

## **Cradle Mountain Masterplan - Frequently Asked Questions**

Updated on 09 March 2016

### **1. Why the need for this project? Why now?**

Cradle Mountain is a site of world significance with internationally recognised natural and cultural heritage, and it meets seven of the 10 criteria for listing as a World Heritage Area. It is a jewel in Tasmania's crown integral to its internationally recognised wilderness experience. But infrastructure at Cradle Mountain fails to deliver on visitors' expectations and current visitor numbers, let alone manage expected increases to the region in the future. The gap between visitor expectation and the current experience will continue to widen unless we fix current deficiencies.

If Tasmania is going to release its vision to increase visitor numbers to 1.5M by 2020, it needs visitor infrastructure that can compete with other internationally recognised destinations. This plan is designed to deliver visitor facilities to complement Cradle Mountain's status as well as manage future visitor numbers to Cradle Mountain, and generate new and repeat visitors.

### **2. But doesn't Cradle Mountain get all the attention? What about other priorities?**

Cradle Mountain is a wilderness icon and integral to Tasmania's tourism. Managing and growing visitor numbers to Cradle Mountain brings more visitors to destinations across the State and importantly to the North and North West. More visitors to Cradle Mountain means more visitors to Deloraine, Strahan, Queenstown, Devonport and many other communities across the region. This means more public and private investment and tourism jobs throughout our region.

Cradle Mountain has been researched many times before and numerous plans created for various improvements and upgrades. However, beyond the critical infrastructure upgrades resulting from the Cradle Mountain Tourism Development Plan 2003 (such as the sewage treatment plant), little has been done to improve the visitor experience. Cradle Mountain is steadily losing market share and has been for the past five years. If the experience isn't upgraded significantly to offer more products of world-class standard, this decline will continue. The time for change is now given tourism to the region and Tasmania is at an all-time high and repeat visitation for the State has grown to a rate of 70%.

### **3. Who is managing the project?**

The Project has been managed by the Regional Tourism team of the Cradle Coast Authority. It is a collaborative industry and government initiative between the following partner organisations:

- Cradle Coast Authority
- Parks and Wildlife Service

- Tourism Industry Council Tasmania
- Kentish Council

#### **4. How is the project funded?**

The Project has been funded through the partner organisations with matching funds secured through the Australian Government's Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure Programme (TDDI). Future funding for implementing the Master Plan is yet to be confirmed, but will be a mix of public and private investment.

#### **5. Who developed the Master Plan?**

In 2015 the Cradle Coast Authority called for expressions of interest from tourism specialists to develop the Master Plan, in consultation with the partner organisations and Cradle Mountain stakeholders. The successful respondent was Inspired by Marketing, who engaged the following expert advisory team:

- Project manager: David Inches, Inspired by Marketing
- Tourism specialist: Simon Carrant, SC&A
- Design and planning: Peter Walker, Cumulus Studio
- Demand testing: Dan Blair, BDA Marketing
- Economic Assessments: Deloitte Access Economics
- Planning and infrastructure assessment: Ross Mannering, Pitt and Sherry.
- Funding Model: Greg Hudson of SCA Marketing

#### **6. What consultation was undertaken in developing the plan?**

In developing the plan, the consultants reviewed the significant body of work undertaken on Cradle Mountain over many years before consulting with Parks & Wildlife Service staff, tourism operators working out of Cradle Mountain and the region, and stakeholder groups with an interest in Cradle Mountain.

Importantly, the consultants took the ideas and vision of the stakeholders and independently market-tested them with potential visitors to Cradle Mountain.

#### **7. What are the primary recommendations of the Master Plan?**

The primary recommendations include:

- Installation of a Cable Way that will provide all weather, and mobility, access to Dove Lake from outside the Park boundaries
- Establishment of a viewing shelter at Dove Lake
- Installation of shelter pods on the Dove Lake Walk

- Establishment of a 'World Heritage Village' as the gateway to the Cradle experience on the former runway site outside the Park boundary providing commercial, visitor, events and social hub for the destination.

The new vision will ensure that visitors who make the significant journey to the site will be able to experience Cradle Mountain regardless of the weather.

## **8. Why a cable way?**

Two studies have identified a Cable Way as the optimum and most sustainable way to transport large numbers of visitors into such a pristine natural environment, and establish a long-term solution to the critical transport challenges at Cradle Mountain. This project has found through comprehensive market research that a Cable Way will generate additional visitor demand for the destination, creating a tourism boom for the region.

Other transport solutions – such as larger shuttle busses or greater vehicle access - means widening the access road and potentially increasing the parking area at Dove Lake. Neither of these are a sensible conservation outcome, nor would they add any attraction to the destination.

The cable way will enable visitors to experience all the seasons of Cradle Mountain and provide opportunities to see parts of the mountain not previously accessible to the majority of visitors.

The near silent Cable Way will mean visitors will be able to enjoy Cradle Mountain and its environs safely with less noise pollution enhancing the wilderness experience.

## **9. Will the cable way be publicly or privately owned and operated?**

The proposal is that the Cable Way will be a public-private partnership. It is likely the cable way will be predominantly funded by State and Australian Governments, and remain a publicly owned asset. A commercial operator would be leased the asset to operate and return a rental payment back to the State.

