



**NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service**

# **Submissions report**

**Public exhibition of Dorrigo Escarpment great walk and Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre draft master plans**



## Acknowledgement of Country

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

This resource may contain images or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

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# Summary

## The consultation process

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is delivering the **Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk project** on Gumbaynggirr Country on the NSW North Coast. The project has 2 main components:

1. the Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre – a new visitor centre and elevated walkway on the footprint of the existing Dorrigo Rainforest Centre
2. the Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk – a 46-km multi-day walk with purpose-built low-impact hiker huts and camping platforms.

Draft master plans for each project component were on public exhibition from 13 October 2023 to 15 January 2024. Public consultation on the draft master plans provided an important opportunity for the community to have a say on the new visitor centre and multi-day walk proposals. This report provides a summary of the community feedback received and outlines how the feedback has been considered.

Over 1,000 copies of the draft master plans were downloaded from the webpage during the exhibition period. We received 141 submissions from a range of interested community members and groups, comprising 87 online survey responses and 54 submissions via online form or email. Another 26 submissions on the draft plan of management for Dorrigo National Park, Bindarri National Park and Bindarri State Conservation Area raised points about the concept designs in the draft master plans. These comments were included in this analysis, bringing the total number of responses to 167.

## How we analysed feedback

The 167 responses received were combined and analysed together. Quantitative data was gathered through survey questions where participants indicated their level of support for or opposition to aspects of the draft master plans. Qualitative feedback was obtained through open-ended responses to survey questions, written comments on the online form and written submissions received via email.

Content-rich data was analysed qualitatively with the assistance of a specialised computer software package. This enabled a deeper analysis to discern themes from the hundreds of points made in the submissions.

Each point raised in every submission was documented and considered by NPWS. Points were grouped under 6 topic areas according to the subject of the comment. NPWS has provided a response to each of the topic areas identified in the analysis.

## What we heard

The majority of survey respondents (70%) were from the local Dorrigo – Coffs Harbour area and were generally supportive of the proposals outlined in the draft master plans.

There were a range of views and points raised in submissions and survey comments, with many supporting the general intent of the master plans, others strongly opposed, and some comments being out of scope for the project.

The combined feedback showed there was:

- strong support for the multi-day walk (74% of survey respondents support the proposal)
- broad support for the Arc Rainforest Centre concept designs

## Submissions report for Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk project

- support for enhanced disability access to the visitor centre and day walks
- support for enhanced Aboriginal cultural experiences.

The main concerns raised in the feedback were:

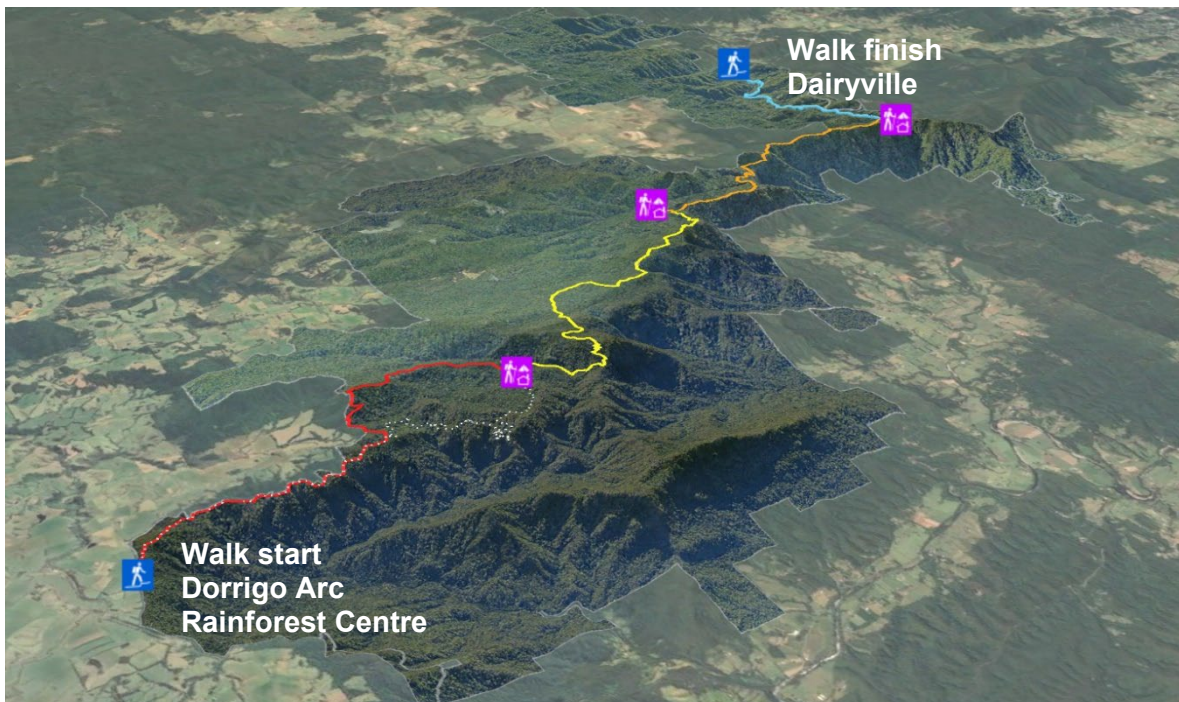
- concern about the scale of the new visitor centre and elevated walkway
- concern about the environmental impacts of the proposals
- concern about impacts of increasing visitation on local infrastructure
- preference for funds to be spent on conservation action and the Great Koala National Park.

