

**BACKGROUND TO THE HUME AND
HOVELL TRACK, SUPPORTING A
STRATEGIC PLAN**

5 November 2023

DIAGNOSIS & PLANNING · PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT · FEASIBILITY STUDIES



Authorship

Prepared by SMA Tourism, Website: www.smatourism.com, Email: info@smatourism.com

SMA is an international tourism consulting firm, specialising in innovative product development, feasibility assessments and business cases for cultural tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism and culinary (food and wine) tourism. Authors contributing to this Report:



Simon McArthur
Project Manager &
Lead Author



Glenn Berrill
Trail & Infrastructure



Sandy Hoy
Consultation &
Support Author



Jane McArthur
Consultation

Disclaimer

Specific investment decisions addressing recommendations in this report require further planning, engineering, environmental and heritage advice, and costing by an estimator. Costings should not be used for construction.

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Hume and Hovell Track Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of the lands where we live, learn and work as well as across the lands and waters that we travel through.

We also acknowledge our Elders past, present and emerging.

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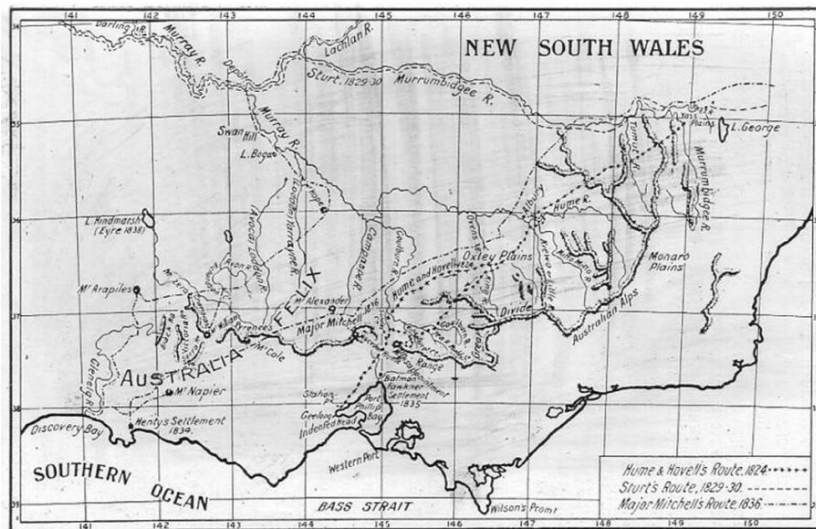
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1. The original objectives of creating the Track

1.1 The Hume and Hovell expedition

The Hume and Hovell Track roughly follows the northern half of the north to south route of explorers Hume and Hovell. The NSW government commissioned William Hovell in 1824 to scout for farmlands between Sydney and Bass Strait. The plan was to explore, document and land a party on the Bass Strait Coast and then return to Sydney. The full route stretched from Hume's family farm in Yass to Corio Bay (where Geelong is now located).

Figure 1.1.1 The route of explorers Hume and Hovell



The Hume and Hovell Track is one section of their expedition, bookended by two historical markers: Hume's heritage-listed home 'Cooma Cottage' in Yass and the Hovell Tree in Hovell Tree Park, Albury, where you can still see the explorer's name that was carved into its trunk on November 17, 1824.

The expedition was significant for several reasons:

- It disproved the widely held theory that the interior of *Australia* was an uninhabitable wilderness. They discovered abundant, well-watered grazing lands between the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers, and also in the lands surrounding Port Phillip Bay. It was Hume that informed John Batman of the valuable grazing lands on the western shores of Port Phillip Bay – as well as to the north;
- It led to a land route between Sydney and Melbourne, since developed and known as the Hume Highway – a major transport route for leisure and business;
- It was a real act of endurance. The return journey of almost 1,900 kilometres was accomplished in just 16 weeks. There were sections of thick scrub and 'cutting grass' that scratched and tore at exposed skin, as well as steep, unexpected escarpments that promptly halted progress. The hot weather attracted swarms of flies, mosquitoes and pests;
- It included several innovations. A detailed journal of the expedition was maintained, including bearings and distances. It was the first *Australian* expedition to use bullocks and it was also the first to use an innovative odometer. Hovell had attached a device to a baby pram wheel which, like a modern car odometer, was designed to measure the distances travelled. Hume converted bullock drawn carts to river crossing punts and back again; and

- While the explorers and local Aboriginal people generally interacted with respect, the opened route triggered the advancement of white settlers that accelerated the dispossession of Aboriginal people and their communities from their land along with policies introduced by Colonial and successive governments.

The only remaining evidence of their journey is the Hovell Tree in Hovell Tree Park in Albury. The detailed journal of the expedition provides an excellent resource from which to interpret the trials and tribulations of the trip south. The book Hume and Hovell 1824, edited by Alan E.J. Andrews, brings together all the important primary information sources.

1.2 The evolution and purpose of the Track

In 1979 the Crown Lands Office began to develop a State-system of recreational walking tracks. The Wagga Wagga office of the organisation was particularly interested in developing a recreational track that followed the route taken by the explorers Hume and Hovell, as it was clear that a large proportion of the historic route passed through public land (predominantly Crown Land at the time) managed by the NSW government. In 1981 the Crown Lands Office adopted a proposal and put it to an inter-departmental committee for the establishment and promotion of walking tracks¹ who endorsed the proposal.

¹ Included the then National Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Commission, Department of Leisure, Sport and Tourism, Federation of Bushwalking Clubs and the Livestock and Grain Producers Association

The concept of the original development was to:

- establish a track that retraced as close as possible the original route south;
- provide a recreational opportunity; and
- promote awareness and understanding of Australia's colonial history, environment and development.

To assess demand for the Track and its facilities, approximately 1,200 questionnaires were issued by the Crown Lands Office to walker stakeholders in 1985 and approximately 25% were completed by stakeholders (Alston G.S., 1985, Hume and Hovell Track potential use, Crown Lands Office). Some 97% said that they would use the Track, and the most popular sections to use were reportedly the central sections that are more natural and mountainous. The top four preferred sections to develop (in order of preference) were:

1. Blowering Dam to Talbingo
2. Micalong to Goobarragandra
3. Blowering to Burra Creek
4. Goobarragandra to Blowering Dam

Development of the track over the period 1984 – 1988 was costed at \$1.3M over five years, which included \$69,000 for marketing and \$160,000 for a documentary about the construction (Department of Lands Crown Lands Office, January 1984 'Hume and Hovell Walking Track – a proposed Bicentennial project').

2. The existing Track assets

2.1 The route

The 426km Hume and Hovell Track (the Track) roughly follows the northern half of the exploration route that Hume and Hovell took between Yass and Albury (see **Figure 1.1.1**) but stops at Albury rather than continuing to Corio Bay near Geelong in Victoria where the exploration finished. Early interest to continue the Track from Albury to Corio Bay was considered by the Victorian government but was never fully assessed and determined.

The walking track was constructed as closely as possible to the explorers determined route and much of it is less than 5km from where the explorers actually trod. At several places the two routes coincide, and locations and features described by Hovell can be clearly identified. Where possible, existing fire trails, forestry service roads and other four-wheel drive tracks were incorporated into the walk to reduce the development and ongoing maintenance cost. A few sections of public road had to be used, as well as urban paths and farmland (6%) and easements. The balance (about a third of the track) is on unsealed narrow constructed walking tracks (known as single track). Given this mix of tenure it is determined that the Hume and Hovell Track cannot be marketed as a wilderness walk.

If one was to choose to walk the entire route 'end to end' between Yass and Albury, they would need between 18 and 26 days to complete it at a pace of 16 to 24 km per day. These walkers are known as 'end to enders' and comprise a small fraction of total walkers who use the track.

Figures 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 present the Track route and its campground locations.

Figure 2.1.1 Base map showing northern half of the Hume and Hovell Track route (source TBLD)

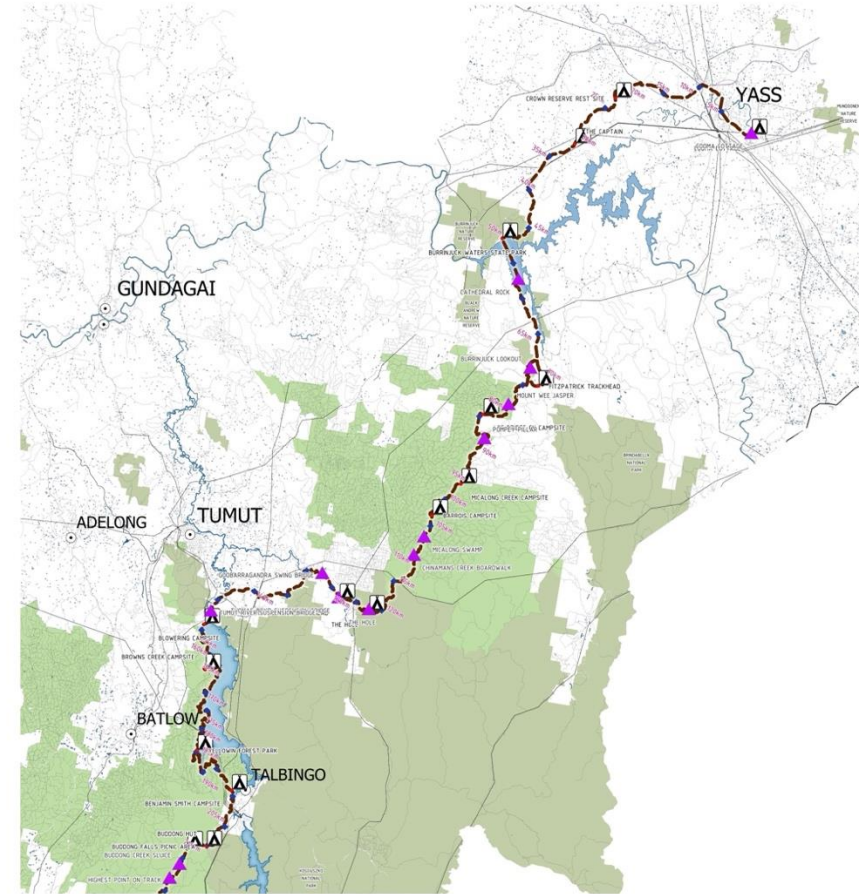
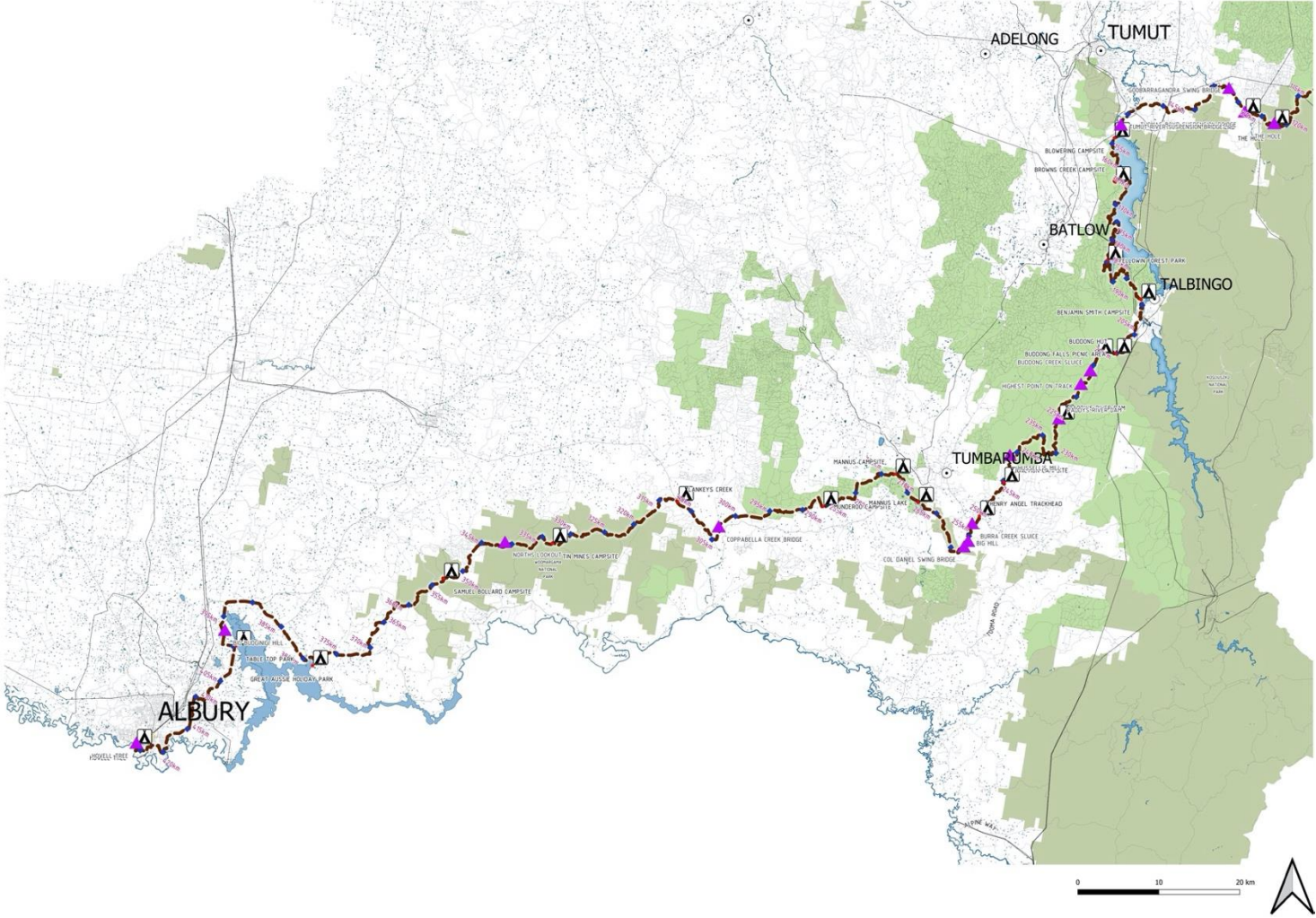


Figure 2.1.2 Base map showing southern half of the Hume and Hovell Track route (source TBLD)



2.2 Multiple ways to use the Track

The original concept of the track in its proposal phase was to provide a variety of walking experiences for a variety of users. Following funding approval, the Track was subsequently designed to provide for a narrower range of uses; long distance walking, overnight walks, day and half day walks. In addition, there were fewer substantial trackheads built (with sealed road access that provide more substantial camping facilities, picnic facilities, toilets, potable water, parking and interpretation signage). Consequently, it has been a challenge to achieve the original concept of a variety of uses and users.

