

# *Mount Roland: Developing a Destination*

A report prepared by  
The Institute for Regional Development  
Cradle Coast campus, University of Tasmania  
May 2011  
for the  
Mount Roland Steering Committee



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The purpose of this study is to develop a tourism strategy for the Mount Roland precinct in the Kentish municipality of North West Tasmania, identifying experience strengths and gaps, as well as tourism proposals consistent with the area's natural and cultural values. The goal is to establish priorities and a process for implementation, and to develop a tourism vision that increases visitation to the Kentish municipality.

### **The vision statement**

*To place Mount Roland as the centre of a “must-see” Kentish tourism experience and to position Kentish as “Tasmania’s Wilderness Playground” offering a diversity of nature-based and cultural experiences.*

To inform the tourism strategy, an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in the existing Kentish tourism industry was conducted.

### **Key findings from the SWOT Analysis**

- The current Kentish tourism industry exists on strongly branded niche attractions but lacks diversity
- Kentish is endowed with a variety of wilderness and topographies, centred around Mount Roland, that has the potential to provide different tourism experiences
- The Kentish municipality is well located for tourism access being near large population centres, close to key entry points to Tasmania and on the main route to Cradle Mountain
- The loop road system in Kentish creates opportunities for day trips
- Kentish is a natural and authentic point for interpretation of highland and pioneering history and culture.

Community and tourism stakeholder consultation was undertaken to establish what was acceptable to, and desired by, the Kentish community, tourism industry and other stakeholders in relation to the Mount Roland precinct.

**Key findings from the consultation process**

- No land use and development management plan exists for Mount Roland
- Mount Roland is recognised for its natural, authentic, wilderness and spiritual values
- A key issue limiting visitation to Mount Roland is the restricted accessibility to its summit. Alternative means of access need to be considered
- While the Kentish community strongly supports tourism, community expectations regarding development on Mount Roland often conflict with potential tourism opportunities
- While Mount Roland can add substantially to the Kentish visitor experience, it needs to retain and enhance its distinctiveness as a destination of natural beauty. This will pay dividends to the community in the long term by attracting and retaining high quality investors, residents and a diverse range of visitors.

A set of selection criteria was established against which potential tourism proposals were assessed. Eight tourism proposals that met those criteria are presented for consideration.

**Primary themes of the selection criteria**

- Tourism proposals must be in harmony with the Kentish community's culture and expectations
- They must benefit the Kentish economy including tourism and other industries
- They must have minimal environmental impact
- They must attract local, intrastate, interstate and international visitors to ensure a diverse and resilient market base for the Kentish tourism industry.

## **Recommendations**

There are three priority tourism proposals being recommended in this report. When considering these proposals, it is acknowledged that there is a complex framework of stakeholders often representing different regulatory or compliance requirements. The primary recommendation, therefore, is to create a comprehensive **management plan** for the Mount Roland precinct.

The plan should stipulate the statutory requirements and guidelines for use and development that reflect the expectations and values of the majority of Kentish residents, community stakeholders and land managers.

### **Three priority tourism proposals**

Three proposals have been nominated as priorities because they have the potential to deliver the greatest benefit to the Kentish tourism industry and broader economy with minimal financial outlay from project Steering Committee organisations. They were also the three favoured options identified in the community consultation and met the greatest number of selection criteria. They are:

1. An adventure tourism hub
2. A must-see destination for recreational campers, including fully self-contained campers
3. A world-class mountain biking and family cycling park.

### **Other key tourism proposals**

From the community consultation, a further five tourism proposals have been identified to also likely deliver considerable benefit to the Kentish municipality.

- Walking tracks:
  - A new walking track to the summit of Mount Roland
  - An interpretative walk on the Mount Roland Face Track to a look-out at the tree line
  - An iconic multi-purpose route from Mount Roland to Cradle Mountain

- Minor upgrade and promotion of the Badgers Track to Kimberley's look-out
- Development of a guided walks industry
- Themed promotion of established and proposed bushwalking experiences.
- A series of scenic look-outs and look-ats packaged as day trips
- A centre for historical, cultural and natural interpretation
- Aboriginal culture tours
- A cable car on or near Mount Roland. The cable car proposal met relatively fewer of the selection criteria however it has a significant level of community support and its high profile warrants consideration. This proposal can only be considered once a comprehensive management plan for the Mount Roland precinct is developed. This plan must also address community expectations.

#### **Marketing recommendations**

- **Brand Kentish as “Tasmania’s Wilderness Playground”**

This is a theme that is inviting to most visitor demographics as it suggests fun and adventure while capturing a broad definition of “play”; from high-adrenaline activities to quiet enjoyment of the scenery.

- **Improve marketing of the municipality**

It has been identified that many visitors do not know what experiences are available in Kentish and as a result do not plan for multiple night stays.

A three-year implementation plan and 10-year vision have been established to chart the roll-out of the report’s tourism proposals and marketing recommendations. Refer to Table 1.

## **INTRODUCTION**

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The Institute for Regional Development team placed at the heart of its approach to this study a principle that any proposal would not conflict with the values ascribed to Mount Roland by the Kentish community. To create diversity in the Kentish tourism experience would be to strengthen the industry's ability to attract more visitors from more visitor segments. This directly and indirectly creates economic benefits across the broader community. Given community expectations surrounding development on the mountain are in conflict with some potential tourism proposals, the central principle for recommendations in this report is to respect and maintain Mount Roland's natural integrity.

This report provides an introduction to the Kentish municipality and its economic base, followed by summaries of the community and stakeholder consultations, the tourism proposal evaluation process and a short-list of eight proposals. Key recommendations are presented for implementing a 10-year vision for tourism development in Kentish.

The following process was undertaken to produce this report:

1. Desktop and in-field research including a SWOT Analysis, Market Analysis and Asset Map
2. Community and stakeholder consultation
3. Compiling a long-list of tourism proposals (based on an assessment of 1 and 2 above)
4. Identifying selection criteria (based on the Project Brief and 1 and 2 above)
5. Assessing the tourism proposals against the selection criteria
6. Creating a short-list of eight tourism proposals, researching and ranking them based on their selection criteria performance.

The appendices provide additional detail on the study findings and tourism proposals.

