

Wellington Park Business Case

Prepared for the Wellington Park Management Trust Board

FINAL — 3 March 2026



Report by Evolve Tourism

FINAL 1.0

3rd March 2026

Purpose

This Business Case prepared for the Wellington Park Management Trust sets out the reasons, recommendations and outcomes for introducing a user-pays revenue model for Kunanyi/Mount Wellington (the Park). It distils the findings of multiple commissioned reports into a single narrative to support decision-making by the Trust Board and the Tasmanian Government.

Executive Summary

The Park is experiencing sustained and growing visitation that is not supported by its current funding arrangements, creating increasing risks to visitor safety, infrastructure condition, environmental values and long-term park sustainability.

The Park relies heavily on local government funding—particularly Hobart City Council—to maintain roads, manage safety risks, respond to snow and bushfire events, and protect sensitive natural and water catchment values. This funding model has remained largely unchanged for decades and is not sufficient to meet current or forecast levels of demand.

The Wellington Park Management Trust has taken responsibility for addressing this challenge through the preparation of this Business Case. Stakeholder consultations confirm broad acceptance of the need for new revenue, with clear recognition that off-island visitors should be the primary contributors as the major users, and that any model must include fair, transparent revenue reinvestment directly into the Park.

The BDA Demand Forecast indicates a potential Park revenue of \$8.6m per annum by offering i) fee per vehicle ii) shuttle service and iii) commercial licenses and agreements (mixed mode model).

The total forecasted Trust revenue is \$6m (with 70% of shuttle service revenue to the operator) and from 2027 onwards, the Trust is forecast to generate a net operating surplus of \$2.1 million per annum (base case).



The BDA research shows that while visitors have transport preferences, they will still visit the Park regardless of the transport options available. Also noting that with just 12% of days (F24) exceeding the threshold of 950 vehicles per day (HCC congestion threshold) a vehicle only option was tested (no shuttle service) which could generate \$7.6m and a net operating surplus of \$3.8 million in 2027 (mid case).

Research indicated that adopting a user pays model could reduce visitation by 183,000 or 29% less people per annum. This will reduce congestion, improve safety and relieve pressure on the natural environment. This reduction in demand is a deliberate and positive outcome, acknowledging that pricing is a supportive mechanism for managing visitor load at key sites, aligned with the Park's capacity to safely accommodate visitors. A sensitivity analysis was conducted across both the mixed mode (vehicle and shuttle bus option) and the vehicle only option assuming only a 14.5% drop occurred. The net operating result may increase from \$2.1m to \$2.6m (mixed transport option) or \$3.8m to \$5.3 million (vehicle only option) in 2027 (best case).

Commercial agreements would attract annual administration fees and a per passenger fee of [REDACTED] which equates to the per vehicle passenger allowance in the business model.