The next opportunity to provide feedback to ensure the best outcomes for the parks, the community and the project is the public exhibition of the review of environmental factors and associated reports.

NPWS will continue to provide updates as the project progresses.



Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre courtyard (artists impression from master plan)



Dorrigo Escarpment great walk (extract from master plan)

# 1. The consultation process

## 1.1 Background

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) proposes to deliver a new visitor centre with elevated walkway and a multi-day walk as part of the Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk project on Gumbaynggirr Country on the NSW North Coast.

The draft master plans for the 2 proposals were on public exhibition from 13 October 2023 to 15 January 2024. Public consultation on the draft master plans provided an important opportunity for the community to have a say on the new visitor centre and multi-day walk proposals. This report provides a summary of the community feedback received and outlines how the feedback has been considered.

The draft plan of management for Dorrigo National Park, Bindarri National Park and Bindarri State Conservation Area was exhibited at the same time as the master plans to seek input into the proposed strategic management directions for these parks, including the Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk project. Some of the submissions on the draft plan raised points about the concept designs in the draft master plans for the multi-day walk and the Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre. These comments have been included for consideration in this submissions report. In June 2024, the plan of management was adopted under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* by the Minister for the Environment, the Hon Penny Sharpe MLC (NPWS 2024).

## 1.2 Project consultation phases

The various phases of project consultation are shown in Figure 1. Community consultation for the Dorrigo Rainforest Centre commenced with project scoping workshops in 2019 to create a shared vision for revitalisation of the precinct (phase 1). This was followed by concept planning and visitor and market research to develop concept designs. The NSW Government announced funding for the project in 2022 and we launched a project webpage and register of interest to keep the community informed (phase 2).