## **KENTISH OVERVIEW**

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Kentish is a rural, inland municipality of 6,056 people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010) in North West Tasmania, bordering the Tasmanian highlands and Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park. The study area is shown in Figure 1. It is 30 minutes drive to the coast, with easy access to the mainland passenger ferry service at Devonport and three regional airports at Devonport, Burnie-Wynyard and Launceston. It has a low population density of 5 people per square kilometre (Kentish.tas.gov.au, 2011). A significant proportion of the population works outside of the municipality, primarily in Devonport, Latrobe and the West Coast mines.

The main industries are agriculture and forestry, manufacturing (primarily cement production), accommodation and food, retail and health care (Kentish Council Economic Development Plan 2010-2015). While manufacturing and agricultural industries are declining in economic income and employment, higher business density, greater employment and sector growth are notable in accommodation, food and retail, which are related to tourism.

The Kentish tourism industry is based on specific cultural attractions such as the murals of Sheffield, Redwater Creek Steam and Heritage Society Railway and Tasmazia; events such as Muralfest, Steamfest, Taste of the North West, the Spring Flower and Daffodil Show; sightseeing related to natural attractions such as Mount Roland, Lake Barrington and as a gateway to Cradle Mountain; sporting events such as the Triple Top Mountain Run, rowing at Lake Barrington and as a host of key stages of Targa Tasmania and annual cycling events. Relevant statistics derived from Tourism Tasmania research are presented in Appendix B.

North West Tasmania's tourism industry is experiencing minimal growth, with visitor numbers down by 0.3% in 2010, compared to the previous 12 months (Mount Roland: Developing a Destination project brief, 2010). There is, however, inconsistency among the results as Sheffield visitor nights rose 30.2% in the period to 38800 nights, while visitor nights at nearby Cradle Mountain fell 3.9% in the period. The Roy Morgan Holiday Tracking Survey for the same period showed intention to visit the North West from the primary interstate geographic markets fell 24% (Mount

Roland: Developing a Destination project brief, 2010). This study seeks ways to enhance and diversify the tourism experiences in the Mount Roland precinct to attract more visitors and create viable economic opportunities within Kentish. A major part of this study was to understand the community's perspective on potential tourism proposals and an extensive consultation process was conducted.

## Mount Roland Precinct Study

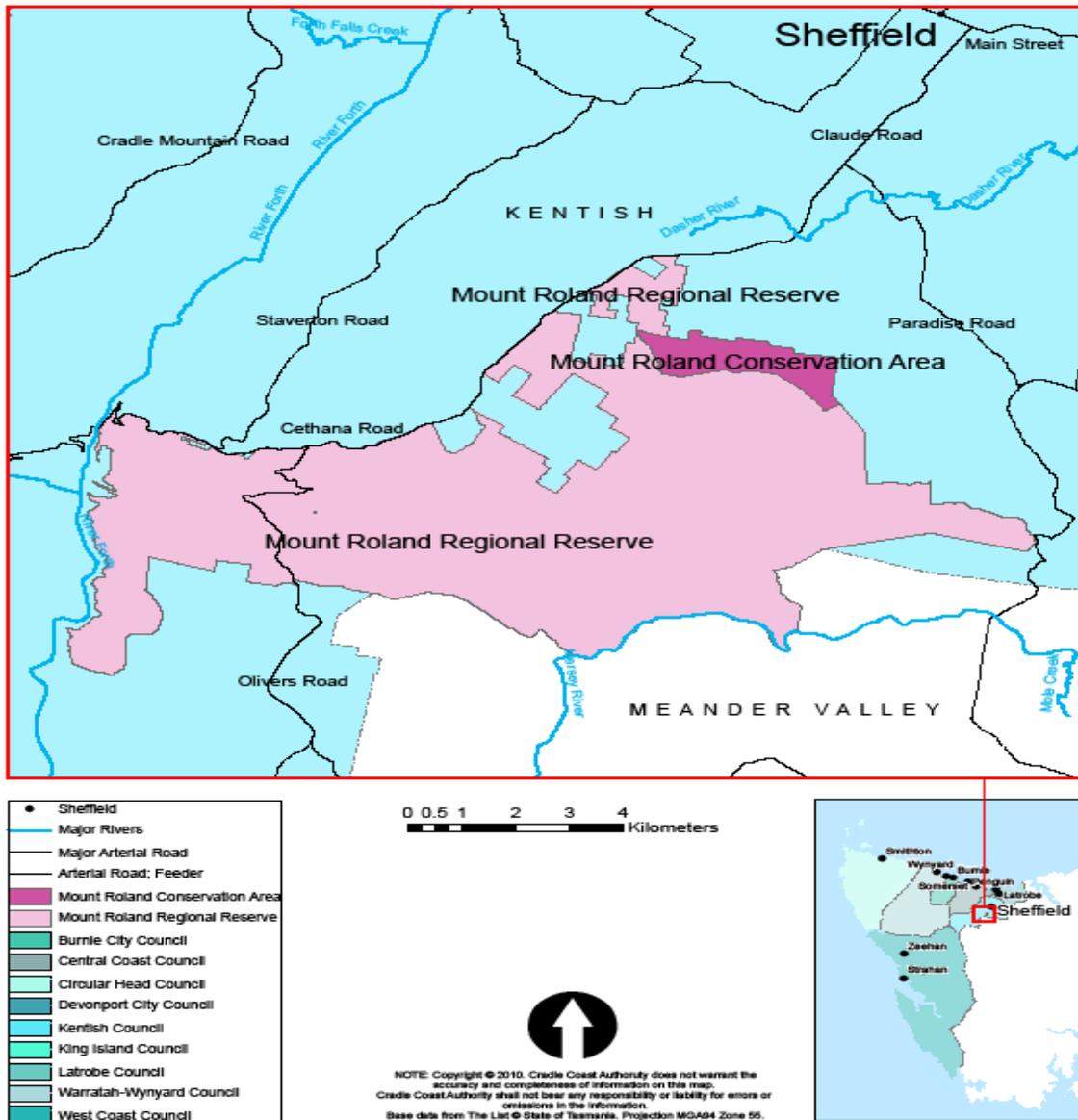


Figure 1: Mount Roland precinct  
Source: Cradle Coast Natural Resource Management, 2010.

## COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

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An extensive community consultation process was conducted as part of this study. This included a community survey distributed via the *Kentish Chronicle* on 1 March 2011, with 155 responses; 42 interviews – face-to-face, phone and email – with tourism operators; and 20 interviews with other stakeholders such as special interest community and sporting organisations, local governance and the Aboriginal community. On 12 April 2011, a public forum was held at the Sheffield Town Hall, attended by more than 100 participants.