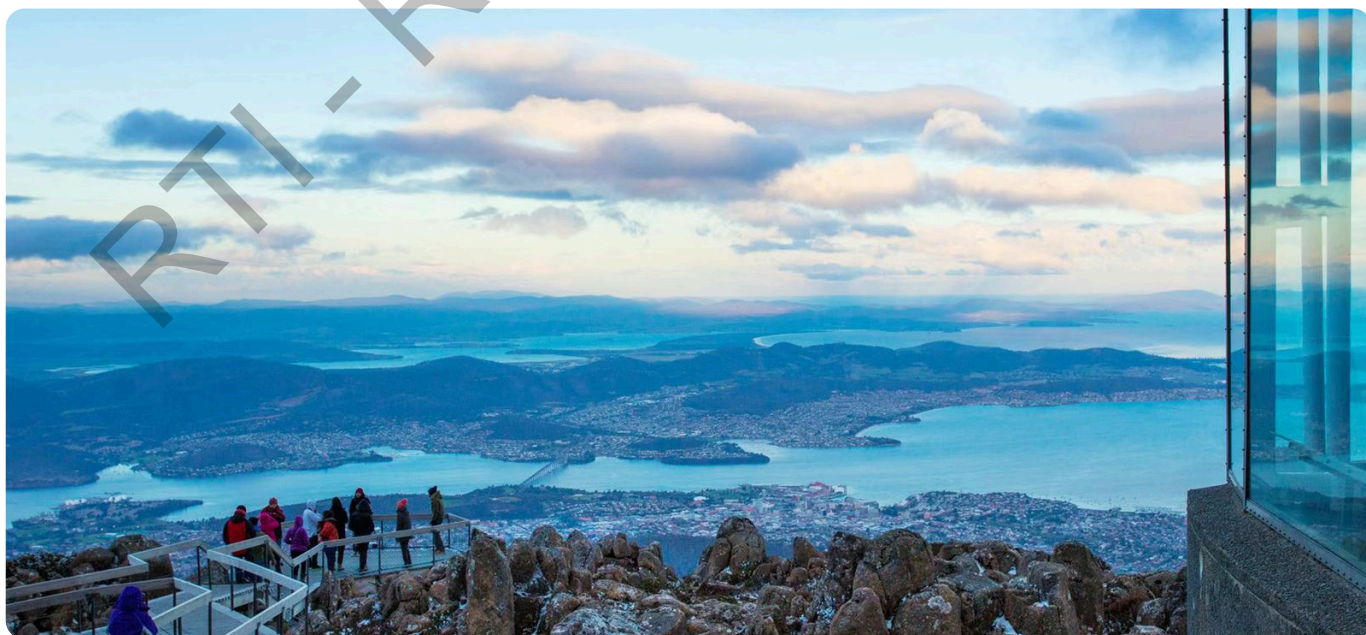
The \$8.6m revenue is generated 87% from interstate and international visitors and 13% from Tasmanians, so for every \$1 contributed by Tasmanians, around \$6.80 is contributed by interstate and international visitors. Importantly, Australian constitutional requirements under Section 117 mean that any charging model must apply universally; as differentiating between residents and interstate visitors is not legally viable. While international visitors can be charged at different rates, the small international numbers and admin costs make this approach not viable. An automated license plate recognition system is recommended just uphill of the Pinnacle Track Rd & Pinnacle Rd junction gate (above The Springs). This is the most cost effective solution for revenue capture with minimal infrastructure as opposed to the high cost of multiple parking metres across the Park.

In summary, this Business Case establishes a clear case for change. A vehicle-based user-pays model provides a sustainable funding solution that improves safety, protects the Park's environmental and cultural values, reduces pressure on local government, and rightly ensures that the users of the Park contribute to its future sustainability. It supports Tasmania's T21 Visitor Economy goals by extracting more value from our interstate and international visitors, reducing pressure on our communities. This Plan ensures Wellington Park can continue to be safely enjoyed by residents and visitors well into the future.

Problem Definition

This work addresses a specific challenge: overcoming the existing shortfall of revenue required to ensure the safety of visitors and the long-term financial sustainability of effective Park management.

The Park is not a National Park and while Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife play a role in managing a significant area of land west of Kunanyi / Mount Wellington, the most-visited areas of the Park are solely reliant on local council funding. Current funding is insufficient to manage visitor safety, maintain or elevate the visitor experience, deliver infrastructure maintenance, bushfire risk, and environmental protection.



