

Vision, Guiding Principles, Themes & Possible Responses

Draft for Discussion & Feedback Vision 2030

The Preferred Future for the Cataract Gorge Reserve and Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area
(NOTE: The Vision is written in the present tense as if it is 2030.)

Vision

The Greater Cataract Gorge: An Aboriginal Place | Illuminating our stories, both ancient and new | Connecting YOU to OUR backyard

The Greater Cataract Gorge: An Aboriginal Place

There is a human history here that is over 40,000 years old. Today the Aboriginal Community bring to this place knowledge and understanding of how it should be managed nurtured and enjoyed. The Greater Cataract Gorge, 632 hectares in the middle of our city, is an opportunity to discover a sense of place, significant to us all

Illuminating our stories, both ancient and new

From this place we can interpret our past and discover a deeper meaning of who we are. The primeval stories of the powerful forces that shaped the landscape; the ancient stories of the original owners and their engagement with the land and the water. The newer, more recent stories of other peoples who shaped, and were in turn shaped, by this place that became their home. Today's stories describe how the Gorge is part of everyday life, influencing how we live and how we feel about living here. They are also of the experiences of those who visit our City and Island. We have all heard...'You have all this so close to your City – Remarkable!

Connecting YOU to OUR backyard

The Greater Cataract Gorge is our 'backyard' and wherever you are from, you're welcome to come and play. You can walk, hike, skate, swim, climb, glide or paddle at whatever level of adventure and excitement you want. You can celebrate with friends, learn our stories, or just sit and 'Be'. In the Greater Cataract Gorge you create your own memories and stories each and every time you connect to this special place.

Principles – To Guide Choice and Behavior

In the future we will:

Be Respectful

To the landscape and its significance by doing today, with both yesterday and tomorrow in mind. We will do *'as much as is necessary and as little as possible'* to secure the natural and cultural values of this place.

Collaborate and Work Together

To realise our opportunities and tackle our challenges

Be Open, have Confidence and Back Ourselves

It's up to us, as a community, to make sure we strengthen our connection to this place and make the most of our future.

The Themes and Responses

To achieve the vision responses will be developed within the following eight themes

1. Governance
2. Environmental Management
3. Access and Linkages
4. Maintenance and amenities
5. Interpretation, Information and Promotion
6. Events
7. Accommodation
8. Other developments

Each theme is described below with a number of suggested responses.

1. Theme Governance

Key issues

Aboriginal Reconciliation: Prior to European arrival, Tasmanian Aboriginal people lived in the area. There have been several surveys of Aboriginal heritage in the TNRA and at least

eleven artifact sites and extensive scatters recorded on the Tasmanian Aboriginal Site Index. This is a story, which has not yet been told. Without it we are unable to fully understand and connect to the past and therefore cannot move into the future with confidence.

Management: Launceston City Council manages the Gorge and the Tasmanian Government through the Department of Parks and Wildlife manages the TNRA. The TNRA falls within three local government areas, each with its own planning zones. Other organisations with interests in the area are TasWater, Hydro, MAST and Tas Fire Service.

Governance is closely linked to management and maintenance of the combined area. The current situation works against whole of area planning. Models need to be explored that will facilitate aboriginal reconciliation, efficient use of resources, cooperation between all the stakeholder organisations and a whole of area view.

Possible responses for consideration

- Involve the Aboriginal Community in the management of the Gorge and TNRA
- Create a Single Authority and Aboriginal 'ownership'
- One name for the combined area
- Joint Aboriginal and English names for the entire area
- Volunteers to work across both areas
- Reference Group to meet annually, so a sound understanding of issues and needs is maintained
- Key stakeholders to continue to work together around projects

2. Theme Environmental management

Key Issues

Water quality and flow: The major environmental issue in both the Gorge and TNRA is poor water quality caused by pollutants including bacteria, nutrients and sediments. Poor water quality, particularly from bacteria, can limit the use of the waterway for recreational activities. In summer, it is not uncommon to close the river for recreation due to public health risks. Visitation declines when water quality is poor. This is detrimental to businesses as well as the City's reputation. Improving water quality is a significant issue that will require cooperation and collaboration from all levels of government, their agencies and the area's neighbours. Natural Resource Management

North and TasWater are presently developing plans, which will help guide and inform the response to improving water quality. Also many people would like to see increased water flow down the Gorge.