Most marketing and walker blogs recommend to walk north to south, to coordinate with the Burrinjuck ferrying schedule and to imagine being Hume and Hovell on their outward exploratory route rather than the return route.

2.3 Wayfinding and in-situ walker information

A track identity logo, in the form of two small stylised human figures representing Hume and Hovell, is displayed along the full length of the track to assist with track finding. Signboards showing places, directions and distances have been erected at all trackheads and other places of track access. White plastic marker posts are installed at regular intervals along the walking track to provide wayfinding reassurance. Where the Track joins or crosses other tracks or roadways, routed timber directional bollards have been installed. If the Track passes through areas of historical interest and significance, descriptive plaques have been erected.

2.4 The importance of interpreting the historic nature of the Track

There is a major Information and interpretation booth at the Henry Angel Trackhead and several interpretation signs about the Hume and Hovell expedition at several locations.

Parklands Albury Wodonga placed QR codes on some signs in the southern section (eg. Eastern Hill) that link additional interpretation that is hosted on a website managed by Parkland Albury Wodonga, but the QR connection no longer goes to the site. As mentioned, interpreting the historic nature of the Track was one of the three reasons for creating it. The designers wanted the Track to:

To gain an insight into the history of Australian exploration and understand the perseverance, hardship, adventure and sense of achievement that this involved.

The Aboriginal history associated with this part of the State will also be documented, together with the history of European settlement from 1825 to 1988.

The route provides a graphic picture of the change that has taken place in the last 160 years. As a result, people will not only see history as related to the progress of time but in terms of environmental change.

The project will assist in encouraging a sense of National awareness. It will present aspects of our history in a way that will give a better appreciation of the achievements of our predecessors.

The track should stimulate research into the regional and local histories of the areas discovered by Hume and Hovell.

Department of Lands Crown Lands Office, January 1984 'Hume and Hovell Walking Track – a proposed Bicentennial project'.

2.5 On track accommodation supporting overnight walking

There are 28 campsites / rest stops along the Track. **Section 7.4** locates all of these sites and rates their relative potential for upgrading. The three major trackheads, Fitzpatrick, Thomas Boyd and Henry Angel are the only sites with sealed road access suitable for two-wheel drive vehicle access (all other campsites are AWD or 4WD access only) with limited car-based camping, and day walks in either direction from the Trackhead. The other 17 campsites have been developed at a varied distance which is generally a day's walking distance apart. Two campsites on Crown land (Thomas Boyd Trackhead and Fitzpatrick Trackhead) currently charge for overnight stay, with the charging system generating useful visitor data. A booking rather than an overnight charge is made to stay at any of the campsites in National Parks (eg. Tin Mines and Samuel Bollard) and these must be booked in advance through National Parks Wildlife Services (NPWS). At this stage only one site offers hard roofed accommodation along the Track.

A basic walker hut, semi walled with raised timber floor has recently been installed at Log Bridge Creek Campsite (see **Figure 2.5.1**).

Figure 2.5.1 Above: Primitive campsite at Micalong Creek, Below: Walker hut at Log Bridge Creek Campsite



2.6 General maintenance regime

Maintenance of the Track reportedly targets sections with the highest use, which is a logical approach. However, while there have been some targeted efforts to control blackberries and other weeds (some reaches remain infested with blackberries), there has been minimal maintenance of the walking track, so the original flat narrow track cut and benched into the bank has significantly eroded, leaving a sloping track that is more challenging and in some places more dangerous to walk on due to angled rough surfaces and loose rocks.

Following the 2019-20 bushfires and 2022 floods an extensive program of Track and facility repairs focusing on the replacement of pedestrian bridge infrastructure was undertaken. During this period extensive sections of the Track had to be closed for walker safety due to natural disasters. A positive outcome of this work is increased infrastructure resilience to these natural disasters, and standardisation of robust and simple bridge design that made the construction work more efficient and cost effective to maintain.

In some damaged areas, some significant improvements have been made to the visitor experience. For example, in the fire devastated Bago State Forest, the Forestry Corporation is planning an upgrade of visitor facilities at Paddys River Dam, the Pilot Hill Arboretum, Lochinvar Rest Area, Paling Yards and Sugarpines 2.0. In addition to trail, amenities, signage, picnic and camping facility upgrades will be the introduction of sculptural elements, an amphitheatre, nature-based playground and wellness walk.

3. Supporting local visitor economies

3.1 Services in neighbouring towns

Unlike many long-distance trails, the Track passes relatively close to several townships and hamlets that have visitor economies that include accommodation, eateries and food supplies.

Figures 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 present a visual depiction of the number and capacity of hard roofed accommodation, food supplies and food and beverage outlets at townships in close proximity to the Track.

The largest suppliers of hard roofed accommodation, food supplies and food and beverage services are located at Albury, Tumut and Yass. It is recognised that this accommodation supply count is not an accurate depiction of actual available supply for Track users. Some suppliers are heavily booked and some have limited staff to support higher occupancies. In addition to the accommodation counted in towns are a number of farm stays and bed and breakfasts, some of which are located even closer to the Track than any of the above townships.

Nonetheless, this analysis suggests that the most strategically important towns to efficiently service Track users are Tumut and Tumbarumba.

Figure 3.1.1 Extent of hard roofed accommodation, food supplies and food and beverage services close to the northern half of the Hume and Hovell Track (source TBLD)

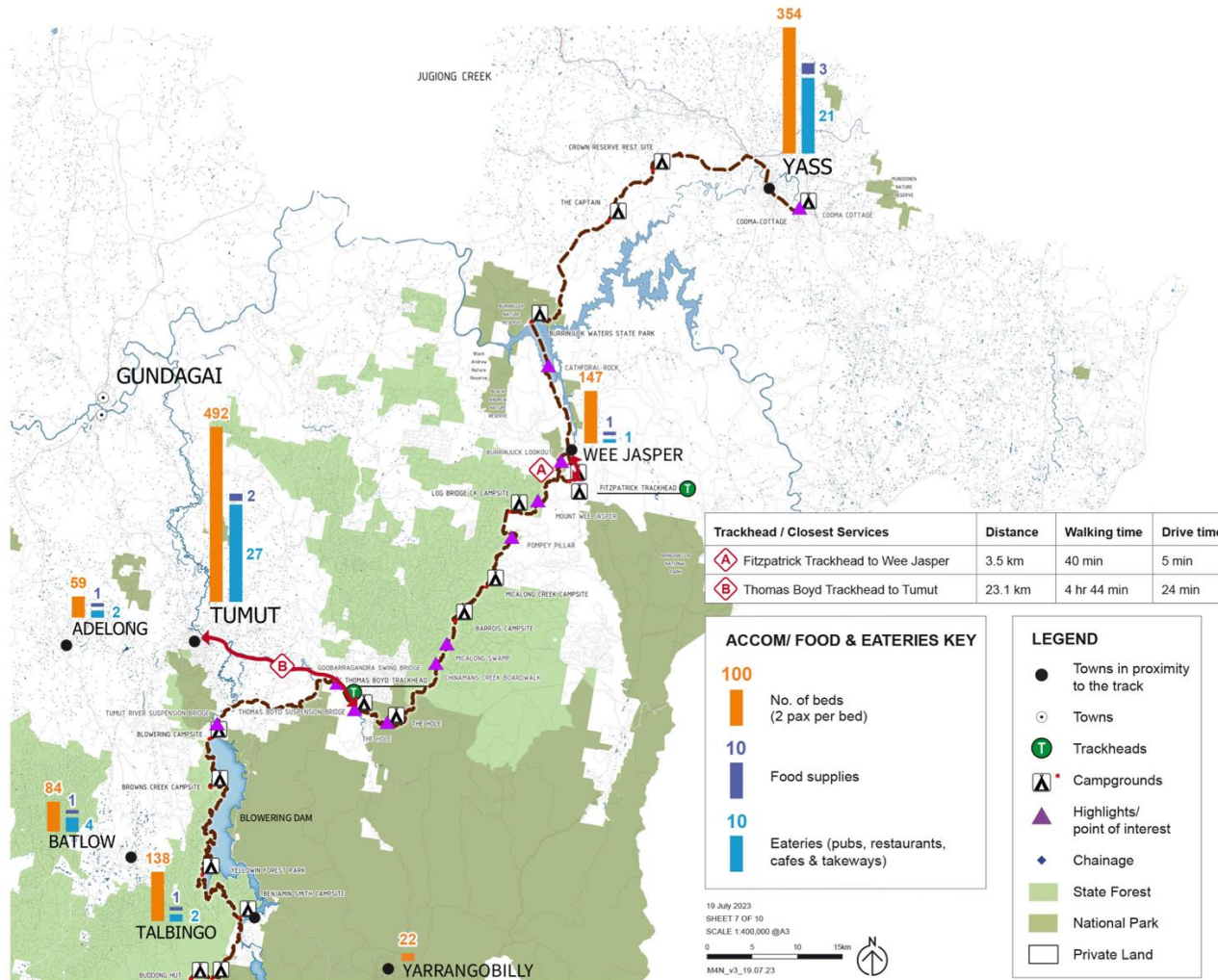
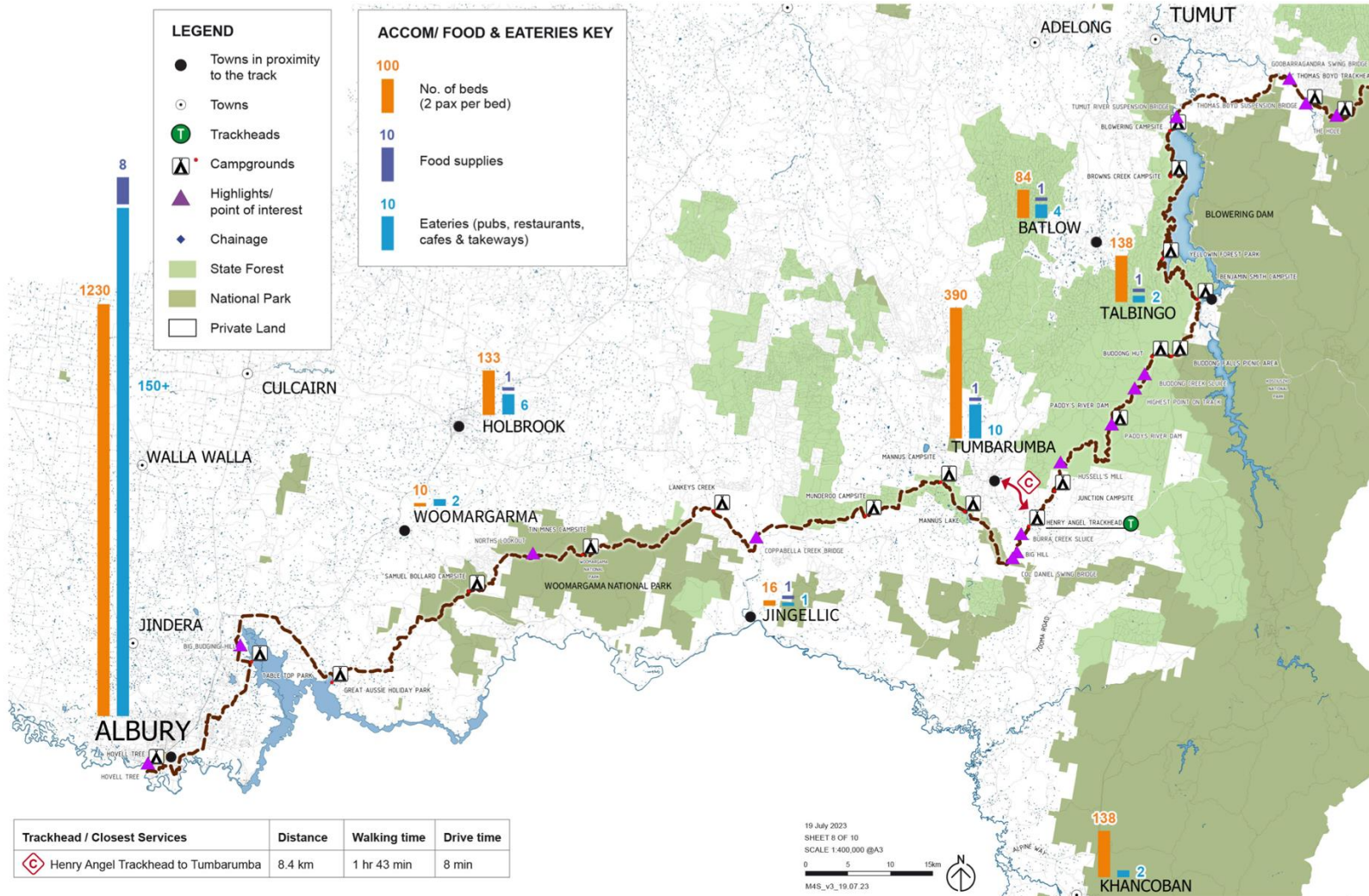


Figure 3.1.2 Extent of hard roofed accommodation, food supplies and food and beverage services close to the southern half of the Hume and Hovell Track (source TBLD)



3.2 Transfers

The only known operator promoting the provision of transfers between the Track and hard roofed accommodation in nearby townships, or between different points on the Track so that walkers could skip a section and resume further along, is 'Our Snowy' based out of Talbingo. This operator offers bus tours around Tumut and also has a 4WD that could take people to the track. Destination Riverina Murray is working with an emerging operator to provide transfers, gear hire and food drops. However, some accommodation operators and taxi drivers provide this service on an ad-hoc basis. A boat ride is required to cross Burrinjuck Dam, from Burrinjuck Waters State Park and disembarking near Cathedral Rock, a journey of 6-7km taking approximately 15 to 20 minutes. The service is usually available on Mondays and Thursdays for track users, or by special arrangement for groups. Boat bookings are essential. Usage of this services is extremely low. There is also no commercial kayak or canoe hire service offered to cross Burrinjuck Dam.