The consultation process was designed to:

- Gather a cross-section of community input including Kentish residents, tourism stakeholders, governance stakeholders, Aboriginal community members, special interest and sporting groups
- Determine the values that Kentish residents and stakeholders ascribe to Mount Roland and its environs
- Understand what forms of development are acceptable to the community
- Identify existing experiences and facilities plus wishes, ideas and plans for the Mount Roland precinct
- Identify untapped tourism assets
- Understand the infrastructure and regulatory limitations and management frameworks that apply to the Mount Roland precinct
- Understand the current economic and policy climate and how that may influence any tourism proposals
- Build community ownership of the vision in the final report
- Test the report's draft recommendations
- Identify potential funding sources for future tourism proposals.

### **Outcomes of community and stakeholder consultation**

The Kentish Community Survey and the public forum revealed that the community is polarised in its support for significant infrastructure development in the precinct. Supporters of infrastructure-centric proposals (such as a summit road and cable car)

cite perceived benefits for accessibility and for the local economy. Opponents cite the perceived appeal of untouched natural experiences, the mountain's 'iconic' status and question the developments' ability to increase visitor duration and therefore deliver economic benefit.

The Community Survey showed that the majority of respondents were opposed to infrastructure on the mountain, but supportive of wilderness-based experiences. Support was greater for activities based around the mountain rather than on it.

Tourism operators, by contrast, were more united in their opinion. They showed a clear preference for both an increase in the number and diversity of activities available in the Mount Roland precinct, primarily a cable car experience and short walks.

## **EVALUATION PROCESS**

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The tourism market was analysed to determine visitor and non-visitor profiles and motivations. An Asset Map and SWOT Analysis (see Appendices D and E) were developed to evaluate strengths and weaknesses or gaps in the current market, and the potential opportunities and threats.

From this understanding of the existing and potential tourism market and tourism assets, a set of selection criteria was established. Tourism ideas and proposals sourced from the community, industry and stakeholders were assessed against the criteria.

### **The selection criteria**

Tourism proposals must:

1. Reflect community expectations
2. Not impose significant costs on the project Steering Committee organisations
3. Have minimal environmental impact
4. Benefit the Kentish economy including tourism and other industries
5. Contribute to goals of attracting more local, intrastate, interstate and international visitors
6. Fill a gap or build on a strength of the existing Kentish tourism experience
7. Add to the diversity of the Kentish tourism experience
8. Meet or have a good chance of meeting regulatory and statutory guidelines
9. Be feasible in terms of scale, economics and (given resource and financial constraints) likely to attract required investment
10. Contribute to tourism and recreational strategies and other strategic plans of stakeholders including the Kentish Council, Sport and Recreation Tasmania, Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, Tourism Tasmania and Cradle Coast Authority.

## OUTCOMES OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

All tourism proposals were assessed against the selection criteria and for their compliance to the stated vision, goals and guiding principles. The result was a short-list of eight tourism proposals that met all, or all but one, of the criteria and which were developed into scenarios with recommendations for action.

The eight tourism proposals in priority order:

1. Adventure tourism hub
2. Recreational camping
3. World-class mountain biking and family cycling park
4. Walking tracks
5. Look-outs and look-ats
6. Aboriginal culture tours
7. History, culture and nature interpretation centre
8. Cable car\*

The priority order was determined according to:

- Potential return on investment
- Potential benefit to the Kentish tourism brand, particularly with reference to the proposed positioning of “Tasmania’s Wilderness Playground”
- Potential impact on the Kentish tourism industry.

\*NOTE: The cable car proposal met relatively fewer of the selection criteria however it has a significant level of community support and its high profile warrants consideration. All of the tourism proposal recommendations, and in particular the cable car proposal, are based on *developing a process* through which the ideas could be progressed.

## **TOURISM PROPOSALS**

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### **1. Adventure Tourism Hub**

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#### **Vision**

To develop a world-class wilderness adventure tourism industry in Kentish with the Mount Roland precinct as the focal point and supported by an accommodation, service and activity hub at Gowrie Park. Adventure tourism incorporates high-adrenalin activities that take place in a natural environment, for example canyoning, rock climbing, abseiling, white water rafting and horse riding. Adventure tourism is central to positioning the municipality as “Tasmania’s Wilderness Playground”.

#### **Demonstrated Need**

- Tasmania attracts tourists seeking wilderness, history and/or culinary-based experiences but does not have the volume or type of experiences appealing to adventure travellers aged 25-45. This large market segment is currently the smallest visitor category by age to visit Tasmania (140,000 in 2010 compared to 204,000 aged 45-54 and 221,000 aged 55-64. Tourism Tasmania Visitor Survey, 2010)
- A conceptually similar adventure tourism hub in Queenstown, New Zealand, recorded 277,000 visitor nights in 2009 (Statistics New Zealand's Commercial Accommodation Monitor, 2010)

#### **Benefits**

- Involves creation of multiple locally owned businesses
- Is jobs-intensive and therefore potentially a significant employer
- Spreads financial investment and return throughout the local economy
- Encourages multiple night stays in Kentish based around a critical mass of adventure tourism attractions
- Adds to the diversity of the Kentish tourism experience
- Appeals to a sub-section of Cradle Mountain visitors who are already travelling through the Mount Roland precinct

- Has minimal environmental impact
- Builds on a strength of the Kentish municipality – having a variety of natural features required for a hub within 30 minutes drive and in close proximity to the service town of Sheffield. See Asset Map, Appendix D
- Fills a gap in the Mount Roland experience - having little to attract the under 35 visitor demographic (Governance Stakeholder Survey 2011; Tourism Operator Survey 2011)
- Contributes to existing strategies relating to tourism, recreation, health and wellbeing
- Services the needs and interests of both locals and tourists
- Avoids direct competition as it is a unique hub concept in Tasmania
- Leverages the municipality's service structure and ability to support such an industry
- Capitalises on discussions held within the Tasmanian tourism, leisure and recreational communities to develop an adventure tourism industry in the State. The municipality is well positioned to lead in establishing itself as Tasmania's Wilderness Playground
- Does not impose a significant cost on the project Steering Committee organisations.