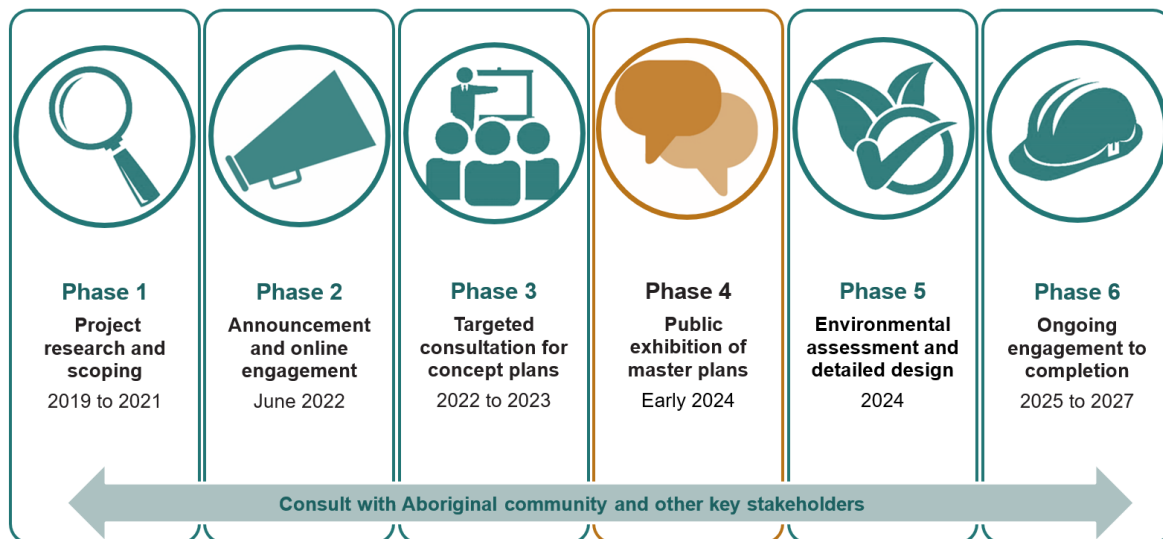


Figure 1 Phases of consultation highlighting public exhibition phase

## Submissions report for Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk project

During the development of the draft master plans, NPWS conducted extensive stakeholder consultation and engagement to refine the concepts in the plans (phase 3), including:

- targeted consultation with Aboriginal groups and key stakeholders
- briefings at group meetings and community events
- field trips on the walk route.

Figure 2 summarises the community engagement NPWS undertook in phases 1, 2 and 3.



**Figure 2** Community engagement leading up to the release of the draft master plans

Public exhibition of the draft master plans is phase 4 of community consultation on the project. The draft master plans have been informed by the consultation to date and reflect the needs, concerns and aspirations conveyed over the last 5 years. These include the need for more accessible experiences, the strong support for the multi-day walk proposal, and the importance of protecting the significant natural and cultural values in the parks.

### Aboriginal community consultation

NPWS is committed to engaging with Aboriginal groups throughout the project to guide decisions and involve Aboriginal people in the management and protection of their cultural heritage. Local Aboriginal land councils and Aboriginal organisations were engaged early to discuss the proposals. Aboriginal custodians surveyed the parks with NPWS staff and experienced heritage consultants to assess Aboriginal places of significance, and to provide advice on spiritual and cultural values associated with Country and how best to respect these values. NPWS will continue to work with the Aboriginal community to support Gumbaynggirr aspirations for Country.

Figure 3 summarises the Aboriginal community engagement activities to date.



**Figure 3** Aboriginal community engagement for the project



### 1.3 Public exhibition of draft master plans

The draft master plans were placed on public exhibition for 94 days from 13 October 2023 to 15 January 2024. This provided members of the community with their main opportunity to comment on the draft concept plans for the proposed walk and visitor centre.

Notification of the public exhibition was sent to 1,800 registered stakeholders and the exhibition was promoted using posters, media and targeted Facebook advertising. Printed copies of the draft master plans were available to view at NPWS offices in Dorrigo and Coffs Harbour. Community information drop-in sessions were held at the Dorrigo Rainforest Centre on Friday 17 and Saturday 18 November 2023. The consultation website was the primary channel for reviewing the draft master plans and providing feedback. Figure 4 provides a summary of the online engagement results.



Figure 4 Online engagement during public exhibition period (October 2023 to January 2024)

### Engagement tools

The comprehensive draft master plans presented design principles and concept plans to enable community feedback in advance of the detailed design and final approval stages for the project. Short videos presented a visual summary of the proposals in the draft master plans. These engagement tools are illustrated in Figure 5.

