

## **Australian Alps Iconic Walk Summit**

The Australian Alps Iconic Walk summit was held on 26 and 27 April 2018 at the Namadgi Visitor Centre, Canberra, and was attended by 43 people. The program and attendees are attached as appendices.

The outcomes that the AALC was seeking to achieve through the workshop included:

- Participants understand the concept of 'iconic' or 'great' walks and how they relate to park management
- Participants understand the great walks market and other relevant visitor markets
- Participants understand what policies and processes are required to support the creation and management of great walks
- Participants understand the key principles of community engagement as applied to great walk concepts and management
- Successors and failures of existing works are shared openly to build capacity within parks agencies to make informed decisions about great walks.

### **Outputs of the workshop include**

- 1. Workshop presentations (distributed with this document)**
- 2. Principles for planning for iconic walks (detailed below)**

### **Principles for planning for iconic walks**

#### *Market ready*

Have a clear vision for your walk and ensure there is a strong and compelling proposition for the offer

Ensure you understand the market and what they are seeking, the consumer/user needs are the core element of the experience – there may be times when it is appropriate to seek external assistance including from the private sector in defining the market needs

#### *The experience*

There is spectrum of walking experiences that can be variously defined by

- The level of service provided in terms of park facilities/infrastructure
- The range of product options from independent walking to high end accommodation (on or off track)
- The walking experience – length, market (independent to serviced)

Plan for great interpretation to meet the needs of target markets and to match the vision and the stories of the place

#### *Characteristics of iconic walks*

Clear point of difference for the walk experience that is well communicated through marketing

Existing high market profile for the destination in which they are located

Complementary nature-based attractions, products and infrastructure in the region

Ability to cater to both independent and guided walkers

An experience that offers a level of exclusivity and avoids high volume nodes or trails

A quality, seamless experience with ease of information, booking, transport and accommodation (whether camping or roofed) for all walkers

Walk period that is geared to consumer preferences – many walkers prefer shorter walks of no more than 3-4 days and 9-15kms average/day

#### *Good planning*

Policies and plans to facilitate the development of walks and tourism operations (if appropriate)

Clear concept

Market demand assessment

Feasibility assessment

Economic benefits and costs

Consumer testing

Master planning

Alignment

Approvals and implementation

Consider new and emerging technologies and platforms to gather data

#### *Sustainable management*

Take a long-term view in planning – the product, the capital investment, the long-term maintenance needs, and insurance requirements

Plan an effective approach to management and governance that is fit for purpose and the business model

Engaging in private/public partnerships needs to take a realistic approach to what the private sector wants/needs (lease terms, expression of their own vision, enabling policies etc)

Ensure appropriate and effective management of all natural and cultural values

Be clear of all KPIs in terms of social, environmental, economic, cultural, visitor experience

#### *Stakeholder engagement*

Have and implement a clear, dynamic, and transparent stakeholder engagement plan that includes decision makers through to general public

Working closely with the community is essential to ensure buy in and support for the walk experience and ensure appropriate services are available. This may take some time. Remember the local community rather than visitors are those that vote.

#### *Project management*

Establish an effective project managements system that allows for a long term approach where necessary

Set clear objectives and be careful of project scope creep

Ensure you have an effective post construction plan

**Iconic Walks Summit – Program**  
**Namadgi Visitor Centre, Naas Road, Tharwa**  
**Thursday 26 April 2018**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
0830	Tea and coffee	
0850	Welcome/acknowledgement of Country	Jackson Taylor-Grant
0900	Welcome	Brett McNamara (Australian Alps Convenor)
0905	Setting the scene: the difference between a great walk, a Great Walk and a Great Walk of Australia  Trends in walking	Janet Mackay (Director, TRC Tourism)
0930	The markets for walks across Tasmania and how the community has been brought along for the “walk”	Peter Mooney (Consultant)
1000	Great Walks of Australia – what’s the market?	Gina Woodward (Executive Officer, Great Walks of Australia)
1030	Panel discussion – what’s the market?	All
1045	<u>Morning tea</u>	
1115	The lasting personal effects of experiences in parks	Rob Saunders (Rob Saunders & Associates)
1140	Guiding and interpretation: enhancing the experience	Prof Betty Weiler (Southern Cross University)
1205	What social media tells us about community values of the high country and how we can use that information in planning	Prof Catherine Pickering (Griffith University)
1230	Panel discussion – what makes an iconic walk experience?	All
1245	<u>Lunch</u>	
1330	New Zealand’s great walks – policy, planning, and stakeholder engagement	Tinaka Mearns (Tourism Manager, NZ DOC)