### **Challenges**

- Gaining a critical mass of private and public operators to legitimately establish an adventure "hub"
- Improving public transport from visitor entry points
- Establishing a collaborative network among operators to share resources such as booking systems, promotions, staff, transport and administration to improve the efficiency and viability of each operation
- Accessing public liability insurance for high risk activities

- Meeting statutory guidelines relating to use of rivers, mountains, public land and Forestry Tasmania land
- Undertaking cultural heritage and environmental assessments. See Appendix C.

### **Recommendations**

That the Mount Roland Steering Committee:

- Establish an adventure tourism industry development plan and a support structure for operators. This plan should include a five-year strategy determining:
  - The facilities, services and infrastructure required to support an adventure tourism industry
  - The key features of a nationally recognised adventure tourism hub in Kentish
  - Proposals for attracting private operators
  - Sites for specific activities
  - Strengths, weaknesses, potential opportunities and threats
  - Development guidelines and statutory considerations and processes that must be met by operators
  - Synergies and appropriate networks to provide support and services relating to administration, insurance and marketing
  - Options for securing high risk activity public liability insurance based on an assessment of operators at Queenstown, New Zealand.
- Map a five-year Council infrastructure improvement plan relating to access to adventure tourism sites and facilities.

### **Target Markets**

- Local, intrastate, interstate and international visitors
- Adventure tourists.

## 2. Recreational Camping

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### **Vision**

To develop the Mount Roland precinct as a “must see” destination for all recreational campers including those with fully self-sufficient accommodation and those without. A key aspect of this proposal is to encourage overnight stays by both the grey-nomad market and those attracted to the area for watersports, mountain biking and other adventure sports.

### **Demonstrated Need**

- Fully self-sufficient recreational campers are a large and expanding segment typically attracted to the natural and built assets available in Kentish (Tracking Self Accommodating Visitors in North West Tasmania, 2011).

### **Benefits**

- Spreads the economic benefit across industries as fully self-sufficient recreational campers stay in an area for extended periods and frequent local businesses, services and attractions
- Attracts repeat visits (likelihood of repeat visits nominated at 55% in the Tracking Self Accommodating Visitors in North West Tasmania report, 2011)
- Enables fully self-sufficient recreational campers to get to know the municipality and therefore assist potential investment and residency decisions. This segment has high knowledge and skill-levels applicable to economic rejuvenation and development and compatible with the natural landscape values of Kentish
- Appeals to a sub-section of Cradle Mountain visitors who are already travelling through the Mount Roland precinct
- Leverages the perception held by many self-accommodating visitors that Kentish has one of the best recreational camping sites in Australia (Tracking Self Accommodating Visitors in North West Tasmania report, 2011)
- Has minimal environmental impact

- Builds on the strength of the Kentish municipality – having wilderness and cultural experiences in a laid-back, quiet, rural, picturesque setting (Community Survey, 2011)
- Adds to the diversity of the Kentish tourism experience
- Meets regulatory and statutory guidelines
- Contributes to existing strategies relating to tourism
- Reflects community expectations
- Does not impose significant costs on the project Steering Committee organisations.

### **Challenges**

- Identifying the best media to reach recreational campers and promote the Mount Roland precinct as a must-see destination
- Identifying and developing the best sites for recreational campers, when some sites might be in demand by other users, such as those at Lake Barrington.

*NOTE:* After this report's study was completed, a decision by the Office of the Economic Regulator was made recommending that the Kentish Council limit free camping at the O'Neill's Creek camping site and institute a fee. This issue is currently under assessment by Council and the Regulator's decision is likely to result in a state-wide regulatory framework that may influence this report's recreational camping tourism proposal.

### **Recommendations**

That the Mount Roland Steering Committee:

- Allow recreational campers to stay at low-cost campsites in Kentish for at least a week, rather than the current standard of 48 hours. Encourage changes to policy to retain recreational campers, and in particular fully self-sufficient recreational campers, longer in Kentish including support for limited expenditure on additional infrastructure

- Audit outdoor furniture and facility provisions at existing and potential camping sites. Small sites need not have any facilities other than an area suitable for fully-self contained motor home or caravan parking
- Expand the low-cost site network in Kentish with attractive and well maintained camping spots, accessible for fully self-contained vehicles and family-sized tents
- Target promotion on retirees and grey nomad websites, such as [www.yourlifechoices.com.au](http://www.yourlifechoices.com.au); [www.greynomad.com.au](http://www.greynomad.com.au) and Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) [www.cmca.net.au](http://www.cmca.net.au)
- Promote the Mount Roland precinct to recreational campers highlighting key attractions within a one hour drive - for example Cradle Mountain, Mole Creek Caves, Lake Barrington Reserve, Sheffield, Wilmot, Railton, Devonport, Leven Canyon, Dial Range, Northern beaches, Narawntapu National Park, Walls of Jerusalem, Gunns Plains and the Mersey River forests
- Monitor best practices in other recreational camping sites in Australia and maintain or exceed with local standards.

### **Target Markets**

- Local and intrastate visitors including families on school holiday journeys or annual leave
- Intrastate and interstate visitors using a mobile home or caravan, including grey nomads
- International visitors travelling in a mobile home
- Tent campers
- The over-50 tourist demographic and retirees.

### 3. Mountain Biking and Family Cycling Park

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#### **Vision**

To establish a world-class mountain biking and family cycling park attracting locals and tourists and supporting the positioning of Kentish as “Tasmania’s Wilderness Playground”. Appealing to competitive and recreational mountain bikers, as well as local families during weekends, the park would be located on Forestry Tasmania-managed land in the Mersey Valley and Beulah. Tracks extend to Sensation Gorge and the southern face of Mount Roland and take in the Tasmania Trail. An elite mountain biking training facility could be established at Paradise and expanded to a centre of excellence for all forms of bike sports.

#### **Demonstrated Need**

- Similar facilities close to population centres are in short supply (Tasmanian Mountain Biking Plan, 2010; Trails Tasmania Strategy, 2008; Cradle Coast Open Space Plan Vol.1, Sport and Recreation Tasmania, 2009). Dedicated facilities exist only at Glenorchy and Launceston and there is a shortage of safe, off-road riding experiences for North West Coast families
- Interest in mountain biking has increased across the world and in Australia and Tasmania (British Columbia Mountain Bike Tourism Plan, 2010; Rotorua District Council, 2010)
- Visitors to Tasmania embarking on cycling activities increased 7% year-on-year and 25% in four years in 2010. In the North West, they rose 42.4% year-on-year and 45.7% over four years. In Sheffield, they rose 67% year-on-year and 60.7% over four years (Tasmanian Visitor Survey, 2010)
- The number of multi-sport competitions is increasing (five events in 2011 compared with two in 2001, [adventurerace.com.au](http://adventurerace.com.au)). Events such as Wildside and the Mark Webber Challenge draw up to 400 competitors plus families and officials

- The under 35 age bracket of visitors and the under 25 cohort, are the smallest two age categories to visit Tasmania (Tourism Tasmania Visitor Survey, 2010) and potential exists to grow this market.