3.3 Food drops

No service providers offer food drops or rubbish removal for multi-night walkers. Experienced long-distance walkers have organised this with individuals that they choose (eg. Blowering Campsite and Munderoo Campsite). Bushwalkers report that hiding food drops is more difficult on the Hume and Hovell Track than most walks due to few safe locations to stow and retrieve food at some sites. Provision of secure food drop points would assist commercial utilisation of this service. Tour operators Force of Nature offers a luxury guided walk featuring high end food and beverage and hard roofed accommodation – guests do not stay overnight on the Track. The three-day walks only require day packs and feature Wee Jasper to Log

Bridge Creek (4 – 6 hours, 22km), Thomas Boyd Track head north of Tumut to Goobarragandra (4 – 6 hours) and Clear Springs south for 4 – 6 hours.

4. Relative appeal of Track sections

A system and set of criteria for track managers to individually rate the appeal of the track has been developed and interpreted into an overall rating shown as:

- High appeal sections (eg. lots of highlights, very natural area, big views, single track)
- Moderate appeal (occasional highlight, natural to semi-natural / poor condition environment, some single track and some road)
- Low appeal (eg. no highlights, monotonous farmland or pine plantation, badly burnt, road as the track)

Figures 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 present the relative appeal of the Hume and Hovell Track over the northern and southern halves.

Figure 4.1.1 Relative appeal of the northern half of the Hume and Hovell Track (source TBLD)

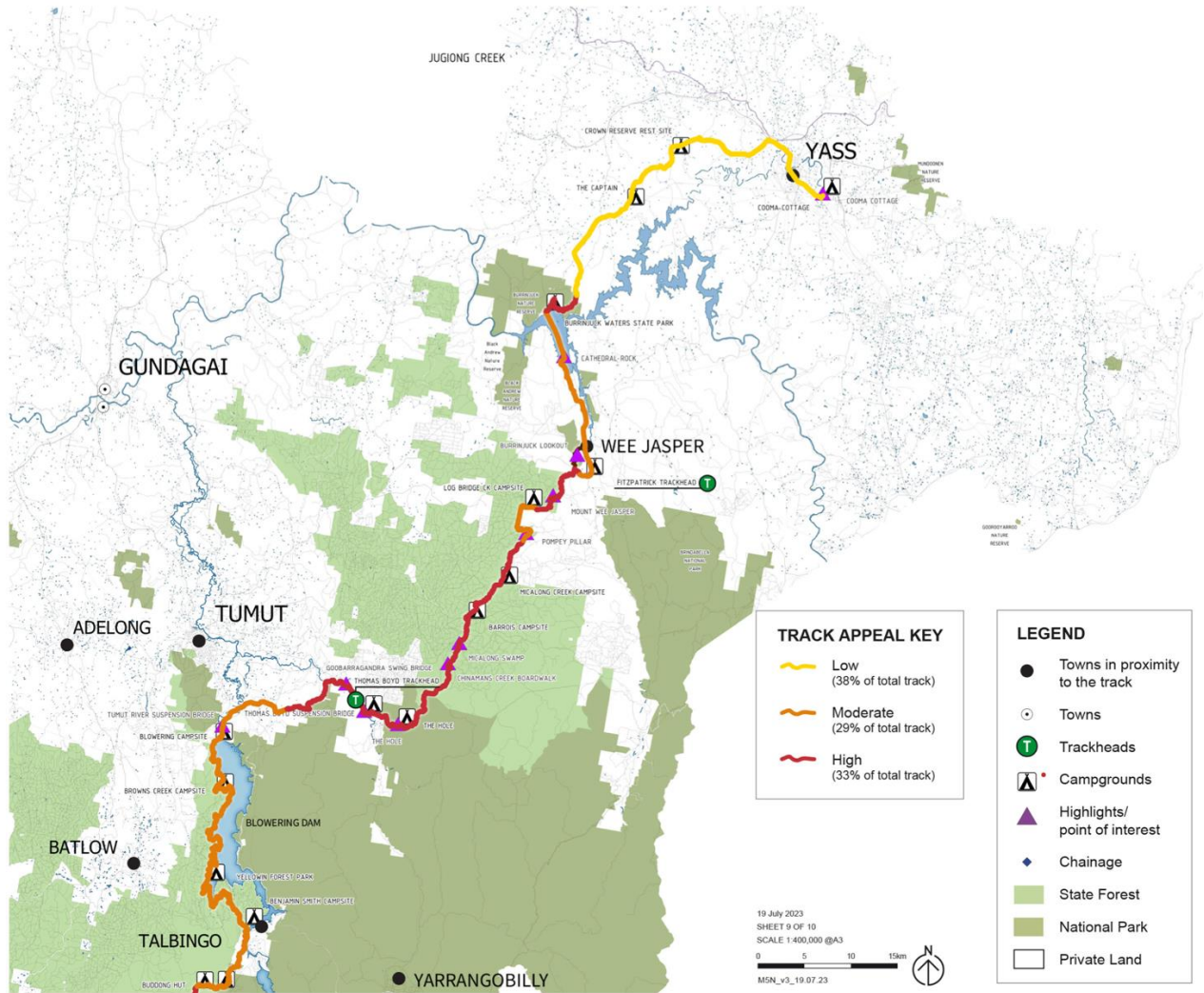
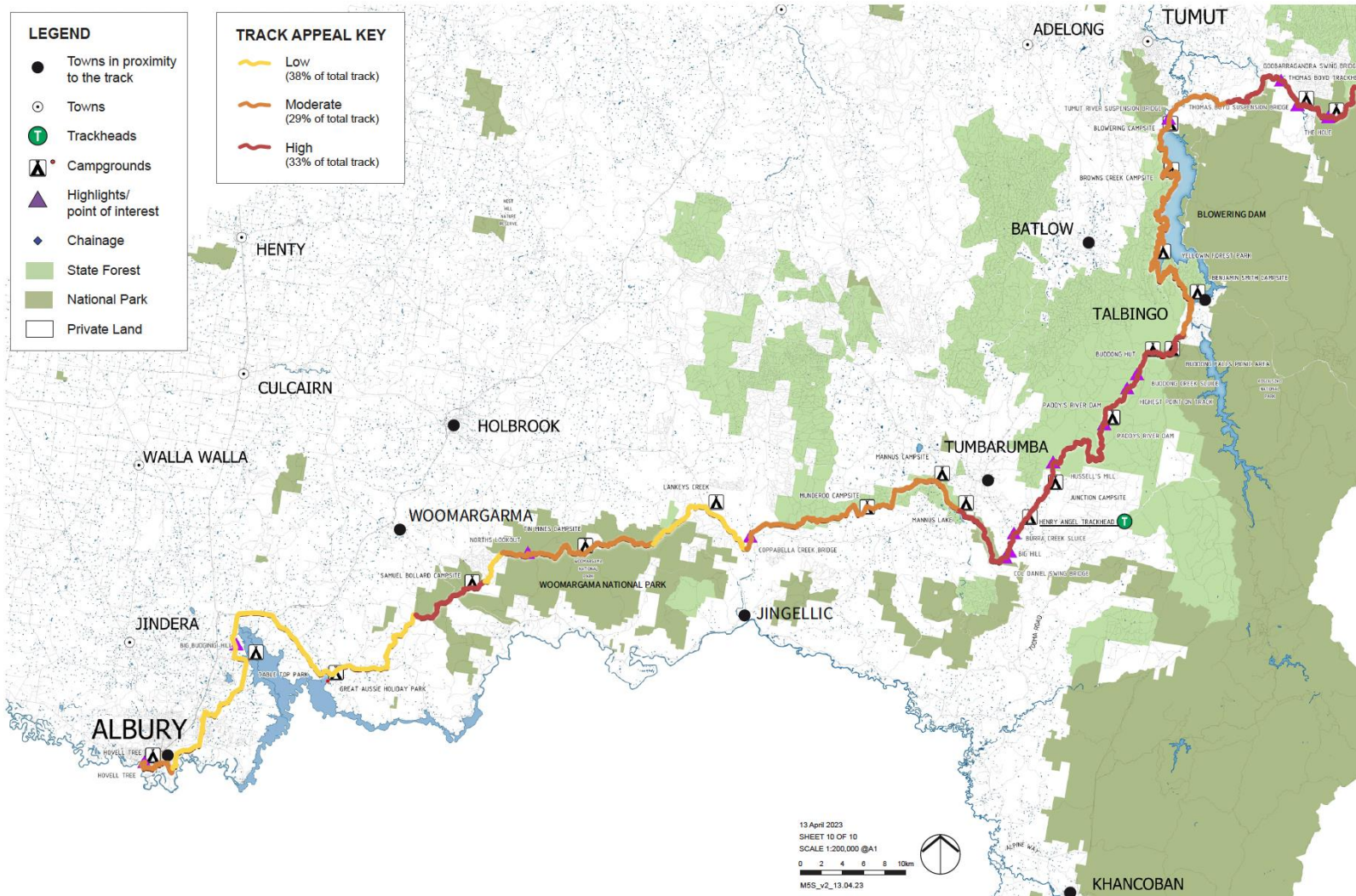


Figure 4.1.2 Relative appeal of the southern half of the Hume and Hovell Track (source TBLD)



Figures 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 reveal that:

- approximately one third of the Track was rated Low appeal – the northern quarter (Yass to Wee Jasper) and most of the southern quarter (Woomargama National Park to Albury);
 - approximately one third of the Track was rated Moderate appeal;
 - there are two distinct sections of the Track that have High appeal:
 - roughly from Wee Jasper south to Thomas Boyd Suspension Bridge near Tumut – approximately four days walking;
 - Buddong Creek (the start of Buddong Falls, near Talbingo) south to Mannus Lake Campground (near Tumbarumba) –three to four days walking; and
 - the section in between these two High appeal sections was rated Moderate and represents two to three days walking.
- there are only two highlights rated as a WOW factor – Micalong Swamp and Buddong Falls, and these are located in the same two sections of high track appeal;
 - the majority of the high appeal highlights are found within the same two high appeal track sections:
 - roughly from Wee Jasper south to Thomas Boyd Suspension Bridge near Tumut – roughly four days walking; and
 - Buddong Creek (the start of Buddong Falls, near Talbingo) south to Mannus Lake Campground (near Tumbarumba) – roughly three to four days walking.

5. Track attractions and their appeal

The relative appeal of attractions enroute were identified and shown in **Figures 5.1.1** and **5.1.2**. The highlights tentatively rated strongest for appeal to attract visitors were identified as being:

- the northern quarter and the southern quarter of the Track have very few highlights, and this contributes to the low appeal of walking these sections – in some cases there is no highlight for almost two days of walking;

Figure 5.1.1 Relative appeal of highlights / attractions along the northern half of the Hume and Hovell Track, northern reach (source TBLD)