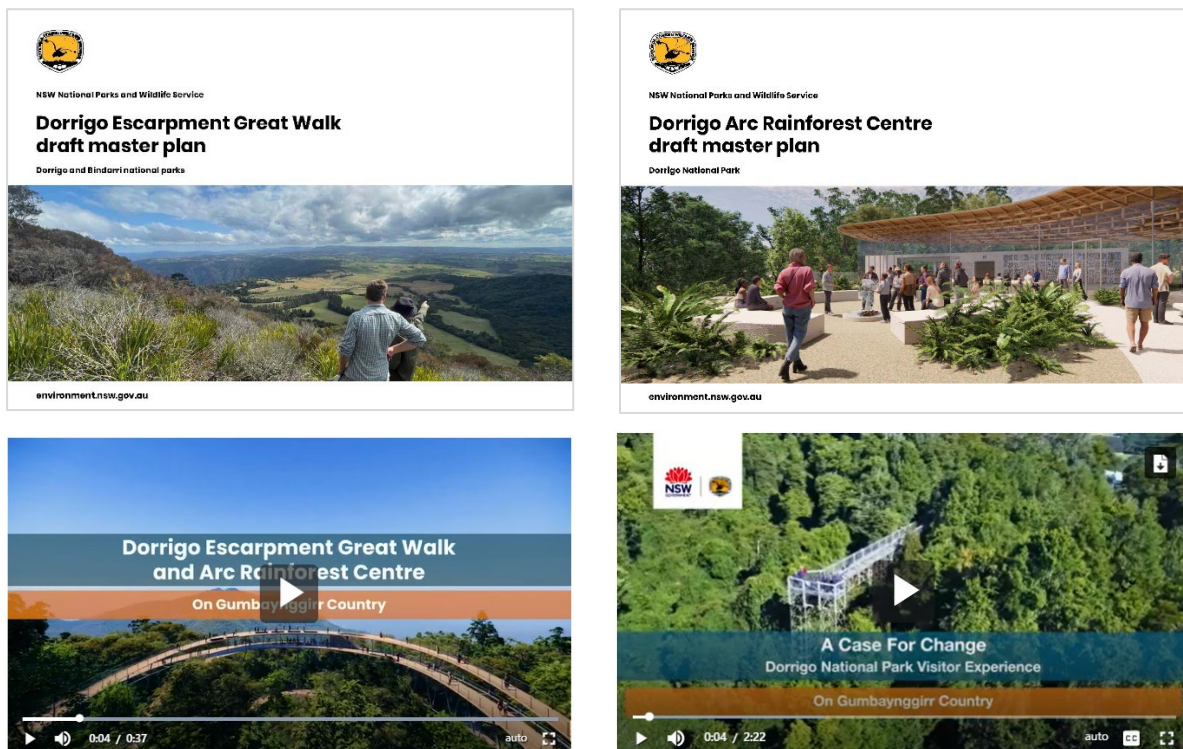


Figure 5 Draft master plan documents and videos explained the project proposals in detail

## 2. Submissions received

We appreciate the time and effort that groups and individuals put into the submissions we received. We received 141 submissions about the draft master plans from a range of stakeholders, including individuals, local residents, business operators, local councils, park users and hiking groups. This included:

- 87 online survey responses
- 54 submissions via online form or email.

There were 26 draft plan of management submissions with comments relevant to the draft master plans that were included in this analysis, bringing the total to **167** submissions.

Organisations that made submissions are listed in Appendix A.

### 2.1 How submissions were recorded and analysed

Submissions and survey data on both master plans, together with relevant plan of management submission comments, were combined for the purposes of this analysis. The following procedures were followed in handling the submissions and survey data:

- All submissions received via online form, email or written attachment were filed in the NPWS's document management system and recorded in the submission register.
- All feedback survey responses were collated in Microsoft Forms, exported to Excel and saved in the same system. Comments in the survey were treated the same as written submissions.
- Some late submissions were received and included in the analysis.
- Multiple submissions from the same author that raised new or different issues were recorded and treated as separate submissions.
- Additional consultation was undertaken with the Aboriginal community. This engagement is not addressed in this report.

Each point raised in every submission was documented and considered by NPWS using Nvivo data analysis software. Points were coded to one of 6 **topic areas** according to the subject of the comment (Table 1). A rigorous interrogation of complex topics generated themes that reflected a shared meaning or sentiment. **Topic points** and **themes** were then assessed against criteria to see if any suggested changes or alternative strategies would better support delivery of the proposals' objectives. Criteria are outlined in Appendix B. The 6 topic areas are discussed in more detail in Section 3 'Summary of feedback'.

**Table 1 Topic areas and number of total references in survey and submissions**

Topic area	Number of references
1. Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre – concept, facilities and operation	341
2. Dorrigo Escarpment great walk – concept, facilities and operation	218
3. Baliiga precinct plan	58
4. Protecting natural and cultural values	166
5. Equity and community wellbeing	118
6. Project alignment, planning and engagement	346

Notes: Multiple points or references in a single submission have been counted separately, and supportive and opposing points are included in the same topic headings. Therefore, the quantity of references for each topic shown above does not reflect the number or balance of submissions received about each topic and should not be used to evaluate importance or sentiment.