## **10. Who will be the operator?**

It is likely a tender will be called for a potential partner in the cable way. There will be other commercial operators for existing and new tourism investors and businesses across a number of areas including accommodation, hospitality, services and tours at the World Heritage Village.

## **11. What are the expected impacts on the environment within the National Park?**

The project is expected to result in a net environmental gain in the longer term. The changes recommended reduce the size of the footprint at Dove Lake by rehabilitating part of the current parking area, avoid increasing the footprint of the current road and reduce dependence on carbon fuel transport. These gains are likely to more than offset the new footprint of towers and any vegetation management that may be required for the cable way. The Parks and Wildlife Service will ensure all necessary environmental impact assessments are conducted, and Kentish Council will apply their usual due diligence to planning legislation.

The proposed model for operation of the cable way will shift financial impact from a cost burden to Parks and Wildlife to a dividend that can be returned to ensuring world-class management of visitor impacts on the environment.

## **12. How will the improvements benefit the Cradle Coast region and the State?**

Deloitte Access Economics projects the project will directly generate \$29 million of additional economic activity in the region each year and create around 140 long-term jobs in the Cradle Mountain area.

But the entire region is expected to benefit in terms of jobs creation predominantly in construction and hospitality, but also potentially in services and retail. Tourism and hospitality operators will benefit from increased visitors.

When visitors arrive to the region they enter at either Launceston, Devonport or Wynyard airports, or on the Spirits in Devonport, and they travel through the different townships to explore and discover other experiences and attractions along the way.

The establishment of a world-leading World Heritage Area experience at Cradle Mountain will further strengthen Tasmania's reputation as an 'environmental tourism capital of the world'. A project of this scale will create immense new exposure and interest in Tasmania, its Wilderness World Heritage Area and the Cradle Coast region.

## **13. How will the improvements benefit Tasmania Parks and Wildlife?**

The project will further strengthen the Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service's reputation as a global leader in sustainable visitation into protected reserve areas;

- Increased visitor numbers will increase revenue coming into the park and will potentially enable more funding to be diverted to parks protection and caring for the flora and fauna.
- Estimates of the Cable Car operation itself shows Parks and Wildlife could return a profit as early as one year after commencement of operation resulting in more investment in environmental management and the management of the visitor experience.
- There is potential for more job opportunities within PWS when the project is delivered to ensure the visitor experience is supported by park expertise.

#### **14. Will visitors still be able to drive their cars to Dove Lake?**

Limited access will be available for private vehicles outside the operating hours of the cable way. Reducing private vehicle access will allow the existing, and visually intrusive, car park area at Dove Lake to be reduced in size and rehabilitated to a natural state. Limited access will be provided to PWS and emergency services. General public access to Dove Lake will be by foot, bike or cable way only.

#### **15. Will there be better mobility access for visitors?**

Yes, the Cable Way, Dove Lake and World Heritage Village will all be accessible by wheelchair. The revisions and cable way will enable less able-bodied visitors, including the elderly, to experience the destination all year round.

#### **16. What will be the cost of the cable way trip?**

The cost of the cable way will be determined as part of the final operating model with an operator, however preliminary modelling indicates the cable way will be operationally viable at a relatively low cost visitors and locals.

#### **17. Will Tasmanians have to pay?**

It is our expectation that all users will be required to pay for the Cable way and Dove Lake Experience. The business case for the cable way is dependent on growing numbers of all those visiting Cradle Mountain, including Tasmanians, and experiencing the cable way and a low admission fee is critical to this outcome.

#### **18. How will the cable way be powered?**

The energy requirements of the cable way and other developments at Cradle Mountain will be supplied via Tasmania's energy grid. It is expected that back-up diesel generators will be installed to ensure continued operation of the cable way in the event of a power outage.

#### **19. What level of Environmental assessments have been completed as part of this Master Plan?**

Any work proposed in a sensitive environment requires an array of permits and approvals. Whilst consideration has at all stages of this project been given to the potential environmental impacts, the securing of permits and approvals will be the responsibility of the developers and will be negotiated at the appropriate time.

**20. If the cable way is to go ahead when is construction expected to begin?**

It is hoped that support will be sufficient for this project to begin in 2017, but that will depend entirely on securing the funds and approvals to allow construction to commence.

**21. How can members of the public view this Masterplan**

Copies of the Masterplan can be found on the Cradle Coast Authority Web Site at:

<http://www.cradlecoast.com/pdf/Cradle%20Mountain%20Master%20Plan%20FINAL%201.pdf>

**22. Is this the final version or do we get a chance to comment on the Master Plan?**

This is only the start of the process – your feedback is encouraged and will be welcomed. The Cradle Coast Authority has established a comments page on their website and individuals and groups are encouraged to provide their comments and feedback. The CCA and/or Project Partners will attempt to respond to all appropriate feedback.

**23. I am part of a community group that wants further consultation about the plan. How can I get involved in more detailed discussions?**

The Cradle Coast Authority would be happy to meet with community groups who have particular issues or concerns with the Master Plan. Simply submit the feedback form online at the Cradle Coast Authority's Cradle Coast Master Plan page at: <http://www.cradlecoast.com/cradle-mountain-master-plan> . Please include the nature of your concern and contact details.

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