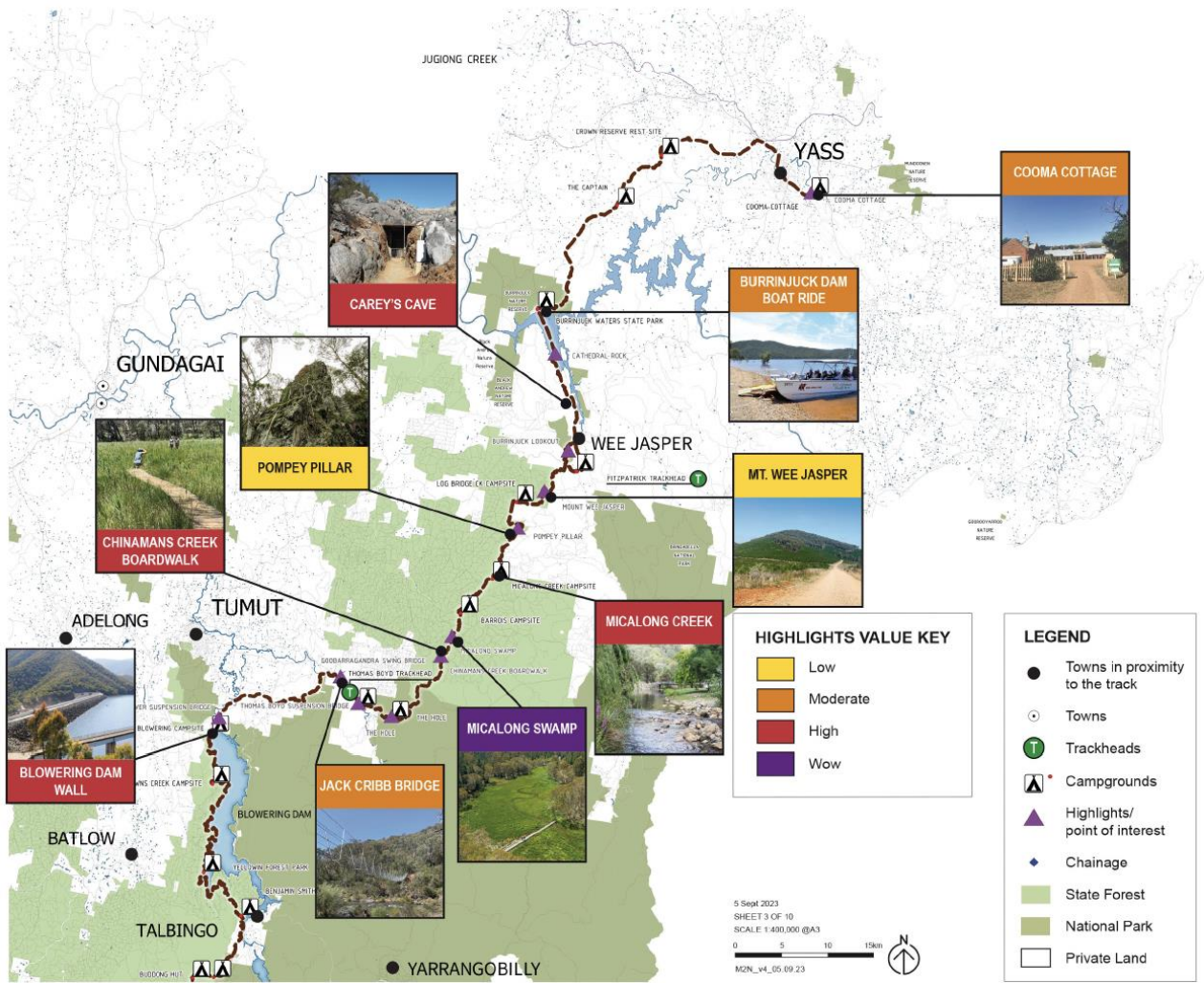
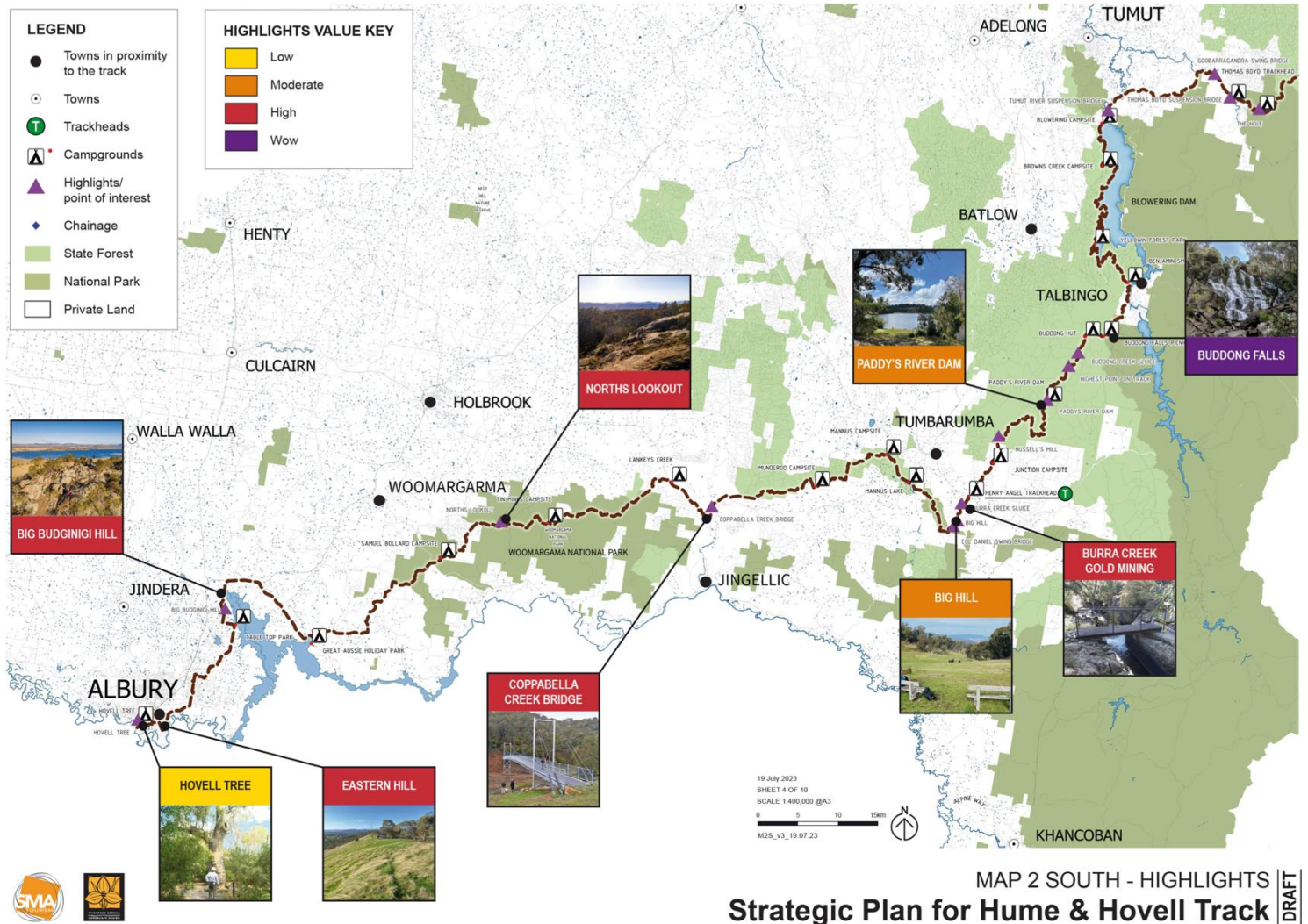


Figure 5.1.2 Relative appeal of highlights / attractions along the Hume and Hovell Track, souther reach (source TBLD)



6. Track short walks and their appeal

The Hume and Hovell Track website suggests that there are 16 highlighted short walks along the route. These short walks were not built for this purpose – they are sections of the Track that had easier access points and were therefore promoted to stimulate visitation to open sections of the Track while repairs to other sections were being undertaken. The relative appeal of these short walks is presented in **Figures 6.1.1** and **6.1.2**. The short walks tentatively rated strongest for appeal to attract visitors are:

- two short walks rated as having a WOW factor (both located in the high appeal track sections):
 - Micalong Creek Campsite to Barrois Campsite (native forest and wildflowers in spring and early summer, located in the northern high appeal section); and
 - Buddong Falls to Paddy's River Dam (can't beat a waterfall, located in the southern high appeal Track section).
- There were only two short walks rated high appeal, one in the north and one in the southern Track section.

This finding further consolidates the strategic importance of the two high appeal sections of the Hume and Hovell Track – they deliver the WOW and high appeal of the entire Track.

Figure 6.1.1 Relative appeal of the northern half of short walks along the Hume and Hovell Track, northern reach (source TBLD)

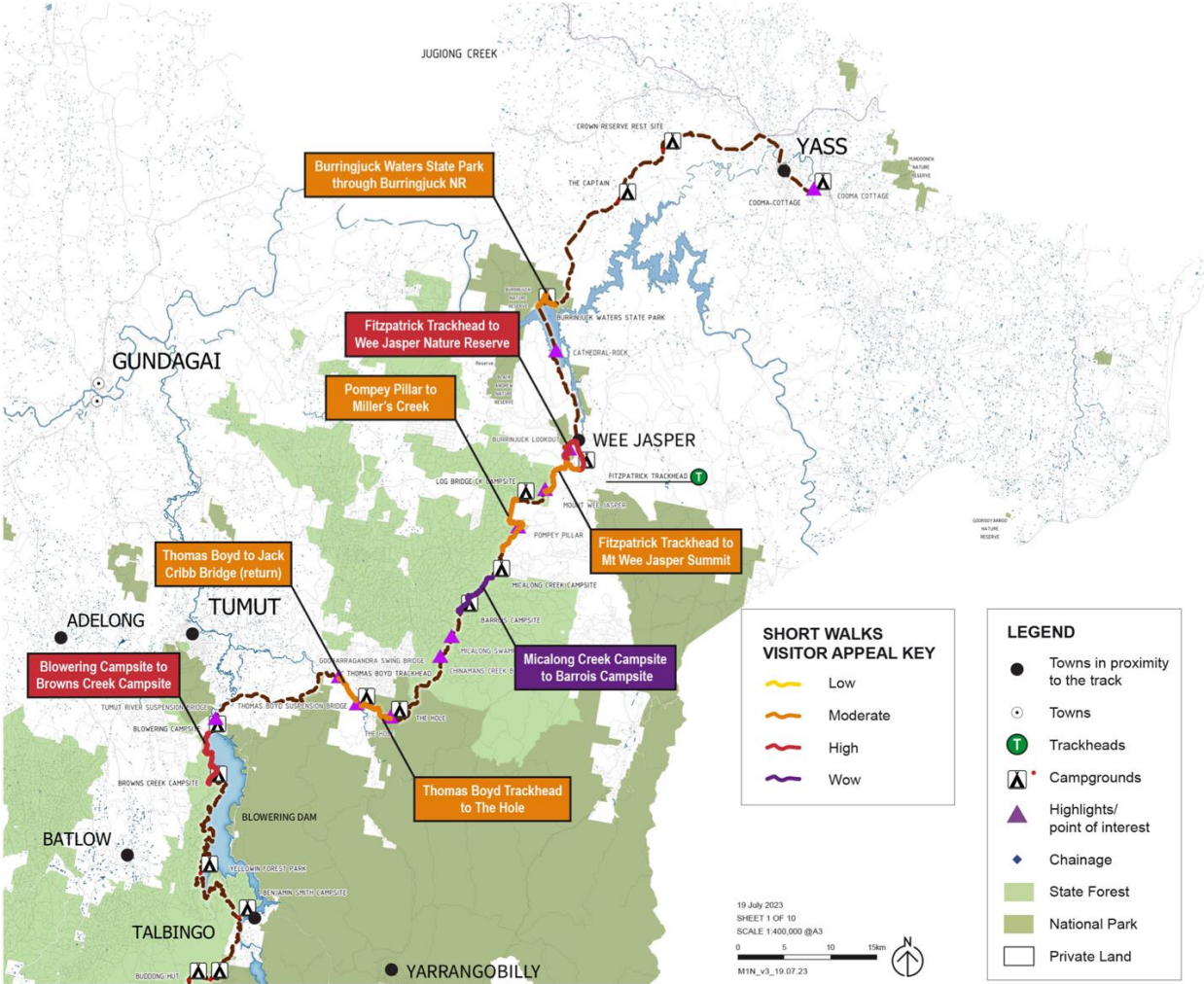
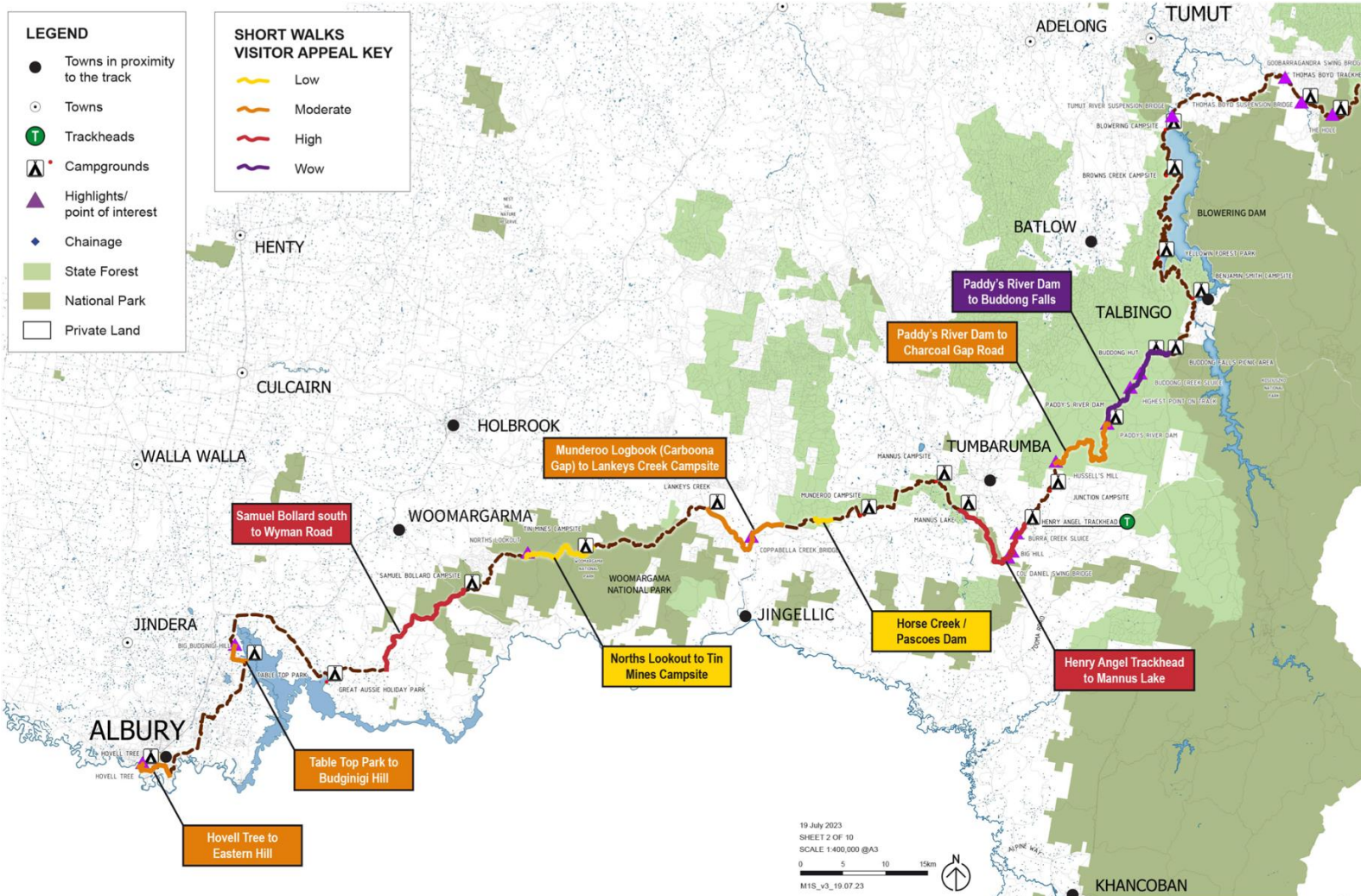


Figure 6.1.2 Relative appeal of the southern half of short walks along the Hume and Hovell Track, southern reach (source TBLD)



7. Visitation and use of the Track

7.1 End to end use

Reflections Holiday Park (Lake Burrinjuck) operates a boat transfer for walkers across the lake – an essential service for true end to end walkers and thus the most accurate indication of this use. Data supplied by the operators suggests use is low, never exceeding 32 passengers in a year.