Context

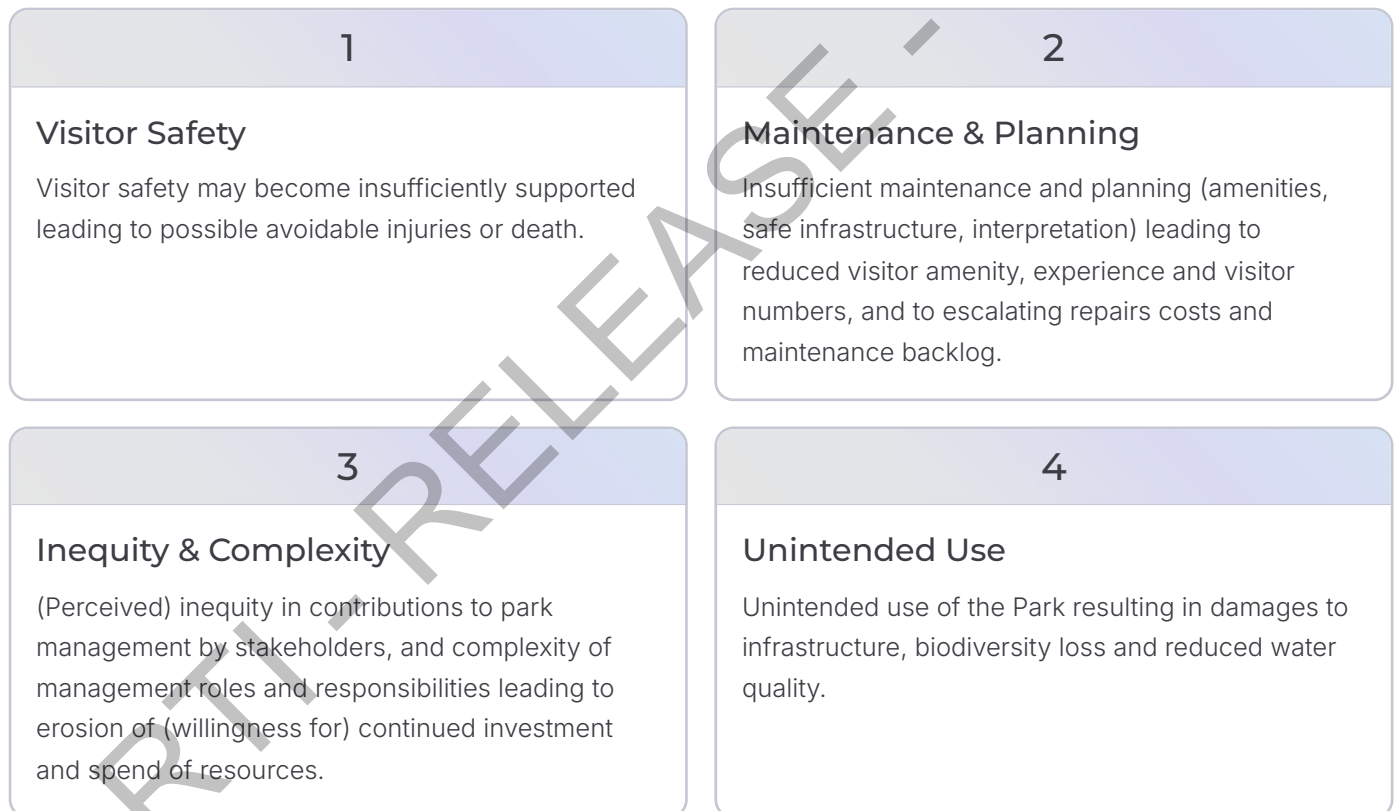
The Park is Tasmania's second most visited tourist attraction and the most visited natural site. Around 450,000 individuals visited in 2024, making a total of 1.5 million visits. Based on forecasts and without any management interventions, this is expected to double over the next 25 years, reaching 910,000 visitors and 3.3 million visits.

The Park is used and visited by a wide range of groups, including residents, interstate and international visitors and tourism business operators facilitating visitation. The water catchment also provides drinking water to parts of Hobart.

There are increasing concerns about the intensity of use, the availability and quality of pathways, roads, infrastructure and services. These issues intensify and are especially noticeable during peak periods when parking at the Springs and the summit may be insufficient and the road becomes unsafe due to traffic volume and the presence of drivers inexperienced with the Park's road conditions.

Challenges

Four primary challenges were identified by SGS Economics:



While these are presented as four distinct problems, they reflect fundamental challenges of fragmented management and financial resourcing.

Stakeholder Views

Personal stakeholder consultations and a review of public consultations from the 'Our Mountain's Future' work were conducted by The Experience Era to inform this work. The following extract captures high level stakeholder sentiment for a user pays model on Kunanyi/Mount Wellington:

"Stakeholder feedback demonstrates clear support for a diversified revenue strategy for Wellington Park. Key opportunities include vehicle-based access charges, shuttle transport systems, revised commercial licensing, event partnerships, and philanthropic contributions. However, all measures must be equitably designed, clearly communicated, and phased in a way that maintains positive visitor experiences and respects local community access and park values."

"Stakeholders overwhelmingly acknowledged the opportunity to generate revenue through park visitation. Off-island visitors were widely seen as the primary target for revenue capture. While there were mixed views on charging local residents, most stakeholders agreed that locals using vehicles to access the park could reasonably be included in a fee regime."