Fire management: Living close to such a large expanse of bush land carries the risk of fire. Currently, consultants are preparing a Bush Fire Management Strategy for all Council owned or managed bush land areas. In the next financial year the Cataract Gorge Fire Management Plan will be revised to address a range of issues including climate change impacts, bushfire risks, vegetation management and risk reduction strategies.

Feral Animals: Feral cats, domestic ducks and other feral animals are occasionally sighted in the Reserve. These are considered a hazard to the natural wildlife and natural values of the area. Current interventions are aimed at removing these animals where possible.

Control of Weeds: The 'Green Army' has commenced working on a weed management program for the Gorge.

Effects of Climate Change: The potential effects of climate change on the environment need monitoring.

Dumped rubbish: Rubbish is presently being dumped in the area and this needs to stop.

Possible responses for consideration

- Improve river water quality
- Achieve increased water flow through the First Basin.
- Raise awareness of Fire Management plans and what people can do to minimise risk
- Support the 'Green Army' to eradicate weeds in the area
- Continue to control the removal of feral animals
- Stop people dumping rubbish in the area

- Monitor the effects of climate change

3. Theme Access and Linkages

Key issues

Access in to and around the area, as well as linkages to other precincts and developments around Kings Bridge is an issue. Presently the main 'car and visitor' entrance to the Gorge is via the First Basin Car Park. There is limited car parking on the Cliff Grounds side. The main pedestrian access to the Gorge is via Kings Bridge, which has to accommodate cars and bikes as well, all within a very narrow space. Vehicle access to the TNRA is via Reatta Road, which meanders through suburban streets and without local knowledge, finding your way is challenging. Walking tracks provide the interface between the Gorge and TNRA. Again, a fair amount of local knowledge is needed to easily access the area. There are also calls for bike tracks to link the City and TNRA and also the two sides of the Gorge. Urban development round the area is influencing access and linkages. The growth in housing on the area's West Tamar side has seen an increase in vehicle traffic as residents travel into the City via the narrow Kings Bridge.

A whole of city approach is needed to link precincts. People also need safe access points into the combined area. People with disabilities need fully accessible walking tracks and strategies are needed to reduce reliance on motor vehicles to access the area.

Possible responses for consideration

- Implement a way finding system for cars, cyclists and pedestrians
- Make Kings Bridge the major pedestrian access point to the area.
- Provide a "hop on" "hop off" bus for visitors
- Build a stairway track for mountain bike riders to connect the City, Gorge and TNRA.
- Explore potential 'across' linkages for bike riders
- Build a boardwalk from the Swinging Bridge to the First Basin to make the loop around the First Basin fully accessible
- Establish a 'family friendly' cycling route that links the two areas

4. Theme Maintenance and amenities

Key Issues

This issue is linked to governance and a whole of area view. Maintaining the landscape and associated infrastructure makes and maintains the 'sense of place' for both areas. Some infrastructure is wearing out and looking 'tired'. There is budget pressure on maintenance and a need to generate income that can be used to help maintain standards. Built infrastructure is more extensive in the Gorge than in the TNRA. The Launceston City Council presently spends around \$900,000 per annum on maintaining its areas of responsibility. Parks and Wildlife allocate around \$19,000 per annum for the TNRA. New infrastructure is also needed to meet changing recreational trends and uses e.g. mountain bike tracks.

Additional amenities could include, drinking fountains, shade, toilets, power outlets, way finding approaches and quiet spaces for reflection.