## 2.2 Demographics of contributors

Of all submissions, 122 or 73% of respondents provided their postcode, allowing an analysis of origin of contributors (Figure 6). Community members and organisations from the local area and across New South Wales responded to the feedback survey and provided written submissions. The majority of respondents (70%) were from the Dorrigo, Bellingen, Coffs Harbour and Nambucca areas.

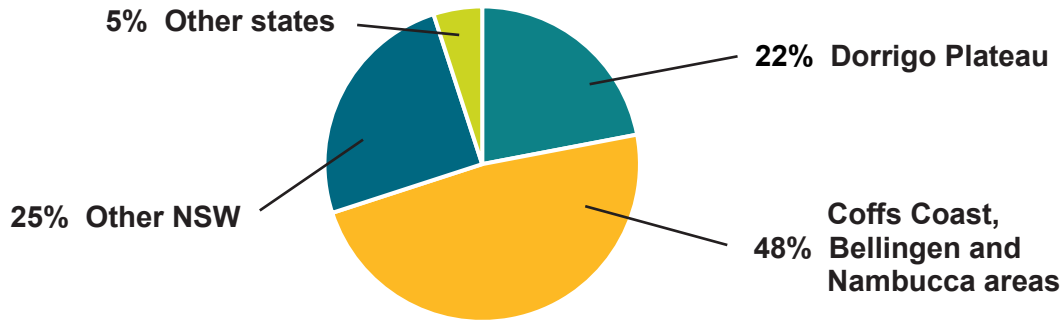
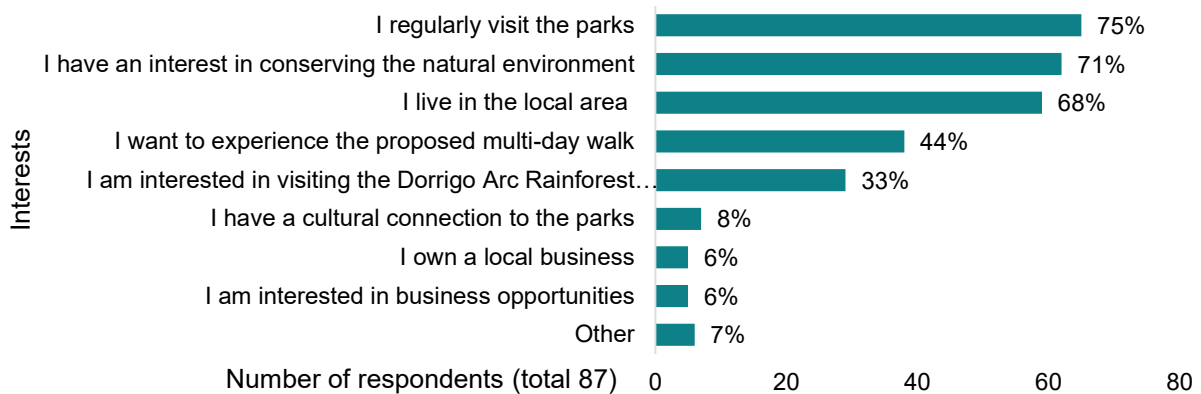


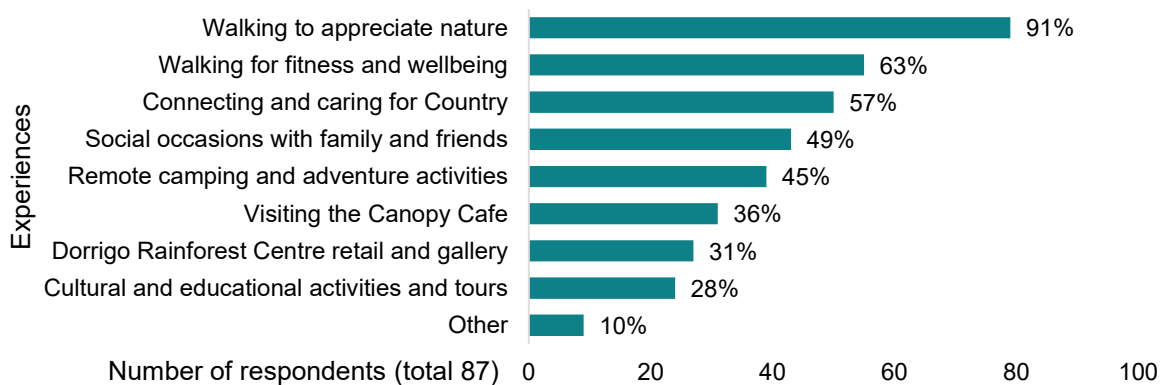
Figure 6 Origin of contributors where postcode provided (n = 122 or 73% of submissions)