The Solution

The solutions required to meet the challenges and achieve the benefits are:



Create and implement a sustainable revenue generation strategy.



Develop and implement a Master Plan.



Pursue suitable governance arrangements.

After an extensive benchmarking assessment, Tasmania's Parks and Wildlife Model and Shuttle Service at Cradle Mountain were used as the base for design of the user pays model. Access to Wellington Park for those on foot (walking or running) or cycling is free of charge. Commercial agreements with events and tourism operators are in addition to these revenue forecasts. Original research was conducted through BDA Marketing Planning with 1,412 respondents, 606 from the Tasmanian market and 806 from Mainland to deliver a 97% confidence level with findings.

Pricing Structure

Shuttle Bus	Adult (18+) Day Pass	Adult (18+) Annual Pass	Child (5-17) Day Pass	Child (5-17) Annual Pass
Optional shuttle service to key destinations	■	■	■	■
Family (2 adults, 3 children)	Day Pass	Annual Pass		
Shuttle family pass	■	■		
Drive Your Own Vehicle (up to 8 people)	Day Pass	Annual Pass		
Per vehicle charge via Pinnacle Road	■	■		

Revenue & Surplus Forecasts

Based on the BDA research results a user pays model at the price points shown above could generate \$8.6m in annual revenue.

A few key points from the research show:

- Intention to visit the Park reduces when introducing a user pays model. Tasmanians' intention to visit reduces from 82% to 63% while interstate reduces from 97% to 94%.
- For Tasmanians 11% would choose a shuttle and 29% for interstate (if available).
- Day Pass is the preference for 42% of Tasmanians and 83% of interstate.
- 48% of Tasmanians either support or neither support nor oppose a user pays model and 52% somewhat or strongly oppose.

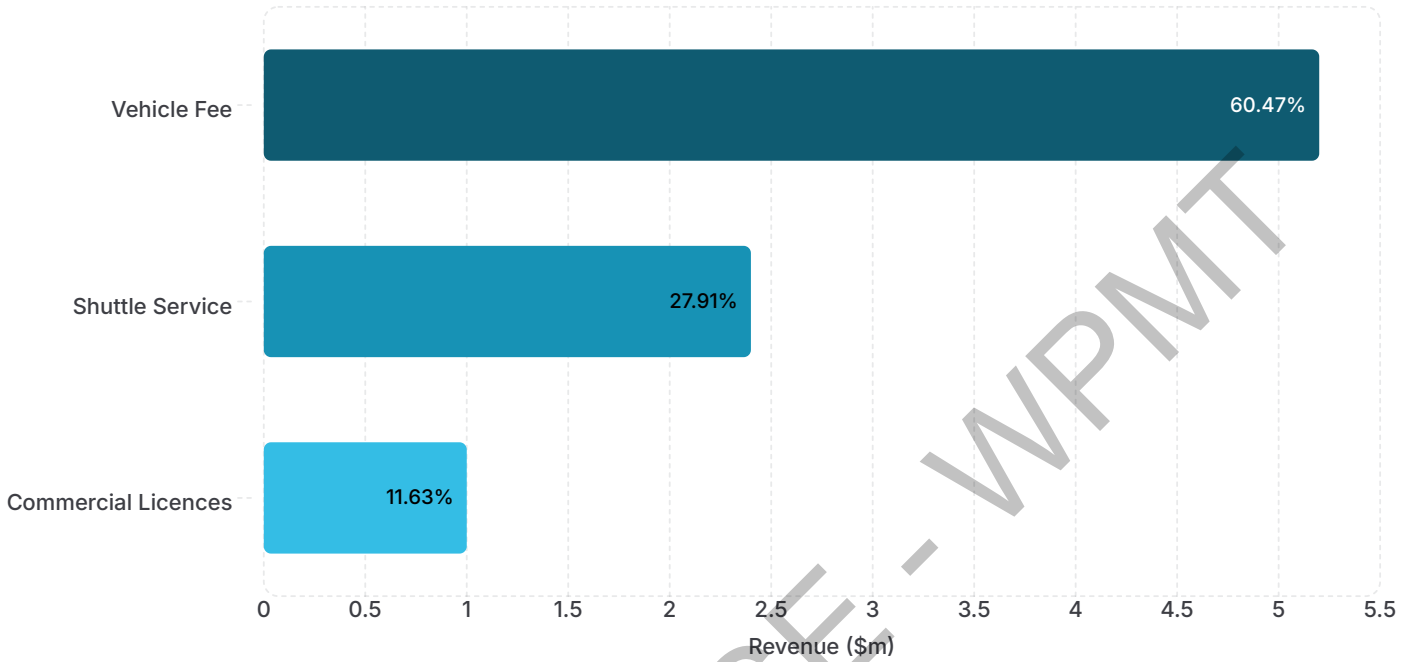
The BDA Demand Forecast indicates a potential Park revenue of \$8.6m per annum by offering i) fee per vehicle ii) shuttle service and iii) commercial licenses and agreements (mixed mode model). The total forecasted Trust revenue is \$6m (with 70% of shuttle service revenue to the operator) and from 2027 onwards, the Trust is forecast to generate a net operating surplus of \$2.1 million per annum (base case).