7.2 Short walk use

Six points on the track have track counters that have generated walker data. Track counters suggest the most used section of the track is Eastern Hill in Albury, which has had an average of 18,161 visits per year. This higher use is indicative of this section being close to a major population centre looking for outdoor recreation, and this section has attractions that convert it to a short walk proposition. While there is no data differentiating the proportion of short, day use and overnight walkers at Eastern Hill, most of it is probably short walk use.

7.3 Day and overnight use

Putting aside Eastern Hill in Albury, the trackheads attract the most walkers, because they are the only sealed road access points to the track allowing use of two-wheel drive access that also supports car-based camping with toilets and potable water, and because they have easier access to nearby towns for resupply. The surprisingly low number of trackheads (only three for over 426kms of track) hinders the potential of a higher number of short walk tourists (in 2WD cars) being able to reach the trail and raises the historical question, why were so few

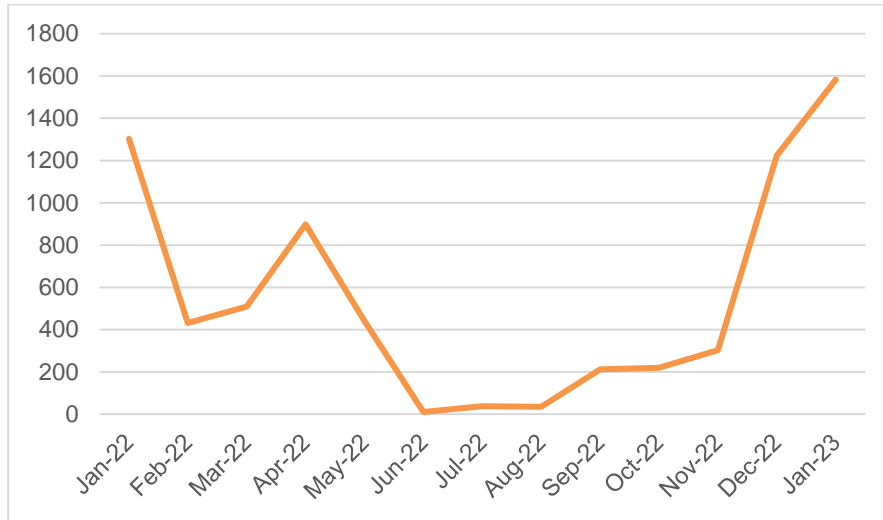
trackheads constructed? The limited number of trackheads has created a bias towards 4WD tourism, which limits numbers of short walk tourists and limits potential spend to the local towns and accommodation. The site investigation phase points to the difficulty of constructing sealed roads to the track as the main limiting factor in constructing more trackheads. This does not preclude the opportunity to explore other opportunities sites for trackheads in the future, should growth in visitation consistently increase over time. The other major influence on the number of walkers is whether the site has car-based camping and a potable water supply servicing it. This raises the prospect of the walk supporting camping, rather than camping supporting the walk. Supply of potable water (town water) is available at the trackheads, but not at all other campsites. It is a complex supply issue, as all existing water tanks serviced from small roofs are not technically potable, water at these sites are correctly labelled as not potable, and the water needs to be boiled.

The highest day and overnight walker use along the track is likely to be at the Tumut River Bridge (6,651 annual visitors) and Thomas Boyd Trackhead (6,586 annual visitors).

7.4 Seasonality of use

An analysis of the trackhead campground data suggests a highly seasonal use of these campgrounds based on summer (December to January) and Easter (April) holiday periods. This trend is visually depicted in **Figure 7.4.1**. This focus is important when considering user safety in bushfire season and water availability during these drier months.

Figure 7.4.1 Monthly use for Thomas Boyd Trackhead Campground (January 2022 to Jan 2023)



7.5 Place of residence

An analysis of all log book entries demonstrates that data from various locations suggests 49% come from NSW, 48% from interstate and 3% from other countries.

7.6 Walking party size

The 2015-18 log book data suggests that the party size most commonly varied between 1 and 7 persons and had a median of two persons. Larger groups were 12-15 or 25 persons, but these have only occurred approximately 15 times between 2016 and 2022. This information is useful for campsite size, any future transfers and food drops to Trackheads.

7.7 Feedback from Track logbooks

An analysis of approximately 500 comments from the logbooks of 2018 – 2023 suggests the following positive feedback – in order of the most number of comments:

- some tough walking (ascents) but worth it for the peace and serenity;
- appreciate the campsites in natural / secluded areas with basic facilities (toilet, picnic table and water) at most sites;
- appreciate the Hume and Hovell Track website News section and Facebook site for track updates;
- definitely not a wilderness walk, but like the transitions between rural character and natural settings;
- nice to see so few other walkers; and
- really appreciate the track maintenance.

An analysis of the comments from the logbooks of 2018 – 2023 suggests the following negative feedback – in order of the number of comments:

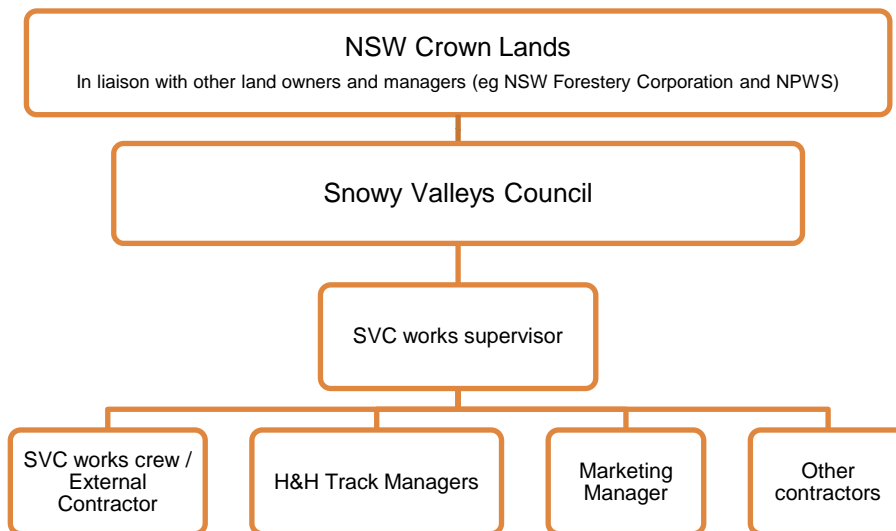
- Hume and Hovell Track website needs better maps suitable for wayfinding;
- blackberry and thistle infestations (2018 – 2023);
- some boring sections – particularly roads and plantations; and
- more track markers in places needed (2018 – 2023).

8. Current governance

8.1 Governance structure

Figure 8.1.1 presents the governance structure for managing the Hume and Hovell Track.

Figure 8.1.1 The current governance structure for managing the Hume and Hovell Track



The NSW Department Planning and Environment – Crown Lands is responsible for overall management, direction and funding of the Hume and Hovell Track. Crown Lands is responsible for all Track management and maintenance over all Crown

reserves and Crown roads, and related signage / infrastructure, single track and benching maintenance/upgrades on all other tenures. Crown Lands owns more than 350 built assets along the Track (with a replacement value of \$20M).

8.2 of Track assets

The Track includes over 350 built assets, including bridges, toilets, shelters and signs. Crown lands believes it owns all assets, including those located on other public tenures and private land.

Whether these assets are located on public lands owned and managed by the NSW government (eg. NSW NPWS and the Forestry Corporation) the ultimate landlord is the same, ie. the Crown. Nonetheless, there are no existing formalised agreements for track construction, asset management and maintenance, and management agreements between Crown Lands (or its delegated day to day Track manager Snowy Valleys Council) and the NSW NPWS nor the Forestry Corporation.

8.3 Support in Plans of Management

Crown Land 2031 - State Strategic Plan for Crown Land (2021) reflects government and community aspirations to deliver social, environmental and economic benefits from Crown land. The Hume and Hovell Track contributes to a range of Crown Land 2031 priorities including, strengthening community connections with Crown Land, accelerating economic progress in regional and rural NSW, protecting cultural heritage on Crown Land, and protecting environmental assets, improve and expand green space, and build climate change resilience.

Land reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NPW Act) as national parks, historic sites, state conservation areas, regional parks, karst conservation reserves and Aboriginal areas are managed to protect their unique values and provide for sustainable visitor use and enjoyment. This includes the provision of visitor experiences and, where appropriate, the provision of visitor facilities including visitor accommodation. The NPWS Plans of Management recognise that the Hume and Hovell Track is managed by Crown Lands.

NSW Forestry Corporation recreational and tourism policy (2018) says that state forests provide a distinct blend of leisure and visitor opportunities, differing from other NSW land manager and/or NSW public lands. Whilst the provision of traditional camping, picnicking and bushwalking experiences remains important, FCNSW recognises a role in providing safe, innovative and high-quality nature-based visitor experiences. The development of commercial R&T opportunities is seen as a key means by which FCNSW can provide on-forest experiences of a high standard that promote FCNSW and State forests brand.

The Track is acknowledged in Plans of Management for Burrinjuck Nature Reserve, Wee Jasper Nature Reserve, Jingellic, Bogandyera and Clarkes Hill Nature Reserves, Woomargama National Park, Woomargama State Conservation Area, Mullengandra Nature Reserve and Mullengandra State Conservation Area, and the Micalong Swamp Flora Reserve Working Plan.

The Track is not acknowledged in Plans of Management for any of the State forests in Tumut, Bago, Mannus and Mundaroo sections.

8.4 Wider input into Track management

There is no reference or working group established to facilitate regular discussions on Track management issues and opportunities. Such a group typically comprises all public land managers as a minimum, but may include local government, regional tourism organisations, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and key user groups.

8.5 Asset management system

The Track assets are entered in an asset management system Asset Edge 'Reflect', which is used by the primary contractor Snowy Valleys Council (and their maintenance management subcontractor 12p) to plan, prioritise, and record asset maintenance within the LGA and also on the Hume and Hovell Track.

Reflect is software designed for asset management and includes both asset condition database as well as a defect and action module for planning maintenance work. The Reflect system integrates track asset management with that of the rest of Snowy Valleys LGA. Crown Lands would like to improve maintenance reporting.

Crown Lands is implementing a new Asset management framework that will include a field-based tool to collect asset data. This system will be either integrated the existing Reflect system or provided to field contractors as a new tool.

8.6 Managing heritage / cultural values

Many sections of the Track are in environmentally sensitive areas where threatened species (or their habitat), or Aboriginal or other cultural heritage values exist.

A number of local, state and federal statutory controls may apply to Track management, and there are measures that can be invoked to protect cultural and natural heritage features and places along the Track corridor, including:

- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 – this Act enables heritage items, such as buildings, structures, landscape items or places known as ‘conservation areas’, to be listed in a Local Environmental Plan (LEP) or a State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP). Particular controls then apply to listed heritage items;
- Heritage Act 1977 – this Act focuses on items that have state heritage significance. These are listed on the State Heritage Register administered by the department. An application to carry out works affecting an item on the State Heritage Register will generally require separate approval under the Heritage Act (though it can be combined with a development application as ‘integrated development’); and
- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 – this Commonwealth Act protects Australia’s National Estate, which consists of places of aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance owned by the Commonwealth or that have heritage value to the nation. These items are listed on the Australian Heritage Database, administered by the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy. An approval under the Act may be required if a proposal is likely to have a significant effect on a listed item.

Crown land has significant spiritual, social, cultural and economic importance to the Aboriginal people of NSW. NSW is Aboriginal land.

There are various legal mechanisms in place to protect places and objects of heritage significance to Aboriginal people and provide access or title to Crown lands in certain circumstances, including the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993 and the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983. Land rights are granted in the form of freehold land where the minister administering the NSW Crown Land Management Act 2016 (CLM Act) determines that the land is ‘claimable land’ for the purposes of the ALR Act.

Although many Aboriginal heritage sites and relics are listed on the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) database maintained by the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH), other sites and relics may not be listed.

8.7 Contracted management of the Track

Since 2016, Crown Lands has contracted Snowy Valleys Council (SVC) through an annual contract to deliver the following roles on its behalf:

- provide maintenance services on the Track to provide a safe, sustainable and quality natural experience for users;
- provide promotional, marketing and information services, including social media to provide information and raise the profile of the Track to visitors and the community, and incorporating the Track into the Council’s Destination Management Plan and associated Visitor Service Strategy;
- report on a quarterly basis to Crown Lands on all relevant aspects of Track management; and
- maintain partnerships through liaison and progression as required with all stakeholders involved in the operation of the Track.

In addition to the maintenance contract, 100 bridges and other minor infrastructure have been replaced using insurance pay outs following flood and fire damage. Parallel to this there is an insurance funding that has been used to replace infrastructure damaged by the recent fires and floods. This is being delivered by SVC and their contracted delivery consultants 12p Consulting.