The 87 survey respondents reflected an even spread of age ranges for each decade, from age 25 to 75 years (13 to 17 respondents each). There were 4 respondents under 25 years old and 6 respondents over 75 years old. Their interests and favoured experiences are detailed in the graphs below. Of note, 75% of respondents regularly visit the parks and 91% stated that walking to appreciate nature is an experience they value in the parks.

**What best describes your interest in Dorrigo and Bindarri national parks? Select all that apply.**



**What experiences do you value in these parks?**



### 3. Summary of feedback

There were a range of views and points raised in submissions, with many supporting the general intent of the master plans, others strongly opposed and some providing comments that were out of scope for the project. Alternative options to the NPWS proposals were also provided in some submissions.

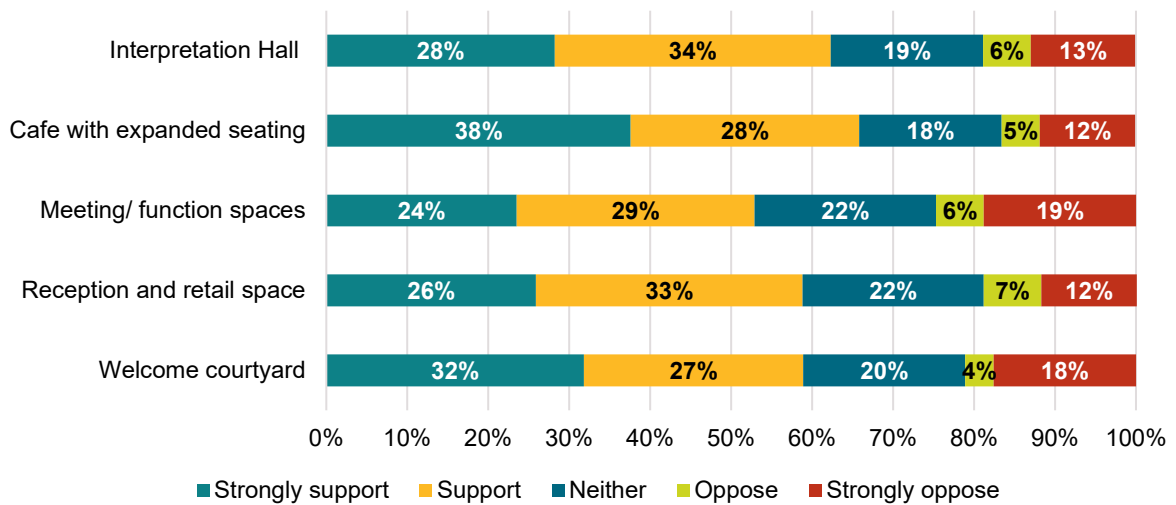
In response, the NPWS considered where changes could be made to the draft master plans to improve outcomes for the parks’ natural and cultural heritage values, visitors and the community. The feedback received and how this has been considered are summarised below for each of the topic areas discerned from the analysis (see Table 1).