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8.6

Total Revenue (\$m)

Revenue Source



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Commercial agreements would attract annual administration fees and a per passenger fee of [REDACTED] which equates to the per vehicle passenger allowance in the business model.

The \$8.6m revenue is generated 87% from interstate and international visitors and 13% from Tasmanians, so for every \$1 contributed by Tasmanians, around \$6.80 is contributed by interstate and international visitors. Importantly, Australian constitutional requirements under Section 117 mean that any charging model must apply universally; as differentiating between residents and visitors is not legally viable.

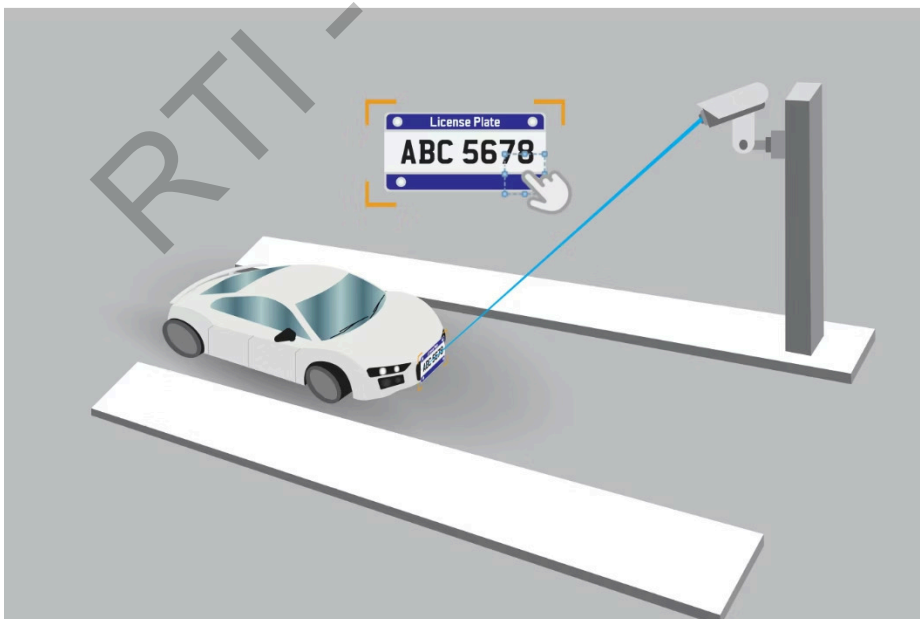
Set-Up Cost Estimates

Item	Cost
LP Recognition Infrastructure and Installation	\$160,000
Power (old hotel to cafe and to main road ARPR point)	\$650,000
Legal	\$20,000
Booking Platform	\$150,000
Signage (2 fixed and 1 electronic)	\$135,000
Marketing Assets	\$35,000
Total Investment	\$1,150,000

Collection of Funds

An over road numberplate recognition system would be installed at Bracken Lane. Visitors would purchase a day or annual pass online or at select Visitor Centres to register vehicle number plates. Similar to a road toll solution on major highways, each numberplate will be checked against registrations. Those passing without a valid pass will be issued with a Notice for Payment. Discussions with other organisations using this system indicate approx. 7% of Notices of Payment remain unpaid which has been built into the revenue model. Commercial operators would pay post month of use to account for actual passengers.