### **Benefits**

- Reinforces the municipality's position as "Tasmania's Wilderness Playground"
- Contributes to existing strategies relating to recreation, health and wellbeing including the Tasmanian Mountain Biking Plan 2010
- Leverages Sport and Recreation Tasmania's support and willingness to assist development of the Tasmania Trail
- Leverages Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service support for recreational activities across a regional network of reserves (Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice, 2003)
- Leverages Forestry Tasmania's support for the concept of loops off the Tasmania Trail (through Beulah at the foot of Mount Roland) and in particular a loop track around Mount Roland. Enables expansion of Forestry Tasmania's "Adventure Forests" network and marketing strategy
- Attracts annual international, national and up to four state-wide mountain biking events, plus multi-sport events
- Reflects community expectations
- Contributes to the Kentish economy including tourism and other industries
- Enables cooperation with the existing Glenorchy facility to attract more interstate mountain bikers to a multiple-facility experience
- Does not impose significant costs on the project Steering Committee organisations
- Attracts a new, younger and more active visitor market segment to Kentish. Mountain bikers are commonly also walkers, rowers, fishers and road cyclists
- Attracts repeat visits either for competitions or as subsequent holidays

- Increases the likelihood of overnight stays
- Services the needs and interests of both locals and tourists
- Creates opportunities for private operators hiring bikes and equipment
- Extends the competitive mountain biking skills of North West residents, with several competitors having already won national multi-sport and mountain biking events
- Leverages Tasmania's reputation for excellent mountain biking terrain and the diversity of terrain in Kentish for mountain and road biking (Sport and Recreation Tasmania, pers. comm., 2011)
- Builds on the strengths of the Kentish municipality - having accessible wilderness, good mountain biking terrain, diversity of terrain, expanses of state forest (Community Survey, 2011)
- Fills a gap in the Mount Roland experience - allowing access to the summit for a greater number of people, cycling opportunities (Tourism Operators Survey, 2011; Governance Stakeholder Survey, 2011; Community Survey, 2011)

### **Challenges**

- Determining facility ownership
- Gaining agreement on responsibilities for developing tracks and facilities
- Gaining agreement on responsibilities for facility management and maintenance
- Funding for track and facility development
- Undertaking cultural heritage and environmental assessments, particularly in areas outside of Forestry Tasmania's working forest zones. See Appendix C for a list of threatened species in the area
- Meeting required land management regulations. See Appendix C.

## Recommendations

That the Mount Roland Steering Committee:

- Develop an area management plan that addresses the issues of multiple land managers and owners, use, risk, track management and responsibility.  
*NOTE:* Lease arrangements or joint ventures would be considered by Forestry Tasmania. The Cradle Coast Mountain Bike Club has experience in building trails and holding events and has offered to undertake track maintenance. Parts of the proposed trail network are in Forestry Tasmania working forests and management and coordination would therefore be required across land management boundaries
- Establish a Mount Roland Cycling Park Management Committee, including representatives of mountain bike interest groups, Kentish Council, Forestry Tasmania, Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, and Sport and Recreation Tasmania to:
  - Develop the management plan
  - Develop funding applications
  - Oversee implementation, following the six-year strategy in Appendix O
- Divide the development into two main stages:
  - Family cycling park for regular use by locals and intrastate visitors
  - World-class recreation club and competition facility attracting national and international competitions, including a round of the ICU Mountain Biking World Cup.

## Target Markets

- Intrastate, interstate and international mountain bike competitors
- State, national and international multi-sport events
- Families and the under 45 age demographic
- School and community groups and adventure tourists.

## 4. Walking Tracks

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### **Vision**

The Kentish municipality, with Mount Roland as its central feature, is well placed due to its natural and built assets to be developed as a hub for wilderness experiences such as bushwalking. A series of well-promoted walks, most of which are less than two hours duration but also featuring some longer, iconic walks, would contribute to positioning Kentish as “Tasmania’s Wilderness Playground” for intrastate, interstate and international visitors. Tracks could be extended to walking, cycling and equestrian users. The vision includes:

- New route to the summit of Mount Roland
- Redevelopment of the first quarter of the Face Track from Kings Road to the summit into an interpretative walk culminating in a look-out halfway up the face
- Upgrade of The Badgers track to Kimberley’s look-out
- Development of an iconic multi-day Mount Roland-Cradle Mountain multi-purpose route
- Facilitation of the guided walks industry
- Adding value to walking tracks.

For details, see Appendix P.

### **Demonstrated Need**

- Existing tracks cater only for walkers with high levels of fitness and provide poor access for non-walking trail users and people with disabilities (Trails Tasmania Strategy, 2007; Kentish Tourism Operators Survey, 2011)
- The number of visitors who embarked on walks of less than two hours increased 12.9% state-wide and 14.5% in the North West in the four years from 2007-2010. The state-wide number who undertook walks of 2-4 hours rose 13% year-on-year and 180% over four years from 2007-2010. The rise was 185% over four years in the North West. In Sheffield, the number of visitors who undertook

walks of 2-4 hours increased 23.3% year-on-year and 298% over four years from 2007-2010 (Tourism Tasmanian Visitor Survey, 2010)

- Walking tracks are the most sought-after tourism development on Mount Roland (Kentish Community Survey, 2011)
- Public interest in trails for walking and non-walking users exists and there is an increased need for recreation trails, particularly in rural areas (Trails Tasmania Strategy, 2007)
- Travellers nominate wilderness experiences as the second-most appealing of ten themes that motivate travel to Tasmania (Tourism Tasmania Motivations Research Survey, March 2011).

