

Proposal: South Coast Track Walk

Proponent / s

Mr Ian Johnstone

The Maria Island Walk

Location

Southwest National Park

Description of proposal

The *South Coast Track Walk* proposes a new walking product that would guide visitors through the rugged South West National Park in the company and care of professional guides. The guided experience would involve transfer by light plane from Hobart to Melaleuca, where guests would start their traverse through to Cockle Creek to meet a bus to transport them by road back to Hobart.

The project would appeal to a growing market of environmentally conscious, discerning walkers who seek unique cultural and natural locations but the safety and comfort of delicious food and a warm hut in the evenings.

The experience would be fully inclusive of bus transport, pick up from Hobart and transport, basic walking gear, park entry fees, food and accommodation and is designed to cater for small groups and two guides per trip.

The project would involve constructing six environmentally sensitive huts for overnight accommodation. The huts would have a small environmental footprint and be located discreetly from view of other park users. The huts would be built in accordance with the requirements of the current Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA) Management Plan.

The proposal seeks to enhance Tasmania's global reputation of providing outstanding tourism experiences in its wilderness areas and it will also raise the profile and visitation of the Huon Valley and Far South regions.

The proponent, Ian Johnstone, has received multiple awards for his environmentally sensitive Maria Island Walk.

Estimated jobs created

The South Coast Track Walk would expect to employ seasonal guides and drivers plus two full time staff.

Social, cultural and environmental impact

Ian Johnstone is an experienced environmental tourism operator, currently operating guided walks on Maria Island. Maria Island Walk has a strong track record of providing high quality, low impact experiences.

Consistent with the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan values, the proposed environmentally sensitive huts would be pre-fabricated off site and transported via helicopter for assembly.

The huts would be powered mostly by renewable solar power, with rainwater collected from the roof and stored using onsite tanks. Environmentally sensitive dry composting toilets would be used to minimise water consumption and eliminate effluent.

The project would liaise with the Tasmanian Aboriginal representative groups with regard to respecting their traditions and culture and incorporate suggestions and values into the interpretation and overall experience.

In addition to a Reserve Activity Assessment through the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, the proposal is required to obtain any necessary statutory approvals through the Australian and State Government planning approval processes.