An automated license plate recognition system is recommended just uphill of the Pinnacle Track Rd & Pinnacle Rd junction gate (above The Springs). This is the most cost effective solution for revenue capture with minimal infrastructure as opposed to the high cost of multiple parking metres across the Park.



Use of Funds

Revenue collected from the user pays model and other supporting sources would be deployed across 3 areas and follow 6 landscape guiding principles:

1. Rebate to Land Managers

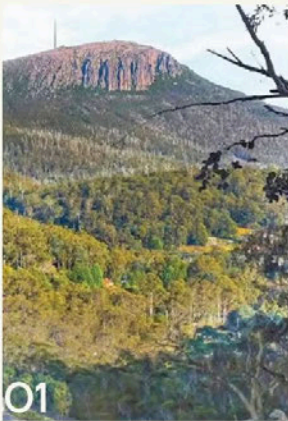
Rebate to Parks and Wildlife Service, Hobart and Glenorchy City Council estimated at \$2.6m when the new model is established.

2. Capital Works & Improvements

Capital works and improvements to the Park as detailed in the Master Plan by Inspiring Place.

3. Trust Administration

Trust management and administration of the user-pays revenue model.



01

CARE FOR COUNTRY

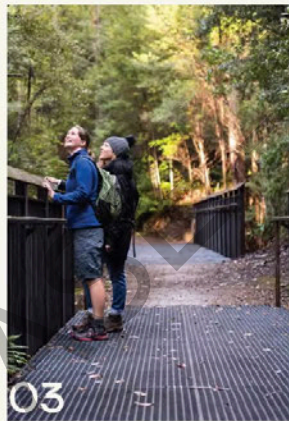
Recognise, protect and preserve the precious natural and cultural values of Kunanyi and surrounding wellington park landscape



02

MOVE SAFELY

Ensure that everyone can access the mountain, via safer pedestrian, cycling and vehicular circulation



03

EXPERIENCE RESPECTFULLY

Sensitively upgrade existing facilities to provide inclusive and improved amenity for locals and visitors



04

CONNECT AND ENGAGE

Reimagine story telling and interpretation across the mountain to enhance opportunities for connection to country



05

SHARE RESPONSIBILITY

Support shared thresholds with surrounding land managers and their public reserves

Master Plan

The Trust with the support of Inspiring Place has developed a series of experience principles to guide any potential future works raised by a user pays model. Revenue would be reinvested into safety upgrades, improved visitor experiences and amenities, asset and infrastructure maintenance, environmental protection, cultural engagement, and priority projects identified in the Master Plan.

The Park's Master Plan identifies a range of infrastructure and servicing works to improve the visitor experience. The total identified works amounts to \$12.2 million, across the three zones:

Zone 1 – Halls Saddle: \$1.2 million

To avoid double counting with the implementation of the user pays system, exclusion of the number plate recognition system brings it to \$1.1 million.