9. Maintenance

Track maintenance includes vegetation clearing, track surface repair, repairing bridges, signage, picnic tables and camp site facilities. Ongoing removal of blackberries that encroach over the Track corridor is a constant challenge and major cause of walker complaints. At times, the burden of vegetation management overwhelms other items in the scope of works, particularly in periods of high rainfall and sunlight. There has not been enough work done of maintaining the Track surface due to resource constraints. In many areas the original benching has collapsed, with loose rocks and debris creating a sloping surface that is often difficult if not dangerous for walkers to walk on.

In contrast, some walker campsites have had inadequate vehicle protection measures (rocks / bollards) removed by 4WD users, and vehicle-based camping has damaged the facilities and dominated the space at the expense of Track walkers' experience.

Figure 9.1.1 Examples of track surface, shelter and new Coppabella Creek Bridge



10. Funding and operating budget

To date all of the funding for undertaking maintenance on the Track corridor has been provided by Crown Lands. As a NSW government department, there are limited opportunities to seek external grants or receive donations and sponsorships.

Between 2017 and 2023 (seven financial years) Crown Lands has provided approximately \$3.27M for the maintenance and marketing of the Hume and Hovell Track.

In 2017/18 Crown Lands provided \$436,000 for the maintenance and marketing of the Hume and Hovell Track. This amount then increased by approximately \$50,000 per annum to 2022/23, where approximately \$630,000 was spent. Not all of these funds are transferred to the head contractor, Snowy Valleys Council. Some funds are for other projects and activities with Wee Jasper Reserves (Fitzpatrick Trackhead) and Goobarragandra Valley Crown Reserve Manager (Thomas Boyd Trackhead).

Table 10.1.1 presents a breakdown of maintenance expenditure from the average of \$0.54M per annum and shows that the largest portion is tree removal (20%) and tree maintenance (15%). To oversee the management contract, Snowy Valleys Council charges \$54,000 per annum. An approximate calculation suggests that Snowy Valleys Council is paying out about \$15,000 + gst per week for track maintenance.

Future maintenance costs will depend on how contractors can deliver maintenance via a commercial subcontract that will be more expensive than using very cheap but relatively unproductive labour used earlier on (Correctional Services). A

commercial subcontractor can deliver more effective (productive) maintenance in a shorter period of time than the previous regime. However, it will be more expensive for the equivalent timeframe. Past evaluations proved that the commercial subcontractor option is actually cheaper per kilometre of track than the old regime – more track can be maintained for the same budget.

Table 10.1.1 Breakdown of the maintenance budget

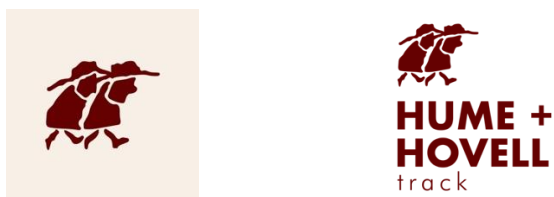
| Maintenance activity | Proportion of budget |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Tree removal | 20% |
| Tree maintenance | 15% |
| Sign maintenance & replacement | 12% |
| SVC Oversight & maintenance | 10% |
| Auditing | 11% |
| Mowing and slashing | 10% |
| Marketing | 6% |
| Blackberry control | 5% |
| Track surface repair | 3% |
| Campsite asset maintenance & repair | 2% |
| Footbridge maintenance | 2% |
| Trackside asset repair | 2% |
| Miscellaneous | 2% |
| Total | 100% |

11. Marketing

11.1 Brand

A brand pyramid or other tool used to identify the brand essence (key strengths) of the Track does not appear to have been developed for the Hume and Hovell Track as it is not addressed in the Draft Marketing Plan for the Track. However, a track logo in the form of two small stylised human figures representing Hume and Hovell is displayed as a track identification marker that guides walkers on, especially where walkers might appreciate some sign of assurance that they are on the track (see **Figure 11.1.1**).

Figure 11.1.1 Application of logo as Track pictogram and naming



11.2 Promotional channels

The Hume and Hovell Track is currently most extensively profiled via the website www.humeandhovelltrack.com.au. The site is well optimised, being the first listing from a Google search without advertising to place it there. The positioning statement emphasises diverse landscapes enroute, rather than the linkage to the explorers' route. The website is structured to cover: Towns; Sections; The Track; Short walks; Highlights; Campsites; and Plan your trip.

There is an existing Map Kit produced in 2013 by Crown Lands available for purchase that is being updated. In addition to the Map Kits that are being updated a promotional 'short walk' style brochure is being produced.

There is a Facebook and an Instagram site for the Hume and Hovell Track, as well as a brief profile on the visit destination NSW site. However, there is no listing of the Track under the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse.

12. Track development opportunities for people with limited mobility

Figures 12.1.1 and 12.1.2 present the sections of Track that have potential to be upgraded to provide greater access for people with limited mobility.

Figure 12.1.1 Sections of northern half of the Track that have potential to be upgraded to provide greater access for people with limited mobility

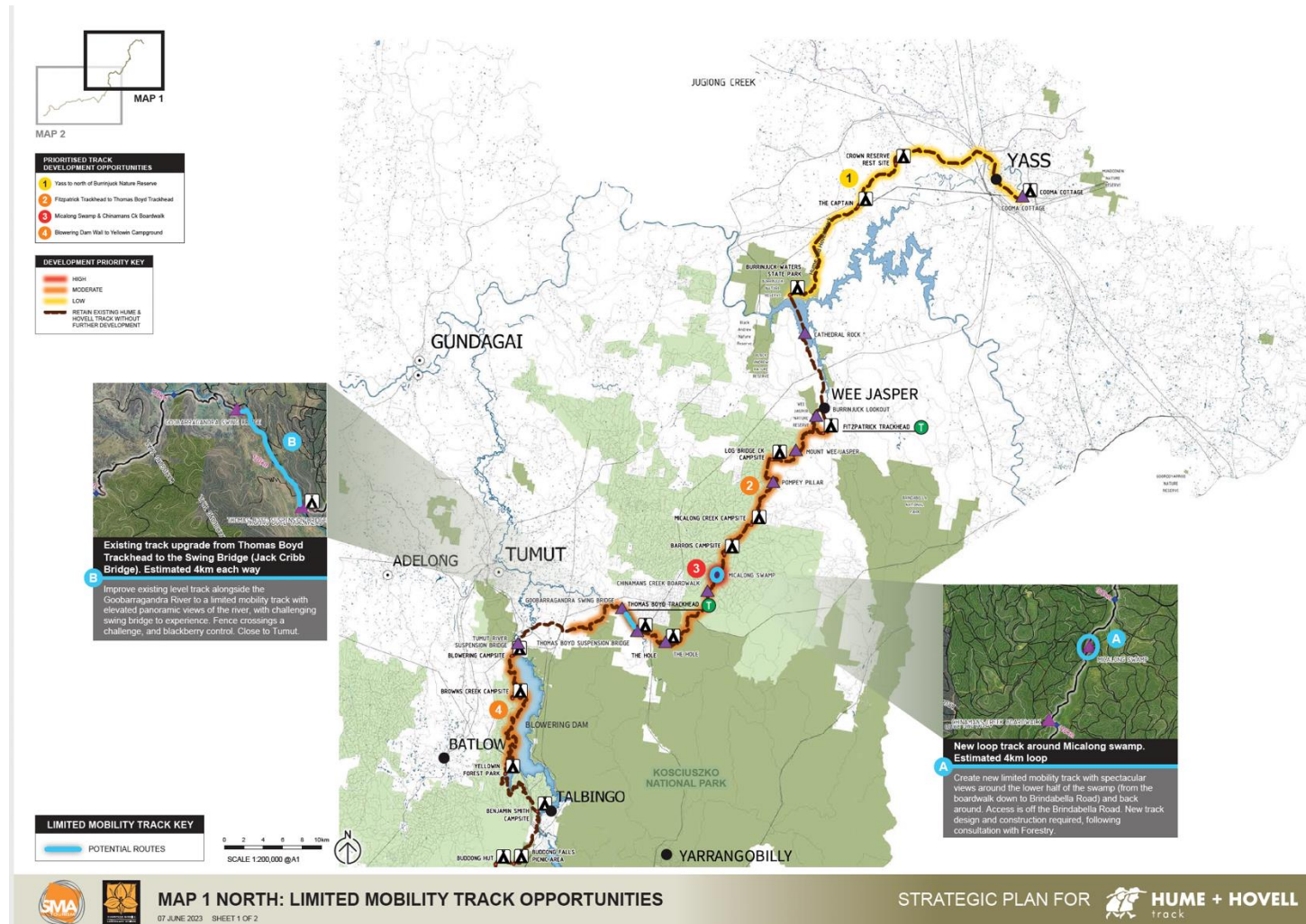
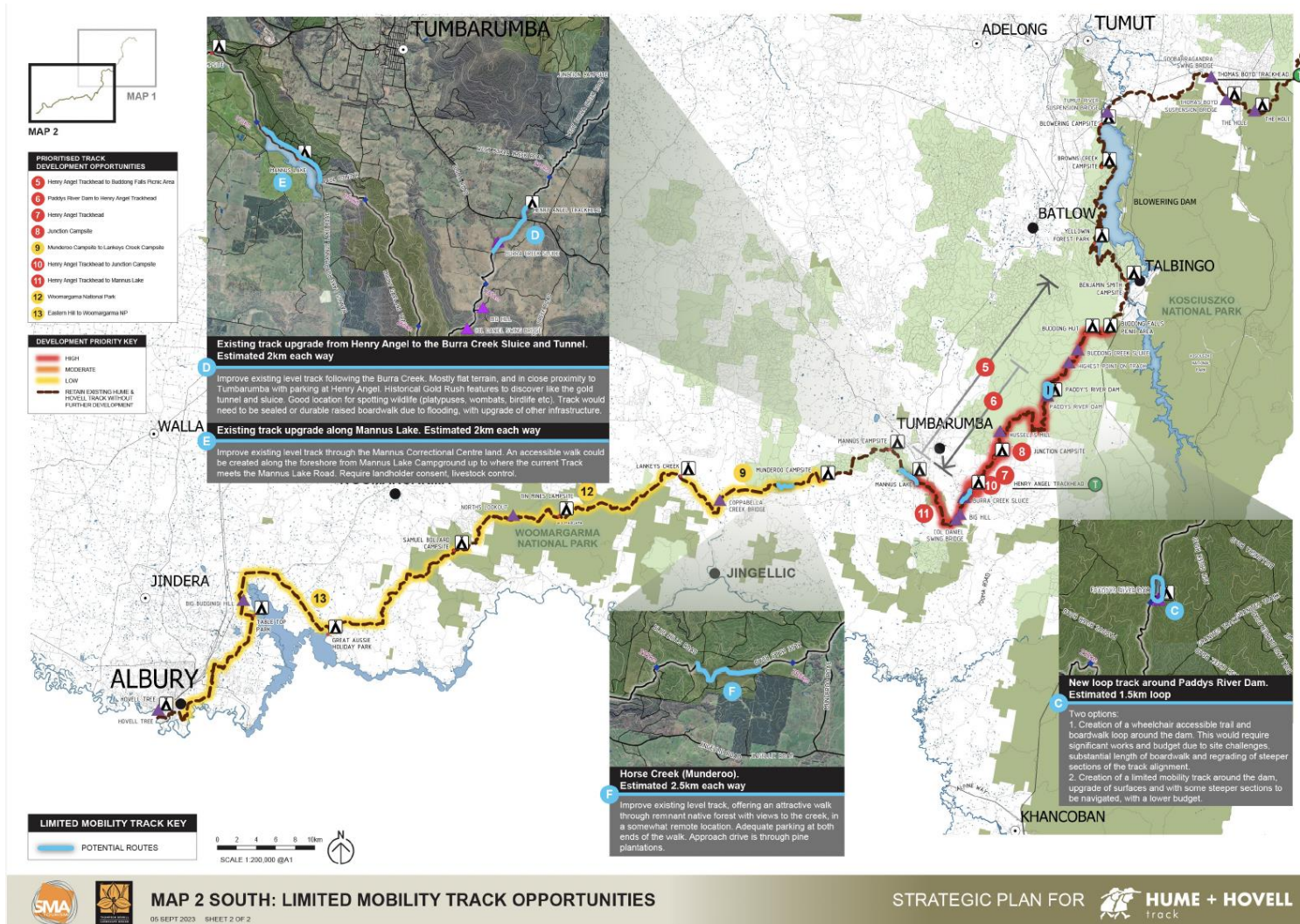


Figure 12.1.2 Sections of southern half of the Track that have potential to be upgraded to provide greater access for people with limited mobility



13. Track campsites and their potential for upgrading

This section determines which campsites or nearby sites might have potential for further accommodation development, such as:

1. Upgraded campsite facilities (eg. more campsites, toilets, camp kitchen shelter, tent platforms)
2. Simple overnight hut supporting existing campsite
3. Multiple huts and upgraded facilities.

The results of this high-level assessment are presented in **Figures 13.1.1 and 13.1.2, and Table 13.1.1**. From this data, the following interpretations can be made:

- there is Low opportunity to upgrade campsites on the northern quarter and southern quarter of the Track;
- most of the campsites with high or moderate potential for upgrade are located in the high appeal sections of the Track:
 - roughly from Wee Jasper south to Thomas Boyd Suspension Bridge near Tumut – two moderate (Barrois Campsite and Micalong Creek Campsite) and one high potential for further development (The Hole);
 - Buddong Creek (the start of Buddong Falls, near Talbingo) south to Mannus Lake Campground (near Tumbarumba) – one high (Benjamin Smith Campsite) and three moderate potential sites for further development (Paddys River Dam Campsite, Junction Campsite and Mannus Lake Campsite); and

- Munderoo Campsite, Tin Mines and Samuel Bollard – Moderate.

Most of the sites with moderate to high appeal for campsite upgrades were identified as having potential for camper hut development.

