



MINUTES OF MEETING

9.30am Thursday 11 September 2025 | Riverview Room, Hobart Council Centre

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1. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

PRESENT:	Dr C Mucha	Chairperson
	Cr M Kendall	Glenorchy City Council
	Ms R Warrener	Tourism Tasmania
	Cr J Kelly	City of Hobart
	Cr B Lohberger	City of Hobart
	Mr S Fletcher	Dept of NRE
	Ms T Ross	PWS
	Ms F Smith	TasWater
	Ms A Russell	WPMT

APOLOGIES: Nil

The meeting opened at 9.35am.

The Trust acknowledges and pays respect to all Tasmanian Aboriginal people, all of whom have survived invasion and dispossession, and continue to maintain their identity and culture.

2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND RELATED PARTY INTERESTS IN AGENDA ITEMS

Nil

3. PRESENTATION – HALLS SADDLE MASTERPLAN BRIEFING – City of Hobart

CoH staff advised that Halls Saddle was identified as a possible mountain hub in 2018, and a feasibility study was completed in 2020. Since then, there have been a number of obstacles to further investigation, notably COVID, the cable car assessment and the State Government's *Our Mountain's Future* review.

Council conducted an open day on the site in April 2025, and Council resolved to prepare a masterplan for the site in May, moving the feasibility study forward to readiness for a development application.

A consultancy brief has been prepared for release in late September, with a consultant to be in place by the end of October. The masterplan is due for completion by March 2026, for reporting back to Council in April.

The consultants will be tasked with master planning, business planning, transport analysis and communications and engagement strategy. Work is also needed to ensure that the proposal is compliant with the new planning scheme. A geotechnical assessment has not yet been undertaken to assess the suitability of the old quarry site for development. This will be fundamental to the masterplan.

The business plan component will review and refresh visitor projections and cost estimates. Commercial uses of the site will be explored, noting that there has already been interest from commercial operators and that this use could offset project costs.

Council recognises that Halls Saddle is not a silver bullet to issues being experienced on the mountain, but that it is part of a solution. The site has potential capacity for parking of 250-300 vehicles, equal to the current capacity of the mountain. The transport analysis will investigate local traffic impacts, options including shuttle buses up Pillinger Drive including required interchange and associated facilities within Wellington Park, and other options for more effective movement, noting that alternative/new road access is also in scope.

Following questions by Trust members:

- Roundabout development at the Huon Rd/Pillinger Dve intersection will be considered as part of the transport analysis.
- There has been no notification to date on the Urban Precincts and Partnerships Funding application submitted by Council.
- There is no timeline on seeking commercial EOIs for use of the site as this is dependent on consultancy proposals received and the preliminary geotechnical and planning scheme assessments.
- The Council is in communication with the Trust General Manager to facilitate links with the Trust business case.
- There is concern about community fatigue regarding additional surveys and consultation on matter associated with the mountain.
- It was suggested that it would be prudent to defer the Halls Saddle masterplan until other reviews underway were completed as the outcomes could result in significant changes to the management of Kunanyi / Mount Wellington and Wellington Park. In response, the Council officer advised that staff are required to act on the Council resolution, and ongoing deferral of activity is creating significant issues with infrastructure maintenance and renewal. The masterplan seeks to ensure Council is ready and able to act immediately once other reviews are completed. There was general agreement that delays and deferrals have been frustrating, and now there seems to be too much happening.
- Following the open day and Council discussions with the Fern Tree Community Association, community sentiment towards the proposal is not overly negative.
- There is value in the Trust and Council continuing to work together and feeding in

information to Minister Duigan and Minister Ellis.

- Tourism Tasmania has been developing a Sustainable Visitation Framework to revise total visitation and trends that may be of value to both the Halls Saddle Masterplan and the Trust Business Case.
- It is unknown if the outcomes of the planning scheme compatibility assessment could lead to the development of a Specific Area Plan for Halls Saddle.
- The potential impost on the Trust General Manager from contributing to another external review process was flagged. The General Manager responded that the impost had not been significant to date and that whilst duplication of effort was an issue, Trust input into and timely resolution of the various reviews and planning processes underway was critical to the future of Wellington Park.

City of Hobart staff left the meeting at 10.17am.

On further discussion:

- The Trust discussed the validity of forming a position on the masterplan, given that it is located outside of Wellington Park and the Trust may be over-stepping its authority in raising concerns about the timing of the work. Conversely, there is concern that the Council activity will cause further confusion and may be overridden by outcomes of other reviews.
- The Trust has a standing position dating back to 2018 in support of further investigation into the feasibility of Halls Saddle as an access hub and provided a letter of support for the recent federal funding application.
- Any movement on development of Halls Saddle is still a long way off and will likely require State Government funding so this is not an immediate issue for the Trust.