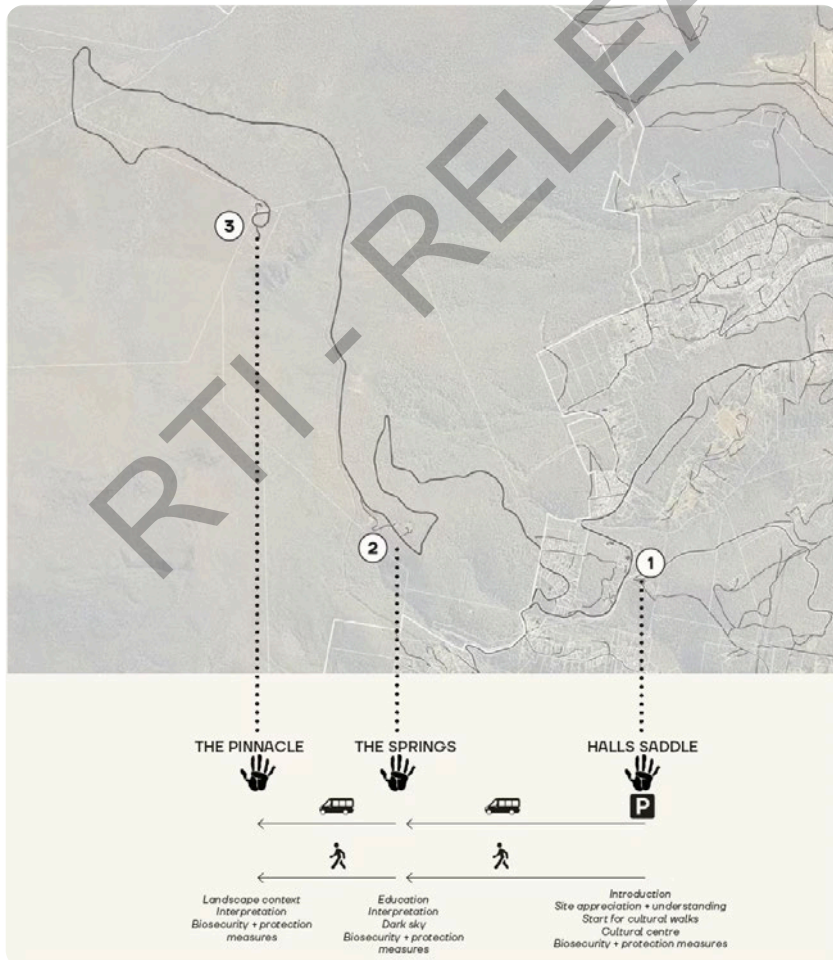
Zone 2 – The Springs: \$6.2 million

The largest single zone investment, covering visitor amenity, infrastructure and experience improvements.

Zone 3 – The Pinnacle: \$4.9 million

Summit infrastructure, safety and visitor experience upgrades.

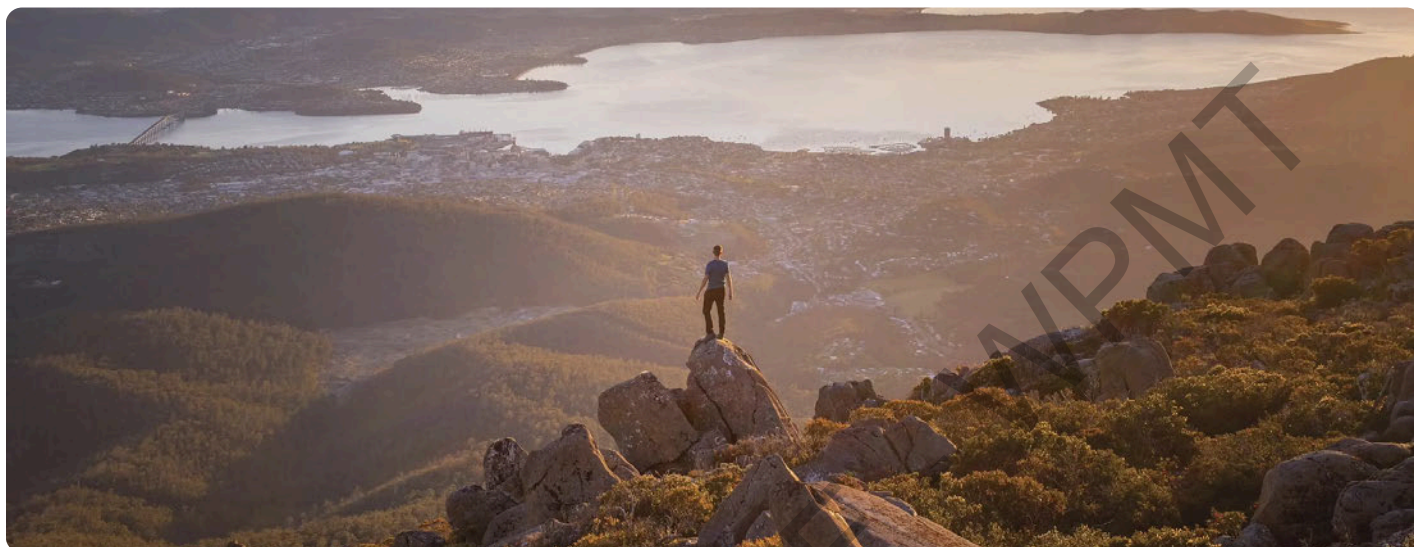
Reinvesting the operating surplus to fund the entirety of the Master Plan, implementation of the works would likely require 3.5 to 6 years. If external capital grant funding is secured on a dollar-for-dollar basis, the implementation could be completed in 2 to 3 years.