### **Benefits**

- Appeals to a sub-section of Cradle Mountain visitors who are already travelling through the Mount Roland precinct. Mount Roland is close to the North West visitor entry points and there is no entry fee
- Encourages overnight stays and support of local businesses and services if a diverse network of trails can attract guided walking tours (Cox, 2011)
- Builds on a strength of the Kentish municipality – having accessible wilderness (Community Survey, 2011)
- Fills a gap in the Mount Roland experience - allowing access to the summit for a greater number of people (Tourism Operators Survey, 2011)
- Contributes to existing strategies relating to tourism, recreation, health and wellbeing
- Aligns with environmental guidelines and community values associated with the natural values of Mount Roland (Kentish Community Survey, 2011). Has minimal environmental impact
- Contributes to the Kentish economy including tourism and other industries. Encourages expenditure by combining short walks with additional, same-day

activities such as a winery or lunch stop. Walking tracks are a valuable tourism attraction, especially if marketed well (Cradle Coast Tracks Strategy, 2003)

- Adds to the diversity of the Kentish tourism experience
- Services the needs and interests of both locals and tourists, particularly for families in the North West.

### **Challenges**

- Creating routes and walking experiences for inexperienced or casual trail walkers (existing tracks require high levels of fitness)
- Constructing tracks or infrastructure and adhering to the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service Reserves Standards Framework, the Australian Standard for Walking Tracks and the Recreational Activities Assessment. For full details, see Appendix P
- Undertaking cultural heritage and environmental assessments on tracks. For a full list, see Appendix P
- Funding for track maintenance and construction from the current Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service budget.

### **Recommendations**

That the Mount Roland Steering Committee:

- Provide Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service with a “demonstrated need” analysis for the proposed Mount Roland summit track, Mount Roland-Cradle Mountain trail and the Kings Road track look-out
- Develop a new summit track and an interpretative walk to the tree line with a viewing platform on the face of Mount Roland
- Contact Australian and Tasmanian guided walk providers to establish requirements for facilities and services and liaise with providers in the Kentish community to ensure those needs are met

- Actively promote Kentish within the guided walk industry to encourage increased visitation
- In partnership with the Sheffield Visitor Information Centre, establish a series of themed walks in Kentish and produce promotional brochures. Suggested themes include:
  - *Wild Waterfalls of Kentish*
  - *Views from the Roof*
  - *The Iconic Walks*
  - *Highland Country on your Doorstep*
  - *12 Short Walks in Kentish*
  - *Mountains, Waterfalls and Rainforest in a Day*

For further details on these themes, see Appendix P.

### **Target Markets**

- Local, intrastate, interstate and international visitors
- Families
- Recreational campers
- Bushwalkers and visitors to Cradle Mountain.

## 5. Look-outs and Look-ats

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### **Vision**

To develop a look-out on the face of Mount Roland, plus upgrade the Round Mountain look-out and improve other vantage points around the precinct.

To improve existing roadside pull-over areas and to develop a look-out network that showcases Mount Roland and the Kentish municipality. The areas would feature interpretative signs and all-weather photo points with framed views.

Round Mountain and the Face Track look-out could be the centrepiece of a look-out trail, potentially titled “Views From The Roof”, that includes Leven Canyon, Cruickshank’s look-out, Liena look-out, Oliver’s Road, Kimberley’s look-out and Devil’s Gullet.

### **Demonstrated Need**

- Demand is growing for short walks of less than two hours (Tourism Tasmanian Visitor Survey, 2010)
- Visitors to Tasmania are seeking wilderness and nature-based experiences (Tourism Tasmania Motivations Research Survey, March 2011)
- A shortfall in the number of roadside pull-over areas was identified and design flaws reported in the existing pull-over areas at Barrington and Spring Street (Tourism Operators and Sheffield Visitor Information Centre volunteers, 2011).

### **Benefits**

- Creates opportunities to showcase built landscapes to the North and natural landscapes to the South to grow awareness and appreciation of land-use systems
- Adds diversity to the Kentish tourism experience and provides photo opportunities that enhance word-of-mouth promotion
- Has minimal environmental impact
- Services the needs and interests of both locals and tourists

- Builds on the strengths of natural and wilderness assets in the existing Kentish tourism experience
- Complements and encourages use of walking tracks (Blue Mountains Lithgow and Oberon Tourism, 2011)
- Meets community expectations for development on the Western end of the range encompassing Mount Roland and for no summit infrastructure (Community Survey, 2011).

### **Challenges**

- Sourcing funding for construction of roadside pull-over areas at look-ats by the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources, plus interpretative signage and viewing frames by the Kentish Council. See Appendix Q
- Meeting the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service requirement for forward budget planning before funds could be allocated for the Face Track look-out
- Meeting government regulations including road works by the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources; Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service track and environmental guidelines; and environmental and cultural heritage assessments. For a comprehensive list, see Appendix C.

### **Recommendations**

That the Mount Roland Steering Committee:

- Develop the Round Mountain look-out to provide increased interpretation, improved car parking and a shelter
- Develop a look-out and interpretative signage at the tree line of the existing Face Track on Mount Roland
- Construct a multi-person platform at Kimberley's look-out
- Develop a series of roadside look-ats with sculptured viewing frames focused on Mount Roland and other scenes

- Promote a trail network, titled “Views From The Roof”, comprising the look-outs and look-ats as a day trip in Kentish
- Erect information signs to provide drivers with advance notice of look-outs so that they can plan to safely pull-over.

**Target Markets**

- Local and intrastate visitors on day-trips
- Intrastate, interstate and international visitors staying in hotels, motels or B&Bs or as recreational campers.

## 6. Aboriginal Culture Tours

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### **Vision**

To establish low-impact guided walking tours on and around Mount Roland (including Mount Van Dyke and Mount Claude) that highlight the Aboriginal culture and history of the precinct.

### **Demonstrated Need**

- Cultural experiences, historic experiences and wilderness experiences are the three greatest attractions for visitors to Tasmania (Tourism Tasmania Visitor Motivations Research Survey, 2011)
- Visitors to Tasmania who participated in Aboriginal culture experiences rose 12.9% in four years from 2007-2010 (Tourism Tasmania Visitor Survey, 2010).

### **Benefits**

- Encourages overnight stays in the municipality (particularly those who want to participate in nocturnal tours)
- Meets community expectations
- Adds diversity to the Kentish tourism experience
- Creates a unique experience in Tasmania, with few direct competitors
- Leverages the experience in commercial tourism operations of the proponent, the Six Rivers Aboriginal Corporation
- Has minimal environmental impact
- Builds on the authenticity of the Kentish experience
- Does not impose significant costs on the project Steering Committee organisations.