Resolution: The Trust resolved to prepare correspondence to thank the City of Hobart for the presentation and that, in light of concurrent activity, the Trust advocates maximum collaboration amongst all parties.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND ACTIONS ARISING

Resolution: The Trust endorsed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 July as a true record of that meeting.

5. IN CAMERA SESSION

The General Manager's Performance Review 5.1 was moved to an open session.

6. WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

A Work Health and Safety report was tabled. The General Manager also referred to an additional report from a licensed commercial operator as detailed in Trust Correspondence.

Resolution: The Trust noted the report by the General Manager.

7. FINANCIAL REPORTS

The Trust was presented with the financial reports to 31 August June 2025. The General Manager also provided an overview on the progress of the Trust's annual audit. The auditors appeared to be focusing their interrogation on staff leave calculations and the SIIRP funding arrangements.

Resolution:

1. The Trust noted the report prepared by the General Manager.

5.1 Moved from IN-CAMERA SESSION - GENERAL MANAGER'S PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Trust discussed the General Manager's self-assessment against agreed KPIs for 24-25. Members acknowledged the extraordinary circumstances that all staff have been operating under over the past year in light of the State Government's *Our Mountain's Future* review and the challenge that this has posed for the General Manager in maintaining stability and morale in the Wellington Park office.

The Trust commended the General Manager for the year in review. The General Manager was invited to suggest any professional development opportunities of interest, however the General Manager advised that the Trust's training budget had been significantly reduced in line with the Budget Risk submission already put to government. As an alternative, the General Manager was encouraged to investigate opportunities for both formal and informal training that may arise within Trust member agencies.

The Trust discussed the need for a timeline on the State Government's *Our Mountain's Future* review, as resolution is fundamental to the future of the Trust and the continued uncertainty and public discourse threatens staff retention and succession planning.

Resolution:

1. The Trust endorsed the General Manager's self-assessment of 24-25 performance.
2. The Trust resolved to contact the Minister's office to request a timeline for the remainder of the State Government's *Our Mountain's Future* review.

8. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

The General Manager tabled a brief overview of pertinent issues arising since the last Trust meeting. Some matters were discussed further.

Audit

The Trust discussed the impost of the annual audit on the General Manager, with 35 hours already expended on responding to auditor enquiries to date, noting that the audit was ongoing and would likely require further input.

The General Manager relayed advice received that the Trust could lodge the matter of the disproportionate audit requirement compared to the Trust budget via the State Government's Red Tape Reduction Portal. The audit requirement is a function of the *Wellington Park Act 1993*.

External audit support through the Trust's contracted accountants was also discussed, however the General Manager noted that the accountants were called on frequently to assist in responding to 23-24 audit enquiries at significant cost. The General Manager had an agreed

strategy with the accountants in advance of the 24-25 audit to optimise this expense, with additional input required from the General Manager being the trade-off.

Member nominations

The General Manager advised that following the caretaker period, the nomination packages for the NRE and TasWater deputy members had been resubmitted. With the next round of appointment expiries occurring in December, contact has also been made with those agencies from whom new nominations are required, with nominations requested to be submitted to the Trust by October. Member nominations have so far been received from TasWater and Glenorchy City Council.

Although formal nominations have not yet been received from the City of Hobart, sitting member Cr John Kelly advised the meeting that he was disappointed to have not been renominated by the City of Hobart, particularly as he believed that he brought a different perspective and background to the Trust. The Chair conveyed the Trust's appreciation of Cr Kelly's input and diversity of opinion for the term of his appointment.

Resolution:

1. The Trust noted the report by the General Manager.
2. The Trust directed the General Manager to lodge issues associated with the annual audit with the Red Tape Reduction Portal.

9. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION / DECISION

9.1 SNOW DAY CONGESTION

The General Manager provided the Trust with a detailed account of significant congestion experienced on Pinnacle Road during a snow event on 20 July. Congestion arose due to fine weather after a heavy overnight snowfall on a weekend day during school holidays. The City of Hobart did not deploy a snow day response as the forecast did not predict snow to the low levels realised. Although two Trust Rangers were meant to be on duty, one Ranger was in hospital following an incident out-of-hours the day prior.

The Trust articulated concern for the sole Ranger on duty in very challenging circumstances, with several Workplace Health and Safety matters flagged in the report tabled.

City of Hobart members had followed up with the Council executive in advance of the Trust meeting and advised that the CEO will set up a high level working group to address the issue and the Trust General Manager is invited to join the group to progress matters immediately rather than exchanging formal correspondence. The Trust still resolved to prepare correspondence so that there is a formal record of the Trust's response.