Possible responses for consideration

- Fund a maintenance program for the First Basin and Cliff Grounds that strengthens its role as a significant visitor experience for the State
- Establish water stations throughout the area
- Provide shade to the pool area during summer
- Develop an amenities program for the TNRA (power, toilets etc.) that will support future activities and events.
- Design and build "thinking and reflective" places throughout the area

5. Theme Interpretation, Information and Promotion

Key Issues

Prior to European arrival, the Tasmanian Aboriginal people lived in the area. This essential story is yet to be told. Without it, we are only telling a part of the entire story of the place. The establishment of an Aboriginal Cultural Centre might be one way of telling the entire story. This however, is a decision for the Aboriginal Community. Visitors seek information on the area so they know how to get to it and access all that it offers. They

also want to make sense of the place through interpretation. Signage has been used in the past but it is often vandalised and replacement is expensive. The use of digital mediums to access information and interpretation is now commonplace. Technology can be used to create self-guided walks for visitors. However, guided walks provide a richer connection to the place and all its stories. This should be encouraged and be delivered by the Aboriginal Community if possible along with other guiding professionals. Creating a nighttime interpretation event in the Gorge would not only add to a deeper connection to place and all its stories but also provide visitors with a reason to stay overnight in the City.

Possible responses for consideration

- Tell all the stories of the area using either built interpretation or technology.
- Provide technology based self guided interpretation and information
- Establish guided experiences for the area
- Create a major night time, light interpretation experience that tells all the stories of the area

6. Theme Events

Key Issues

Council records show that 185 events were held or are booked for the Gorge between 2011 and 2015. Most of the events are local and family orientated. It is a popular wedding venue with 104 weddings taking place over a five-year period. Weddings make up 56% of all events in the Gorge and the most popular precinct is the Fairy Dell. Other events in order of popularity or demand are BBQs and parties; filming; school activities; busking; fitness and outdoor events e.g. the Cataract Challenge and the 2015 Oceania Orienteering Championships and World Cup; music e.g. the Basin Concert. A report on the capability of the Gorge to host major outdoor public events has raised concerns over the suitability and safety of holding events with attendance over 2500. Facilities at the TNRA exist for a potential range of outdoor recreational events e.g. equestrian, archery, orienteering, mountain biking and aquatic based activities. Events need to be compatible to the area and supported by infrastructure like toilets and power. Events across the area also need to be scheduled around an annual calendar.

Possible responses for consideration

- Develop, maintain and publish an annual calendar of events
- Use the First Basin and Cliff Grounds only for smaller local and family oriented events.
- Gain access to water for major events like kayaking, white water rafting, swimming and fishing and ensure these events bring a return to the city.

7. Theme Accommodation

Key Issues

There have been calls to establish accommodation close to the area to support the specific visitor interest groups presently being targeted e.g. the mountain biking fraternity, soft adventure seekers, older couples seeking a longer stay and touring based experiences and younger couples on a shorter stay who skew towards cultural interests. Being able to accommodate camping and RVs in the TNRA has also been raised.

Possible responses for consideration

- Establish a high quality eco development not in the area but on private land with views.
- Develop camping and RV sites in the TNRA

8. Theme Other Developments

Key Issues

A number of development ideas have been raised and include:

A Gondola Chairlift into the Cataract Gorge - The idea of a gondola chairlift has been publicised in conjunction with the JAC Group's redevelopment of the Penny Royal Complex. The concept is for enclosed gondolas to run from a car park and entry point established on the Zig Zag Reserve above the Penny Royal cliff face that travels over the hill into the First Basin, finishing near the inclinator. The developers are very much aware that the establishment of such a visitor feature will only be achieved with community and government support.

A Sculpture Park - Spaces within the Gorge and Cliff Grounds lend themselves to the display of artworks, which also add to the interpretation of the place. The idea of a specific sculpture park has been raised. Similarly art could be used in the creation of other spaces, particularly for thinking and reflection.

Zip Line - A zip line consists of a pulley suspended on a cable, usually made of stainless steel and mounted on an incline. It's designed to enable a user, propelled by gravity, to travel from the top to the bottom of the inclined cable by holding on to the pulley. A zip line delivers an experience of adventure and entertainment.

Possible responses for consideration

- Facilitate a gondola chairlift experience running from the Zig Zag Reserve over the hill and into the First Basin.
- Build a sculpture park in the Fairy Dell and Maple Steps area
- Incorporate art and design into any development of thinking and reflective spaces
- Advertise for expressions of interest in establishing and operating a Zip Line experience

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