There has been a proposal to build ecotourism / glamping accommodation and a café overlooking Blowering Dam in the Snowy Valleys Destination Management Plan. The Plan recommends further investigation for an appropriate location.

Figure 13.1.1 Potential to upgrade campsites on the northern half of the Hume and Hovell Track, northern reach (source TBLD)

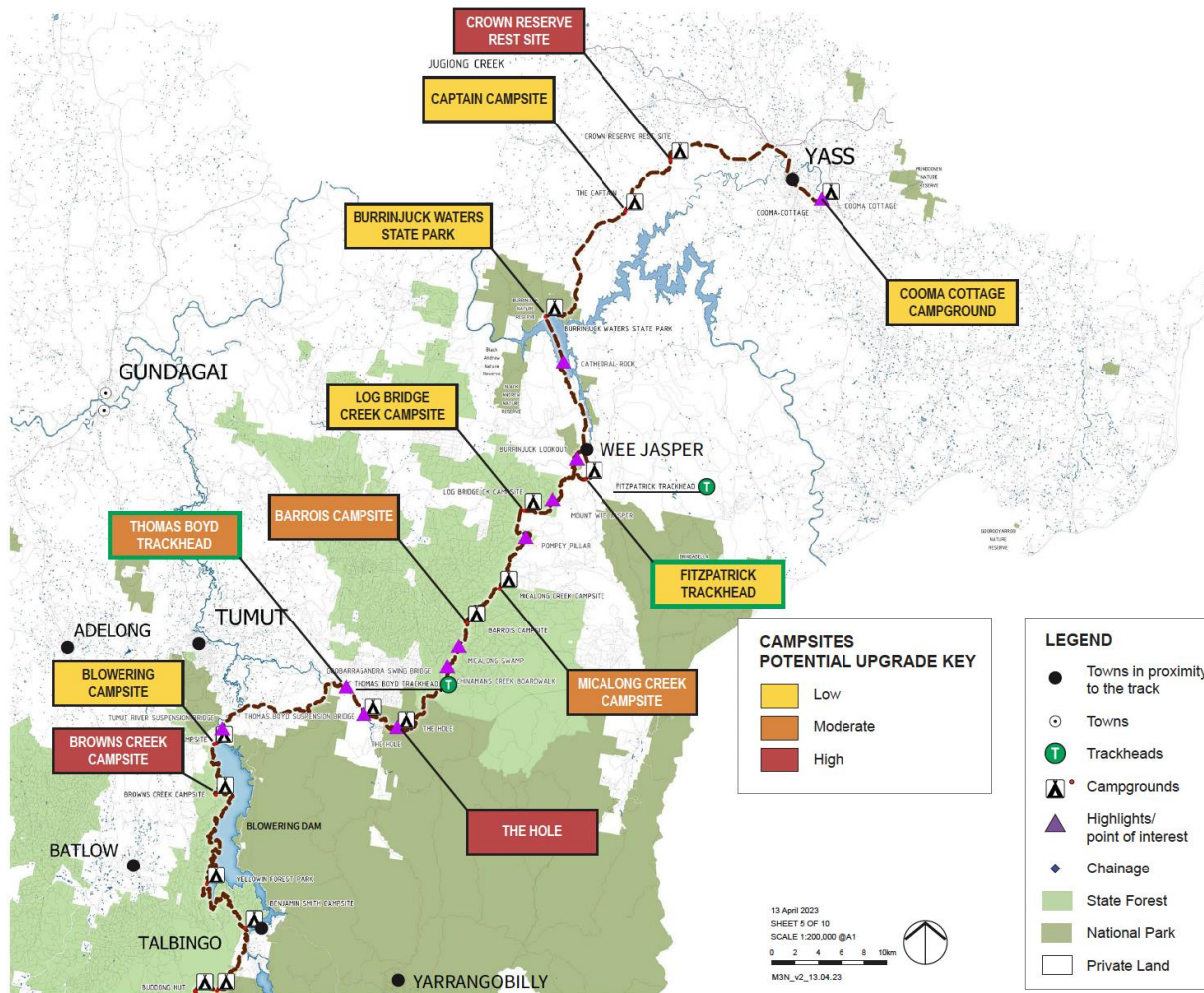


Figure 13.1.2 Potential to upgrade campsites on the southern half of the Hume and Hovell Track, southern reach (source TBLD)

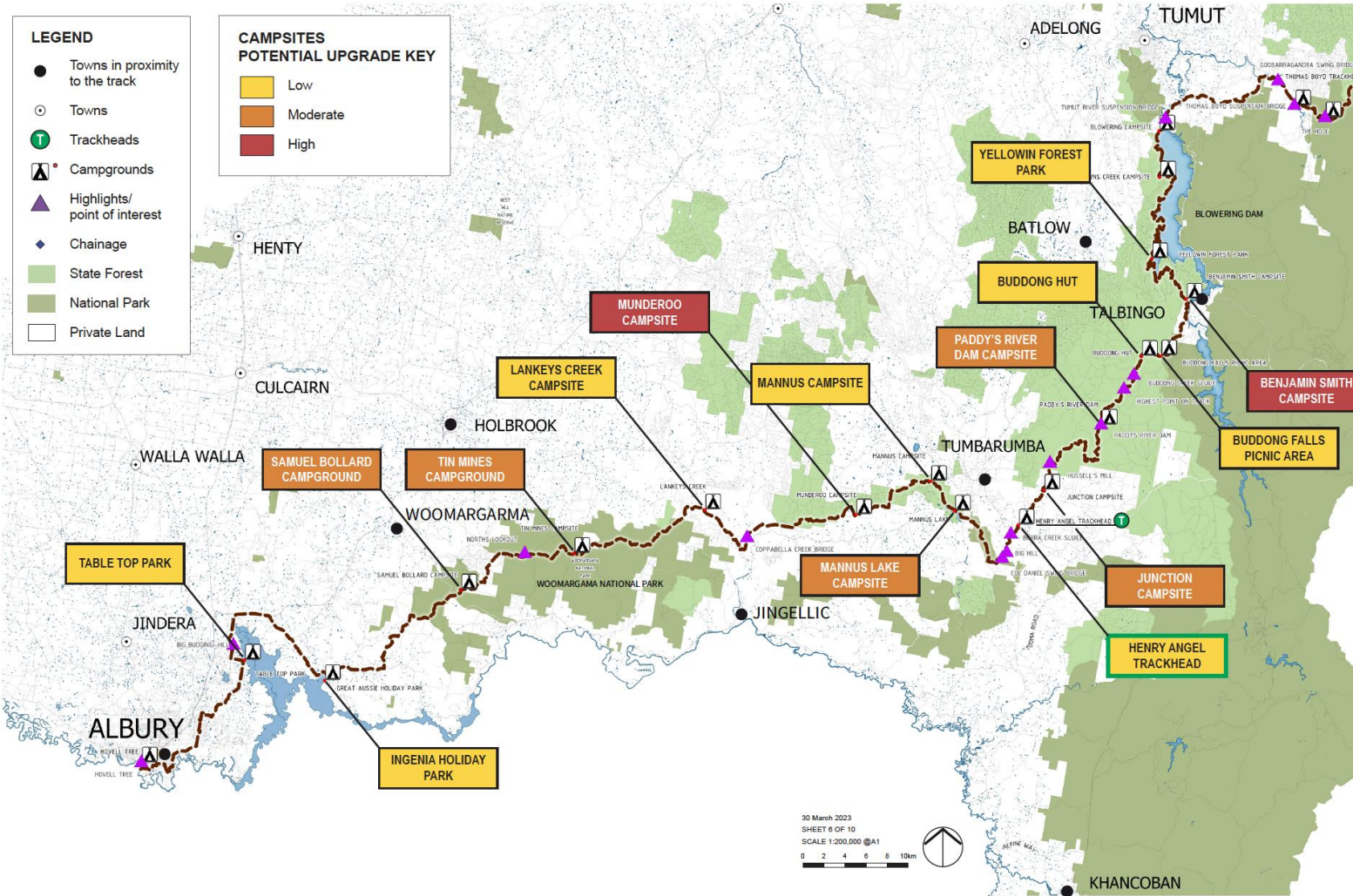


Table 13.1.1 Campsites along the Track (north to south as profiled by the Hume and Hovell Track website)

| Section | Campsites | Toilets | Water | Cost | Booking rd | Hard roofed accom potential | Description (from the Hume and Hovell Track website) |
|---------|------------------------------|------------|-------------|--|------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Crown Reserve Rest Site | No | No | Free | No | High Camping upgrade | Crown Reserve Rest Site has no facilities and therefore a very high potential for upgrade. There is a strong reason to upgrade because hikers starting from Yass have nowhere else to stop on their first day of walking (22km and the first campsite). There is no water here and this is really needed |
| 1 | Captain Campsite | Pit toilet | Tank water | Free | No | Low Low appeal | Captain Campsite takes its name from the lead bullock. When the expedition reached Corio Bay, Captain, having broken the trail through difficult country, had become so weak he was slaughtered to provide meat. Part of the bullock's hide was also turned into moccasins for the travellers. |
| 1 | Burrinjuck Waters State Park | Yes | Yes | \$40 for boat ride includes camping site | Yes | Low Already provided | A Reflections Holiday Park resides on the bank of Burrinjuck Dam. This is paid accommodation, but a campsite is included for free if taking the boat transfer to Cathedral Rock the following day at a charge of \$40. The boat is usually available on Mondays and Thursdays for track users, or by special arrangement for groups. Boat bookings are essential |
| 1 | Fitzpatrick Trackhead | Yes | Yes | \$18 per night for up to 6 | Yes | Low Low appeal close to Wee Jasper | There is plenty of camping space and it is popular with car campers and caravanners as it is located on Wee Jasper Road at Wee Jasper. This Trackhead is named after one of the convicts on the expedition: James Fitzpatrick. Fitzpatrick was transported from Ireland for an offence under the Insurrection Act. He was assigned to Hamilton Hume and was rewarded for his work after the expedition with a Ticket of Leave. He went on to accumulate property, including the mansion and property "Glenlee" at Campbelltown. He died there in 1882, aged 85. Bookings through Wee Jasper Reserves. |
| 2 | Log Bridge Creek Campsite | Pit toilet | Creek water | Free | No | Low Limited room, maybe a hut | Only walker hut on the existing Track – no site profile on Hume and Hovell Track website. Picnic tables and BBQ available |
| 2 | Micalong Creek Campsite | Pit toilet | Creek water | Free | No | Moderate, hut potential | Roofed shelter with picnic tables and BBQ available. No description on Hume and Hovell Track website |
| 2 | Barrois Campsite | Pit toilet | Creek water | Free | No | Moderate Not needed | Covered picnic tables and BBQ available. This campsite, on Micalong Creek, takes its name from one of the convicts, Claude Barrois. Barrois was a shoemaker from London, possibly with French ancestry as suggested by the name. He was unpopular with his fellow convicts and they took to calling the perambulator 'Claude's wheelbarrow'. Afterwards, he sank into oblivion and died at the age of 42. He, and the campsite named after him, was also referred to as Bossawa. |
| 2 | The Hole | No | No | Free | No | High | Located 6.5km from Thomas Boyd Trackhead, "The Hole" was settled in 1888 by Jim McNamara. The Track follows an old road cut by Jim McNamara that was used by bullocks |

| Section | Campsites | Toilets | Water | Cost | Booking rd | Hard roofed accom potential | Description (from the Hume and Hovell Track website) |
|---------|---------------------------|------------|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------|--|---|
| | | | | | | Demand on walk for hut to reduce walk time, on NP | pulling a slide to send produce out, or bring supplies in. There is only a small lean-to structure that remains at The Hole, and a planting of elm trees. |
| 2 | Thomas Boyd Trackhead | Yes | Tank or river | \$10 per person per night | Yes | Moderate But problematic, good sized site heavy car-based camping / caravans requires many huts | One of the 3 major Trackheads on the Hume and Hovell Track. It is located on the Goobarragandra River 24kms east of Tumut. There is plenty of camping space and it is popular with car campers and caravanners. This Trackhead is named after one of the convicts on the expedition, Thomas Boyd. Boyd was convicted of highway robbery and transported to NSW. His 'master' gave him to Hovell to be one of his servants and he proved to be very valuable. After the expedition, he opted to return to the Tumut district where he took up land. To supplement his income, he conveyed some of Tumut district's first settlers to their new homes. In time he became a wealthy and well-respected citizen but he fell on bad times, lost everything and ended up dying penniless. He is buried in Tumut Pioneer Cemetery. Camping fee collected by Goobarragandra Valley Trust managers. |
| 3 | Blowering Campsite | Pit toilet | Tank or dam water | Free | No | Low Limited space | Sheltered picnic area. The area below the Blowering Dam wall is called Brandy Marys Flat. It was one of the most favoured spots for picnics in Tumut. Currently there is no toilet here but a new one is being planned |
| 3 | Browns Creek Campsite | Pit toilet | Dam water | Free | No | High Campground upgrade | This Campground is currently closed due to damage caused by the 2019/2020 Bushfires. Sheltered picnic area and a fireplace. |
| 3 | Yellowin Forest Park | Pit toilet | Dam water | Free | No | Low Existing users | Picnic table, campsites. No description - water-frontage camping area, limited facilities. Attractive for fishing and boating |
| 3 | Ben Smith Campsite | Pit toilet | Dam water | Free | No | High Potential for hut | This Campground is currently closed due to damage caused by the 2019/2020 bushfires. Sheltered picnic area and a fireplace. Campsite to be rebuilt and track re-established |
| 3 | Buddong Falls Picnic Area | Pit toilet | Creek water | \$6 for up to 6 adults | Yes through NPWS | Low No space, day use only | This Campground is currently closed due to damage caused by the 2019/2020 Bushfires. Picnic table and a fireplace. Small picnic area at the top of the Falls. Right on the boundary between National Parks and Forestry. Car park area, picnic table and small campfire |
| 3 | Buddong Hut | No | Creek water | Free | No | Low Existing historic hut | No description – Existing older hut, no other facilities, small clearing Hut was built in the 1920's |