### **Challenges**

- Undertaking cultural heritage and environmental assessments
- Securing funding for the start-up phase and ongoing commercial viability.

### **Recommendations**

That the Mount Roland Steering Committee:

- Support the establishment of an Aboriginal culture tourism operation founded in the Mount Roland precinct and run by Six Rivers Aboriginal Corporation.

### **Target Markets**

- Local, intrastate, interstate and international visitors
- School groups and community groups
- Visitors to Tiagarra in Devonport and other Aboriginal cultural sites.

## 7. History, Culture and Nature Interpretation Centre

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### **Vision**

To establish an interactive interpretation centre that tells the historical, cultural and natural stories of the municipality.

### **Demonstrated Need**

- History is a principal motivation for visitors to Tasmania (Tourism Tasmania Motivations Research Survey, March 2011)
- Visitors to historic attractions in Tasmania have risen 8.5% in four years from 2007-2010 and 14.1% in the North West over the same period (Tourism Tasmania Visitor Survey, 2010).

### **Benefits**

- Builds on the collection of static displays and information at the Sheffield Museum
- Adds to the diversity of the Kentish tourism experience
- Enhances visitor experiences with a holistic approach to the natural and cultural values of the municipality
- Has potential for local business expansion in guided tours, accommodation, dining and retail
- Has minimal environmental impact and enables environmental interpretation
- Fills a gap and builds on a strength of the existing Kentish tourism experience.

### **Challenges**

- Acquiring funds for infrastructure, interactive exhibits, training and ongoing costs
- Identifying and procuring an appropriate location for the centre, including local government planning laws
- Sourcing historical information to accurately interpret cultural, social and natural heritage.

## **Recommendations**

That the Mount Roland Steering Committee:

- Develop a phased plan for the interpretation centre over a three to five-year period and a framework for interpretation, presentation and infrastructure. This involves:
  - Liaising with local experts to develop a detailed record of the historical and cultural highlights of the Mount Roland precinct and Kentish municipality
  - Investigating options for interactive, static, thematic and experience-based displays
  - Appointing a Project Manager/Curator to manage the start-up, and training local staff to relate stories and provide interpretation
- Identify the best venue for the centre, including considering temporary premises during the start-up and ability to complement the Sheffield Museum
- Investigate Australian Government funding options, including Aboriginal grants and the Regional Fund
- Establish collaborative governance between Federal, State and Local Government.

## **Target Markets**

- Local, intrastate, interstate and international visitors
- School groups and community groups.

## 8. Mount Roland Cable Car

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### **Vision**

To build cable car infrastructure on the Gowrie Park face of Mount Roland enabling access to the summit by more visitors from more visitor segments.

### **Demonstrated need**

- Provides a means for people unable or unwilling to undertake a six-hour walk to access the summit of Mount Roland (Kentish Community Survey, 2011; Kentish Tourism Operator Survey, 2011).

### **Benefits**

- Provides a “headline” attraction at Mount Roland that would act as a tourism drawcard
- Adds diversity to the Kentish tourism experience.

### **Challenges**

- Gaining public consensus for the cable car as current opinions are split for and against the proposal (Community Survey, 2011)
- Determining the feasibility of the proposal given the complex regulatory framework. See Appendices C and T
- Securing a proponent with the capital required to develop the proposal and ensuring its financial viability.

### **Recommendations**

That the Mount Roland Steering Committee:

- Develop a management plan for Mount Roland that details the statutory considerations for development and which defines and protects the values important to Kentish residents
- Only support a cable car development if it complies with the Mount Roland management plan.

## **Target Markets**

- Local, intrastate, interstate and international visitors
- Physically disabled or restricted mobility visitors
- Recreational campers
- Visitors with limited time to experience the Mount Roland precinct.

## **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The following recommendations apply as a basis to *all* of the tourism proposals listed in this report.

That the Mount Roland Steering Committee:

1. Develop a **management plan** setting out statutory requirements and guidelines for use and development of Mount Roland, which provides an opportunity for input and reflects the expectations of stakeholders, the community and existing users
2. Focus on developing a **diversity of tourism attractions and experiences** to grow the tourism industry and to provide multiple experiences to attract multiple target markets
3. Set **goals for the number of tourists visiting Kentish** in five years and in ten years and develop a municipality-wide strategy to achieve those goals
4. Invite stakeholders to **round-table conferences** to advance each of the tourism proposals.

## MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

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In order to capitalise on the diversity of natural and cultural experiences identified in the tourism proposals, the following general marketing strategy recommendations are presented:

- Position the municipality – with Mount Roland as its central feature – as “Tasmania’s Wilderness Playground”
- Align Kentish more closely with the Western Wilderness Zone Group within the Tourism Tasmania marketing strategy
  - It is a natural gateway to the highland wilderness from North West Tasmania’s major tourist entry points, providing easy access
  - It reinforces the “Tasmania’s Wilderness Playground” positioning
  - It includes Mount Roland which is the most accessible point of wilderness and mountain highlands in North West Tasmania
- Promote “Sheffield” or “Mount Roland”, not “Kentish”, so potential visitors can find it more easily on maps. After the visitor has made a connection to this information, the content can be expanded to cover the entire municipality
- Focus on marketing the Mount Roland precinct to visitors before they arrive in Tasmania, or at the point of entry
- Highlight the diversity of Kentish attractions, particularly the wilderness, nature and experience-based attractions in the Mount Roland precinct.