Governance & Financial Equity

It is recommended that the Trust focus on financial sustainability by commencing and administering a user pays revenue model in the immediate term before addressing governance concerns. Building financial sustainability allows for the partial compensation of asset maintenance costs currently met by local government.

Under the Stage 1 governance model, the existing Governance model remains, but the Trust collects user pays revenue and reimburses Park Management Agencies for agreed costs, reducing the burden on local ratepayers while benefiting land managers.



Summary of Key Points

- Wellington Park does not have a sustainable model for funding future management of the park and for the Trust to fulfil its responsibilities under the Act.
- Research and stakeholder consultation indicates a high willingness for implementation of a user-pays model.
- Up to \$8.6M can potentially be generated annually to support management of this iconic site with 85% of that contribution coming from interstate and international visitors.
- From \$8.6m in Park revenue generated, the total forecasted Trust net operating surplus could range from \$2.1m to \$5.3m depending on the final model.
- 87% generated from interstate and international visitors, so for every \$1 contributed by Tasmanians, around \$6.80 is contributed by visitors.
- Introduction of the user pays model reduces visitation by an estimated 29% in the short term, and alleviates pressure already being experienced in the park. This figure is likely to be less than 29% with modelling at 14.5% included.
- Major contributors to asset management and maintenance, the cities of Hobart and Glenorchy specifically, will see part of their costs reimbursed through the revenue surplus to reduce the (inequitable) pressure on their rates base. This reimbursement may increase to 30% to 50% of the councils' costs over the first three years and could total \$2.6m.
- Failure to implement a new revenue model increases risks related to visitor safety, bushfire preparedness, infrastructure failure, environmental degradation, and financial sustainability.

Recommendations

- 1 Endorse a user-pays access model
- 2 Implement a vehicle based ANPR enforcement system (auto number plate recognition)
- 3 Manage revenue for safety, maintenance, improved visitor experience, environmental protection and administration
- 4 Reimburse part of the maintenance costs currently borne by Park Management Agencies
- 5 Commit to transparent reporting and community engagement.



Supporting Documents

Core Commissioned Reports

- **SGS Economics** – Wellington Park Economic & Governance Analysis. Identification of core management challenges, financial sustainability modelling, and governance considerations.
- **BDA Marketing Planning** – Demand & Pricing Research (2025). Independent research with 1,412 respondents assessing visitation behaviour, price sensitivity, transport preferences, and revenue forecasts.
- **Inspiring Place** – Wellington Park Master Plan. Infrastructure priorities, experience principles, and capital works estimates across Halls Saddle, The Springs and The Pinnacle. Subcontractor Milangkani Projects for Palawa perspectives on Master Plan.
- **The Experience Era** – Stakeholder Consultation Summary. Synthesis of stakeholder views on revenue mechanisms, reinvestment priorities, governance reform, and alignment with OMF public consultation.
- **WT Partnership** - provide the Cost Plan for Master Plan works.

Public Consultation & Strategic Context

- **Our Mountain's Future (OMF)** Public Consultation Outcomes – State-led community engagement findings informing social licence considerations.
- **Tasmania T21 Visitor Economy Strategy** – Statewide visitor economy framework supporting sustainable value extraction and infrastructure investment.
- **Wellington Park Act (1993)** and Related Statutory Instruments – Legislative framework governing the Trust and land management arrangements.

Comparative Benchmarking

- **Tasmania Parks & Wildlife Service Fee Framework** – State reserve and national park entry models used as benchmarking references.
- **Cradle Mountain Shuttle & Access Model** – Operational reference model for shuttle-based congestion management.
- **NSW Parks Pass Model** – Comparative example of annual and digital park access systems.

Technical & Financial Inputs

- ANPR System Provider Consultations.
- Preliminary Infrastructure Costings (WT).
- Financial Modelling & Sensitivity Testing Worksheets (SGS).

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