| Section | Campsites | Toilets | Water | Cost | Booking rd | Hard roofed accom potential | Description (from the Hume and Hovell Track website) |
|---------|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------|--|--|
| 3 | Paddy's River Dam Campsite | Pit toilet | Dam water | Free | No | Moderate Potential for hut | 2023 upgrade and new picnic shelters, new shelter at entrance, upgraded toilets and updated signage Located amongst alpine ash forests, a site of gold mining in the 1800's the dam was built as a source of water for those activities. |
| 3 | Junction Campsite | Pit toilet | Creek water | Free | No | Moderate Potential for hut | Junction of the West Burra Creek and East Burra Creek. Sheltered picnic area and a fireplace. |
| 3 | Henry Angel Trackhead | Yes | Tank water | Free | No | Low Area floods | Electric BBQ's, campsites and covered seating areas. The southernmost Trackhead on the Hume and Hovell Track, Henry Angel is only 8kms from Tumbarumba via the Tooma Road. It has plenty of camping space by the Burra Creek. Please note, this campsite has been impacted by flooding during current the La Nina rain events and there may be high water levels surrounding the campsite and soft grounds when camping, need to be prepared for wet conditions. |
| 4 | Mannus Lake Campsite | Pit toilets | Lake water | Free | No | Moderate Existing car campers | Covered seating, fish cleaning facilities. Mannus Lake is located in the Mannus State Forest, 16.5km south of Henry Angel Trackhead and only 10km by car from Tumbarumba on Mannus Lake Road. It offers waterfront camping with beautiful views over the lake and is popular with car campers, caravanners and day trippers to the Lake. |
| 4 | Mannus Campsite | Pit toilets | Creek water | Free | No | Low Limited space | Covered picnic table, BBQ. It is 5.5kms upstream of Mannus Lake, on Mannus Creek. It can be a quieter option for camping during summer when Mannus Lake Campsite is popular. |
| 4 | Munderoo Campsite | Pit toilets | Creek water | Free | No | High Potential for hut, another site between MC & Horse Creek | Covered picnic table, BBQ. Munderoo is an Aboriginal word meaning 'place of thunder'. The early settlers attempted to translate Aboriginal wording and this resulted in many variations of the spelling of these places. Munderoo is one such example where the two spellings are both used for the area. The State Forest is Mundaroo, but the access road is Munderoo Road, and the Hume and Hovell Track campground is spelt Munderoo. |
| 4 | Lankeys Creek Campsite | Pit toilet | Creek water | Free | No | Low Limited space | Shelter. No further description. |
| 4 | Tin Mines Campground | Pit toilets | Tank water | \$6 for up to 6 adults | Yes through NPWS | Moderate Tenure is NP which may constrain development | Large open area, sheltered picnic area, campsites and fireplaces. No description |

| Section | Campsites | Toilets | Water | Cost | Booking rd | Hard roofed accom potential | Description (from the Hume and Hovell Track website) |
|---------|---------------------------|------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------------|--|--|
| 5 | Samuel Bollard Campground | Pit toilet | Tank water | \$6 for up to 6 adults | Yes through NPWS | Moderate Tenure is NP which may constrain development, on NP, limited space | Sheltered picnic area and a fireplace. No description |
| 5 | Ingenia Holiday Park | Yes | Yes | \$39 per night for 2 adults | Yes | Low Already provided | The Ingenia Holiday Park is privately owned with a range of accommodation available and camping permitted. |
| 5 | Table Top Park | Yes | Yes | No | No | Low Day use only | Site camping is meant to be available for Hume and Hovell Track Walkers only, no camping for anyone else. Seek an alternative option to this location – potential to change campsite location to base of Budginigi Hill |

14. Competitor analysis

An analysis was undertaken of the top long-distance walks in Australia profiled by:

- Visit NSW best multi-day hikes in NSW (2023 website);
- Australian Traveller's 'Australia's 25 best walking holidays' (2018); and
- Great Walks of Australia (2023 website).

The three analyses sought to:

1. Reveal the competitive elements that make multi-day walks popular and attractive to supporting investment
2. Contrast these elements with the current and the potential of the Hume and Hovell Track to have them
3. Address what it might take for the Hume and Hovell Track to be a Great Australian Walk (as requested in several regional and local plans).

The review found that the Hume and Hovell Track is currently not on par with any of the listing's criteria. The main reasons for this conclusion were:

- there is no three to four day, high appeal section providing big views and a diversity of rugged and attractive landscapes that is being promoted and managed as a separate experience;
- there is no regular guided service;
- there is no eco-luxury hard roofed accommodation along the route; and
- there is no matching quality food and wine offer as part of the walk.

These elements need to be developed for a section of the Track in order for it to become one of the best walks in Australia. The remainder of this section presents the detailed competitor analysis.

14.1 Visit NSW best multi-day hikes in NSW

The top six walks

Destination NSW is the State's primary marketing of visitor experiences in the State via campaigns, expos, media and its Visit NSW website. The website has proposed six multi day hikes as the best in NSW at this point in time. These walks are:

1. Six Foot Track (Katoomba to Jenolan Caves)
2. Green Gully Track (Oxley Wild Rivers National Park)
3. Light to Light Walk (Boyds Tower to Green Cape Lighthouse)
4. Solitary Islands Coastal Walk
5. New England Wilderness Walk
6. Great North Walk (Sydney to Newcastle)

What are the success factors for a Great Walk of Australia?

The Situation Analysis Report for the Hume and Hovell Track (SMA Tourism 2023) presented how these walks as they are marketed by Destination NSW. This profile reveals the following characteristics about the walks:

- average distance walking per day is 10 – 15km;
- while they are all rated difficult, all but one are just three to four days in duration;
- they all offer big views;
- they all present a huge diversity of rugged and attractive landscapes; and
- their landscapes feature at least two of the following – coastlines, mountains, dense forests or waterfalls.

What is needed to become one of Visit NSW best multi-day hikes?

From this analysis, the Hume and Hovell Track is currently not on par with a Visit NSW best multi-day hike. The main reason for this conclusion, is that there is no three to four, high appeal section providing big views and a diversity of rugged and attractive landscapes that is being promoted and managed as a separate experience.

However, there is potential to create a three to four day section from Wee Jasper south to Thomas Boyd Suspension Bridge near Tumut – roughly four days walking. If developed with most of the attributes of Visit NSW best multi-day hikes in NSW, this walk could become one of Australia's best multi-day walks.

14.2 Australian Traveller's 'Australia's 25 best walking holidays'

Australian Traveller is a highly influential magazine and social media distributor whose mission is to connect people to incredible experiences through their understanding of outstanding and inspirational content. Founded in May 2005, the Australian Traveller magazine and Australian Traveller website quickly gained a reputation for inspired travel writing and photography and a dedication to independent advice. Australian Traveller became the best-selling travel magazine in the country in 12 months.

In 2012 Australian Traveller Media expanded with the launch of International Traveller magazine and International Traveller website, catering to the outbound Australian traveller. The brand delivered the same standard in travel writing and

photography, as well as a fierce dedication to sound and independent advice, and quickly become the market leader for outbound travel.

The top 25 walks

Australian Traveller has proposed its own collection of Australia's best walks as:

1. Overland Track, TAS
2. Bay of Fires, TAS
3. Maria Island, TAS
4. Port Davey Track, TAS
5. Three Capes Walk, TAS
6. Heysen Trail, SA
7. Yurrebilla Trail, SA
8. Kidman Trail, SA
9. Jatbula Trail, NT
10. Giles Track, NT
11. The Tabletop Track, NT
12. The Larapinta Trail, NT
13. Fraser Island Great Walk, QLD
14. The Thorsborne Trail, QLD
15. Scenic Rim Walk, QLD
16. The Six Foot track, NSW
17. Budawangs Circuit, NSW
18. Yuraygir Coastal Walk, NSW
19. Gibraltar – Washpool World Heritage Walk, NSW
20. Australian Alps Walking Track, NSW/VIC/ACT
21. Croajinolong Wilderness Walk, VIC
22. The Great Ocean Walk, VIC

- 23. The Wallaby Track, VIC
- 24. Cape to Cape, WA
- 25. Bibbulmun Track (WA)

What are the success factors to be one of the 25 best walking holidays?

The 25 walks marketed by Australian Traveller reveals the following characteristics:

- four are located within NSW;
- the majority are four or less days and the most common is four days (2@1 day, 3@3 days, 8@4 days, 3@5 days, 2@6 days, 7@>6 days);
- average distance walking per day is 8 – 10km;
- they all offer big views;
- they all present a huge diversity of rugged and attractive landscapes;
- their landscapes feature at least two of the following – coastlines, mountains, dense forests or waterfalls; and
- 18 of the 25 walks offer a guided service and several offer eco-luxury accommodations (hard roofed), food and wine.

What is needed to become one of Visit NSW best multi-day hikes?

From this analysis, the Hume and Hovell Track is currently not on par with a Visit NSW best multi-day hike. The two main reasons for this conclusion are that:

1. There is no three to four, high appeal section providing big views and a diversity of rugged and attractive landscapes that is being promoted and managed as a separate experience
2. There is no regular guided service for this shorter section
3. There is no eco-luxury hard roofed accommodation along the route

4. There is no matching quality food and wine offer as part of the walk

However, there is potential to create a four-day section and incentivise the private sector to deliver the required services – establishing a specialised section from Wee Jasper south to Thomas Boyd Suspension Bridge near Tumut – roughly four days walking. If developed with most of the attributes of Australian Traveller’s ‘Australia’s 25 best walking holidays’, this walk could become one of Australia’s best multi-day walks.

14.3 Great Walks of Australia

What is a Great Walk of Australia?

Great Walks of Australia is the brand and company name of a private company that promotes guided walks offered by a variety of operators.

Each walk operator takes the utmost care to select their guides, as well as maintaining the highest standards of training, safety and equipment. Walking groups are kept small, ensuring personal service. The guided experience emphasises the delivery of storytelling-based interpretation that delivers to customers a deeper understanding of the places visited. Operators offer warm and genuine hospitality accompanied by high quality meals and Australian wines. The accommodation is primarily exclusive, often remote and includes semi-permanent campsites, purpose built eco-lodges, private villas, safari style tents and historic homesteads. Each walk meets a strict set of selection criteria to become ecotourism certified and a member of Great Walks.

Where are the Great Walks of Australia?

The 12 Great Walks currently listed are:

1. Seven Peaks Walk, Lord Howe Island
2. Scenic Rim Trail, QLD
3. The Arkaba Walk, SA
4. Murray River Walk, SA
5. Bay of Fires Lodge Walk, TAS
6. Cradle Mountain Huts Walk, TAS
7. Freycinet Experience Walk, TAS
8. The Maria Island Walk, TAS
9. Three Capes Lodge Walk, TAS
10. Twelve Apostles Lodge Walk, VIC
11. Cape to Cape Walk, WA
12. Classic Larapinta Trek in Comfort, NT

What are the success factors for a Great Walk of Australia?

The 12 Great Walks marketed by Australian Great Walks reveals the following characteristics:

- none are located in NSW;
- the majority (9 of the 12) are four day experiences. The remainder are one five day and two six day walks;
- average distance walking per day is just 10km
- the walk comes as a mix of hub and spoke (4), end to end (4) and circuit (3);
- maximum group size is a modest 10 – 12 people;

- accommodation is predominantly ecolodge / eco-villa (8) or glamping (3);
- they all offer big views;
- they all present a huge diversity of rugged and attractive landscapes;
- their landscapes feature at least two of the following – coastlines, mountains, dense forests or waterfalls; and
- all of the walks offer a guided service, food and wine and eco-luxury accommodation (10 of the 12 hard roofed and the other two glamping).

Is the Hume and Hovell Track on par with a Great Walk of Australia?

From this analysis, the Hume and Hovell Track is currently not on par with a Great Walk of Australia. There are many reasons for this conclusion, but our four key constraints are:

1. There is no three to four day, high appeal section providing big views and a diversity of rugged and attractive landscapes that is being promoted and managed as a separate experience
2. There is no guided service
3. There is no hard roofed eco-luxury accommodation
4. There is no matching quality food and wine offer as part of the walk.

However, there is potential to create a four day section and incentivise the private sector to deliver the required services.

14.4 Explorer route walks

As the Hume and Hovell Track is basically an explorer walking route, it is useful to determine how many other explorer walking routes are available to the market.

Only six examples were found across the World:

1. The Aussie Camino Pilgrimage
2. The Camino de Santiago
3. Camino Ingles (The English Way)
4. Kumano Kodo Nakahechi, Japan
5. Saint Olav's Way Norway
6. Lycian Way Turkey

What are the success factors for an Explorer Route?

The six explorer walking routes have the following characteristics:

- they are much longer than standard multi-day walks – typically seven days or 30 – 35 days, and they are located within a track network that provides lots of diversion routes that make them longer or shorter;
- they are generally moderate to challenging grade, or challenging, and finishing them is therefore perceived as a great achievement; and
- they often have a historic and a spiritual dimension to them, where the walker undergoes reflection and even revelation along the way; and
- they are typically located in mountainous areas with dramatic views and diverse landscapes; and
- they often inter-connect with villages and towns that allows for overnight stays, renewal and supply replenishment.

Is the Hume and Hovell Track on par with an Explorer Route?

From this analysis, the Hume and Hovell Track is currently not on par with an Explorer Route. There are several reasons for this conclusion:

1. There is insufficient interpretation designed to help a walker reflect and achieve a revelation along the route – existing interpretation is limited and not at all personal in its design and impact
2. The Track lacks adequate connections with villages and towns that allows for overnight stays, renewal and replenishment.