#### 3.1 Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre

##### Survey responses

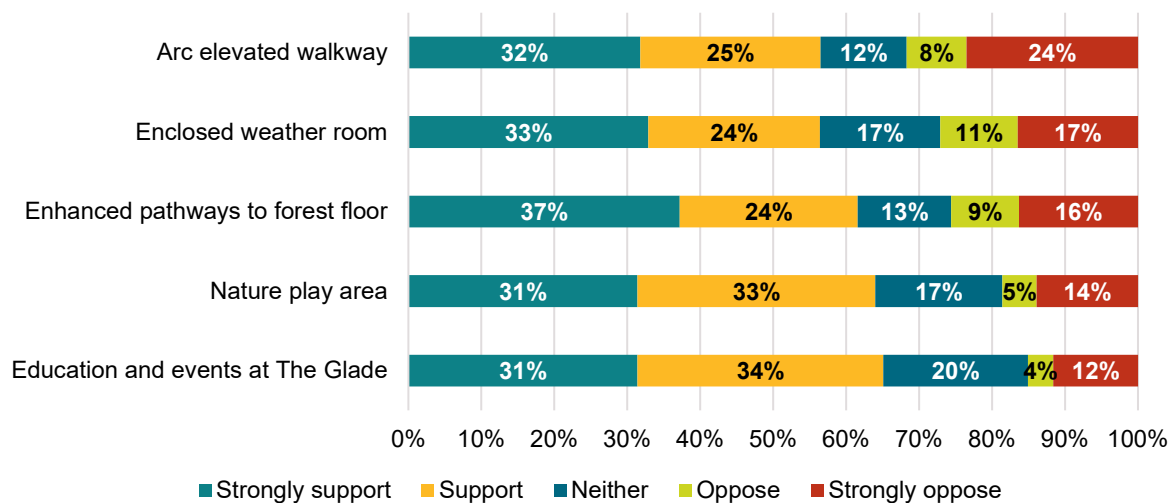
There was strong support through the survey for all proposed functions within and surrounding the Arc Rainforest Centre building. The Arc elevated walkway was supported or strongly supported by 57% of the 87 respondents, with 32% opposed or strongly opposed. The proposed cafe was supported by 66%, with just 17% opposed or strongly opposed.

**Do you support the following uses or facilities proposed within the Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre building? (n = 87)**



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Do you support the following proposed uses or facilities in the area surrounding the rainforest centre? (n = 87)



## Comments and submissions

Analysis of the survey comments and written submissions identified over 300 comments that addressed the draft concept plans for the Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre and The Glade visitor precincts. Comments were grouped by topic point and themes were discerned and explored (Table 2).

**Table 2 Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre feedback topic points and themes**

Topic point	Comments received	Themes raised in the comments
<b>Case for change and objectives</b>	60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong support for the case for change, vision and objectives</li> <li>• The proposals will benefit local communities through tourism</li> <li>• The existing centre is functional and well-loved</li> <li>• Development is not worth potential impacts on rainforest</li> <li>• No condition assessment or visitor demand data provided to justify replacing the existing rainforest centre building</li> <li>• Concern about ongoing maintenance costs</li> </ul>
<b>Proposed uses and facilities</b>	37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong support for all proposed uses including cafe, retail, gallery, function spaces and nature-play area</li> <li>• Some concern about specific uses such as events</li> <li>• Suggestions for additional uses and facilities including transport links to Dorrigo</li> <li>• Support for land acquisition for car parking</li> </ul>
<b>Concept designs</b>	75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong support for the concept plans, especially the 'wow factor' of the Arc, flow and accessibility</li> <li>• Design should enhance the natural values of the site and complement (not compete with) nature</li> <li>• Use of natural-looking materials to blend into landscape</li> <li>• Additional design suggestions for convenience and ambience</li> </ul>
<b>Scale of proposed infrastructure</b>	65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Arc elevated walkway is too large — a more modest elevated structure would meet objectives and be less intrusive</li> <li>• Concept designs are 'stunning and remarkable' but try not to lose the current 'intimate' and 'friendly' visitor experience</li> </ul>
<b>Interpretation and education</b>	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request for enhanced educational services including hands-on experiences and additional staffing</li> </ul>

## Submissions report for Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk project

Topic point	Comments received	Themes raised in the comments
Sustainability	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support for sustainability principles and reuse of materials</li></ul>
Accessibility	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acknowledgement of current barriers and strong support for enhanced accessibility of walkways, building and car parks etc.</li></ul>
The Glade	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong support for the revitalisation of The Glade, including the educational focus of the new compact visitor centre</li><li>• Encouragement to retain the peaceful nature of the precinct</li><li>• Venue for low-key community and educational events</li><li>• Suggestions for different spaces and activities including birdwatching and Aboriginal cultural interpretation</li></ul>

### Example comments

'It all looks awesome! Looking forward to visiting the new facilities'

'The design and layout of the new centre are especially impressive'

'Sustainable design and reuse of materials is very positive and excellent role modelling'

'A gradual descent down to the rainforest floor is needed but it could be achieved gracefully with a shorter constructed pathway of at least half the length'

### NPWS response

In response to the submissions received, the project team will incorporate key suggestions into the next phase of detailed planning. The designs and artists' illustrations presented in the draft master plan are conceptual only and will be developed and refined during the detailed design phase of the project.