**Table 1 Implementation Plan**

Table 1 Implementation Plan			
TIME FRAME	STRATEGY	ACTION	COMMENTS
<p><b>2021: 10 year vision</b> Mount Roland in Kentish – Tasmania’s Wilderness playground. Focuses on and around Mount Roland and its natural, historical and cultural values</p>	Planning for Mount Roland precinct	<i>Set goals for development of a more diverse, larger Kentish tourism industry with performance indicators including milestones for achievement of those goals</i>	Review performance indicators annually; assess constraints; emerging issues and challenges; infrastructure and service requirements; tourism numbers and products
<p><b>Year 1</b> Management plan for Mount Roland</p>	Develop a strategic management plan for Mount Roland as a foundation for development strategies	<i>Establish a committee to develop management plan</i>	Incorporate tourism vision and actions for priority proposal implementation; Tourism Tasmania, CCA, P&WS; Kentish; UTAS; community stakeholders
Policy for recreational campers, in particular those who are fully self-sufficient	Develop policy to attract and retain recreational campers	<p><i>Review period of time allowed for free /low cost camping at one site.</i></p> <p><i>Maintain existing; expand campsite offerings</i></p> <p><i>Collaborate with commercial caravan park operators to develop facilities and offerings for this segment.</i></p> <p><i>Promote via grey nomad, CMCA websites.</i></p>	<p>Kentish, CCA – consistency across 8 LGAs;</p> <p>Commercial park operators collaboration</p>
Plan for mountain biking and family cycling park	Prepare detailed strategic plan for the development of a mountain biking and family cycling park	<i>Establish a mountain bike and family cycling park committee to develop plan and pursue funding options</i>	Mountain Biking Club; Kentish; Forestry Tasmania
Plan for adventure tourism hub	Prepare detailed strategic plan for the establishment of an adventure tourism hub in Kentish	<i>Establish an adventure hub committee to develop plan, navigate regulatory environment and pursue funding options</i>	Detailed review of Victoria, NSW and Queenstown NZ examples to determine key outtakes

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<b>Year 2</b> Detailed marketing strategy	Market Roland and Kentish as Tasmania's Wilderness Playground:	<i>Aligns with management and development plans</i>	Tourism Tasmania, CCA, Kentish
Year 2-3 Extend and upgrade walking tracks	Prepare detailed plan to review existing tracks and consider new tracks	<i>Establish "Friends of Mount Roland" committed to the maintenance of some tracks Support Six Rivers Aboriginal Corp. to develop walking experiences</i>	Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Tasmania, North-West Walking Club, Kentish Council, CCA NRM; Commercial guided walk operators; Six Rivers Aboriginal Corp
Plan for Historical and Cultural and Natural Interpretation Centre (HCNIC)	Prepare detailed strategic plan for HCNIC	<i>Research and collect historical and cultural artefacts; Investigate potential mediums for display and interpretation Investigate funding options</i>	Sheffield Museum, local historians, cultural experts, Six Rivers Aboriginal Corp., Gowrie Park Wilderness Village
Look-outs and look-ats network plan strategy	Develop an implementation plan for the look-outs network	<i>Consider funding, location, construction, interpretation content and marketing options</i>	Liaise with relevant land managers - Kentish; State; Forestry, P&WS; private
Walking Tracks- upgrade and new		<i>Commence upgrade and expand walking track networks, with priority for the four key tracks proposed on Mount Roland and The Badgers.</i>	P&WS, Forestry, Friends of Roland, CCA NRM
Mountain bike and family cycling park		<i>Implement the mountain bike strategy, including track and facility development, and marketing.</i>	
Adventure Tourism hub		<i>Implement the adventure tourism strategy</i>	
Secure HCNIC funding		<i>Source funding for the proposed HCNIC</i>	
<b>Year 3</b> Review marketing strategy	Marketing strategy – Tasmania's Wilderness Playground	<i>Review constraints to tourism strategy in Kentish; Review tourist arrivals and visitor segments; detailed survey of visitors</i>	Audit service; facilities; infrastructure; marketing; governance and regulation; networking; capacity

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		<i>Implement the marketing strategy – emphasis on the look-out and look-ats trail, network of walking trails, and wilderness, historical and cultural experiences.</i>	Direct marketing material to visitors arriving on the Spirit and via Devonport and Burnie Airports. Introduce incentives for visiting Kentish attractions.
Look-outs and look-ats		<i>Implement the look-out and look-ats strategy and marketing program</i>	
Walking tracks		<i>Complete proposed new walking tracks and upgrade of existing key tracks</i>	
Mountain bike park	Mountain bike park – Australian recognition	<i>Expand track network in the mountain bike park, Secure funding for trail expansion and facilities; Expand facility; promote interstate</i>	
Adventure tourism hub		<i>Support growth of adventure tourism hub</i>	
Walking trails review		<i>Review guided walk operators and independent walkers for product evaluation</i>	
HCNIC	Grand opening of HCNIC	<i>Open HCNIC</i>	

## GLOSSARY

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- **District:** The area around Mount Roland, undefinable by municipal or other boundaries, that has a geographical, economic or social relationship with the mountain.
- **Implementation plan:** the translation of the report's tourism proposals into a three-year statement of potential activities.
- **International visitors:** overseas residents who may visit the Mount Roland precinct.
- **Interstate visitors:** residents of mainland Australia who may visit the Mount Roland precinct.
- **Intrastate visitors:** residents of north and south Tasmania who may visit the Mount Roland precinct.
- **Kentish:** the local government municipality bordered by Latrobe, Devonport, Central Coast, Waratah-Wynyard, West Coast and Meander Valley Councils in North West Tasmania. Also referred to as the municipality. The major population centre within Kentish is Sheffield.
- **Local visitors:** residents of Kentish or North West Tasmania who may visit the Mount Roland precinct as part of a day trip or longer stay.
- **Mount Roland:** the mountain located within the Mount Roland Regional Reserve and Conservation Area. Also referred to as the mountain.
- **Mount Roland precinct:** as defined in the *Mount Roland: Developing a Destination* Project Brief, 2010. The area within Kentish surrounding Mount Roland and including the Mount Roland Regional Reserve and Mount Roland Conservation Area (as shown on the map on pg 8). Also referred to as the precinct.
- **Project Steering Committee:** representatives of Kentish Council, Tourism Tasmania, Cradle Coast Authority, Cradle Coast Natural Resource Management and Parks and Wildlife Service Tasmania who initiated the project brief and commissioned this report.
- **Recreational campers:** self-accommodating tourists including motor home and caravan tourists and tent campers. Recreational campers include those with fully self-sufficient accommodation and those without. Fully self-sufficient recreational campers are those in motor homes, vans or similar portable accommodation that include all cooking, shower/toilet, waste storage and disposal facilities and power sources.
- **Region:** the Cradle Coast region comprising nine local government municipalities of North West Tasmania, including Kentish.
- **Report:** the document commissioned by the Mount Roland Steering Committee to identify tourism proposals for the Mount Roland precinct. Also known as this document.
- **Strategy:** the strategic process, not a formal document.
- **Study:** information gathering and analysis activities undertaken by the Institute for Regional Development team (including consultation, desk-top and in-field research) to enable completion of a report.
- **Tourism proposals:** the ideas arising from the study's evaluation process which are subject to assessment via the selection criteria. Also referred to as proposals.

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