1415	Three Capes Track	Jen Fry (Manager, Visitor Strategy, Tasmania PWS) Andrew Wagg (Project Manager, Three Capes Track)
1445	Spicers Scenic Rim Trail	Peter Spencer (Manager Ecotourism Development, QLD Department of Environment and Science)
1515	<u>Afternoon tea</u>	
1545	Falls to Hotham Crossing and the Grampians Peaks Trail – community engagement and the planning of Victoria’s great walks	Ross Grant (North East District Operations Coordinator, Parks Victoria)
1615	Snowies Iconic Walk	Anthony Evans (Area Manager, NSW PWS)
1645	Panel discussion – walk examples and lessons	All
1715	Wrap up	Janet Mackay (Director, TRC Tourism)

**Iconic Walks Summit – Program**  
**Namadgi Visitor Centre, Naas Road, Tharwa**

**Friday 27 April 2018**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
0815	Tea and coffee	
0830	Summary of previous day and introduction to Australian approaches to attracting private tourism infrastructure in public protected areas	Janet Mackay (Director, TRC Tourism)
0850	Good planning for iconic walks: markets, experiences, services	Janet Mackay (Director, TRC Tourism)
0910	The economic and social benefits of iconic experiences	Chris Rose (TRC Tourism)
0940	Panel discussion – planning for walks and private public partnerships	Tinaka Mearns, Wade Oestreich, Peter Mooney, Chris Rose
1030	<u>Morning tea</u>	
1100	International Association for Public Participation engagement	Grace Leotta (Affirm, IAP2)
1130	Engagement in protected areas	Emeritus Prof Stephen Dovers (ANU)
1155	Discussion – principles for engaging stakeholders in developing iconic walks	All
1220	Summit close – final comments and discussions	Janet Mackay (Director, TRC Tourism)

First Name	Last Name	Org	Position
Daniel	Iglesias	ACT PCS	Director
Stu	Jeffress	ACT PCS	Parks and Partnerships Manager
Nathan	Oliver	ACT PCS	Regional Manager, Urban Reserves
Brett	McNamara	ACT PCS	Area Manager, AALC
Mark	Sweaney	ACT PCS	Area Manager
John	Freeman	ACT PCS	Ranger in Charge
Mikaela	Jade	ACT PCS	Community and Visitor Programs Manager
Jasmine	Foxlee	ACT PCS	Visitor Experience Manager
Simon	Stratford	ACT PCS	Senior Ranger, Urban Reserves
John	McRae	Australian Alps Program	Program Manager
David	Barker	Visit Canberra	Industry Development Manager
Robert	Quirk	NSWPWS	Executive Director
Mick	Pettitt	NSWPWS	Director Southern Ranges, AALC
Anthony	Evans	NSWPWS	Area Manager
Pam	O'Brien	NSWPWS	Area Manager
Chris	Darlington	NSWPWS	Senior Business Officer
Sarah	Ferguson	NSWPWS	Ranger, Merimbula
Andrea	Elhers	NSWPWS	Strategic Project Manager
Frazer	Muir	NSWPWS	Manager, Branch Programs
Janelle	Herlihy	NSWPWS	Project Officer
Julie	Bishop	NSWPWS	Director Visitor Experience
Linda	Hall	NSWPWS	Manager Experience Development
Kane	Weeks	NSWPWS	Director South Coast
Kerri	Villiers	Parks Victoria	Manager Regional Operations, AALC
David	Roberts	Parks Victoria	Area Chief Ranger
Ross	Grant	Parks Victoria	District Operations Coordinator
Conor	Wilson	Parks Victoria	Ranger Team Leader
Will	McCutcheon	Parks Victoria	District Manager
Jen	Fry	Tasmania PWS	Visitor Strategy Manager
Andrew	Wagg	Tasmania PWS	Project Manager, Three Capes Track
Wade	Oestreich	QLD Dept of Environment and Science	Deputy Director General
Fiona	Wright	QLD Dept of Environment and Science	Executive Director, Ecotourism Development
Peter	Spencer	QLD Dept of Environment and Science	Manager, Ecotourism Development
Tinaka	Mearns	New Zealand Dept of Conservation	Tourism Manager
Janet	Mackay	TRC Tourism	Director
Chris	Rose	TRC Tourism	Senior Associate
Peter	Mooney	Consultant	Consultant
Gina	Woodward	Great Walks of Australia	Executive Director
Betty	Weiler	Southern Cross University	Professor
Catherine	Pickering	Griffith University	Professor

Rob	Saunders	Rob Saunders & Associates	Consultant
Stephen	Dovers	ANU	Emeritus Professor
Grace	Leotta	IAP2, Affirm	Consultant