It was noted that risk management, traffic management and parking control on the day was either absent or inadequate, especially in light of the controls otherwise placed on public gatherings. The Trust is of the opinion that as this is an operational matter, congestion management is not the role of the Trust, nor is it resourced to be able to undertake this. However, the Trust does provide what support it can, and this comes at a material cost to the Trust given its scale.

The Trust is also investing in traffic management training for staff to provide additional support to the Council congestion response, but is not able to execute a traffic management plan in isolation of Council.

Trust members advocated for a response to be sought from Council on how congestion issues will be managed in the future, noting the risk to both Park visitors and Trust staff.

Resolution: The Trust directed the General Manager to:

1. send correspondence to the City of Hobart to document concerns on the management of snow day congestion on Pinnacle Rd.
2. contact the Solicitor-General to confirm which party has the duty of care for congestion management on Pinnacle Rd and Kunanyi / Mount Wellington.

9.2 2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT

The Trust received the draft 2024-25 Annual Report, with final audited financial statements pending, to be included when available.

Resolution:

1. The Trust approved the 2024-25 Annual Report.
2. The Trust endorsed the Chair to sign the audited Financial Statements 2025 on behalf of the Trust.

10. ITEMS FOR NOTING

10.1 BUSINESS CASE UPDATE

The General Manager provided a written update on the Wellington Park business case. The project is on track, with significant progress expected once market research is completed and analysed in early October.

Notably, the survey circulated in confidence to registered respondents managed by the market research company has been made public and disclosed on social media. The General Manager has been contacted by a member of the public seeking a copy of the survey, and when told that this was not available, the enquirer stated that a RTI request would be lodged. Market research company BDA has already confirmed that the survey is their IP and is commercial-in-confidence.

10.2 VISITOR AND DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS TOOL UPDATE

Resolution: The Trust noted the updated data provided by the General Manager.

11.2 CORRESPONDENCE

The Trust noted the complaint received from Blak Led Tours regarding an interaction with another commercial operator in the vicinity of Sphinx Rock. Upon investigation, the General Manager has identified that two separate operators are involved and licensing conditions have

been triggered to follow up on the complaint. The investigation is ongoing pending further information from the complainant.

Resolution: The Trust noted the report by the General Manager.

11.3 WPO WORK PROGRAM

Resolution: The Trust noted the report by the General Manager.

11.4 WPO SUMMARY

Resolution: The Trust noted the report by the General Manager.

11. GENERAL BUSINESS

Camping at The Pinnacle

The Trust noted recent media coverage of camping in the snow near The Pinnacle. The General Manager confirmed that the activity appears to have been legal owing to the sweep of Natural Zone across the Organ Pipes, with bush camping being allowed in this Zone. Whereas the camper is known to the Trust Rangers, and is aware of Park regulations, the concern is that the broader public to which he has sought to appeal with social media images is not familiar with Regulations. There will be increased vigilance for illegal camping activity in the vicinity of The Pinnacle.

OMF Proposed Approach to Transport and Access

The Trust discussed the *Proposed Approach to Transport and Access* document circulated to members of the State Government's *Our Mountain's Future* Review Working Group for feedback. Of concern was the absence of any mention of current Park management agencies, references to existing planning frameworks and the Wellington Park Management Plan, and the proposal to call for EOIs from private operators to propose transport solutions. There was also concern that there was no acknowledgment that road closures often correspond to unsafe conditions at The Pinnacle and are not simply an obstruction to be overcome.

OMF Governance Framework

The Trust discussed the Governance Framework also circulated to members of the OMF Review Working Group. Trust members expressed concern that there is no indication of the availability of funding required to implement any of the options to be canvassed, and further, that the review risks coming up with a framework with the same weaknesses as the current one. Governance options are noted as also being part of the Trust's business case project.

Resolution of land tenure issues is regarded as being of fundamental importance to future governance, noting that the formation of the Wellington Park Management Trust in 1993 was regarded as the only pathway forward owing to the complexity of land tenures within the Park boundary.

The Trust noted that road management issues will not be resolved by conversion of Wellington Park to a State Reserve as proposed in two of the three models to be considered.

Regardless of the outcomes, the end point may be years ahead and likely to require legislative change that would be difficult in the current political environment.

Lost Freight Lease

Following contact from the General Manager, the City of Hobart Trust members each followed up with the Council CEO and legal counsel regarding the renewal of the lease for the Lost Freight Café that expired in Feb 2025. Without a lease, the operator's Commercial Operator Licence with the Trust is compromised, and lender financing arrangements were in jeopardy. The members advised that the operator would have a revised lease presented to him by COB 11 Sept.

Resolution: The Trust directed the General Manager to provide Trust feedback on the *Proposed Approach to Transport and Access and Governance Framework* to the State Government's *Our Mountain's Future* Review.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next Trust meeting will be on Thursday 27 November at the Hobart Council Centre.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.10pm.