The key concerns raised in public feedback are addressed below.

### Case for change

#### *Why is the proposed redevelopment necessary?*

- The new Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to future-proof this popular destination with a bold 50-year vision for sustainable nature tourism. The new centre will welcome a more diverse cross-section of the community and encourage more people to enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits that come from visiting Dorrigo National Park.
- With enhanced education and interpretation facilities and services, we can build our new visitors' connection to the rainforests and foster that sense of awe and respect for nature that leads to future conservation advocacy and stewardship.
- The new Arc Rainforest Centre will also offer a spectacular place to acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal cultural values and perspectives and provide opportunities for Aboriginal communities to rightfully share their culture, and participate in and benefit from the regional visitor economy.

#### *Why not renovate the existing building instead of demolishing it and rebuilding?*

- Doing nothing is not an option as visitation is increasing and regularly exceeds capacity at the existing rainforest centre and car park.

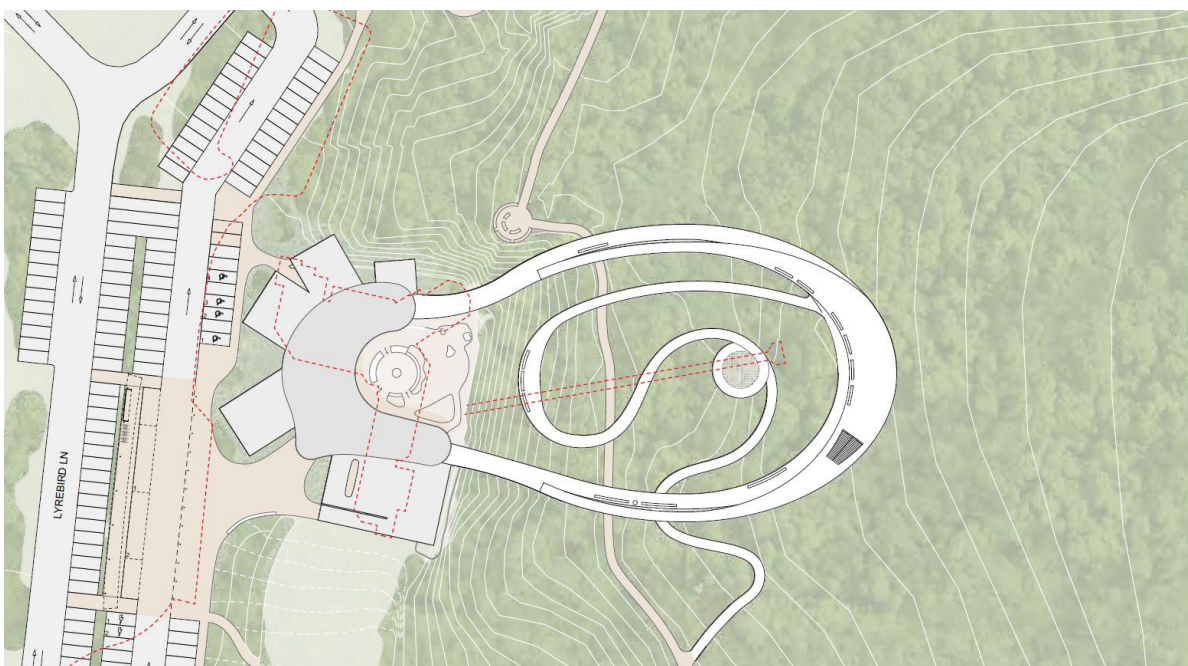
## Submissions report for Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk project

- The existing building is nearing the end of asset life and renovations would compromise future needs and opportunities and be prohibitively expensive in terms of meeting modern efficiency and building standards.
- By demolishing the existing office building, we can redesign the entire footprint for public interpretation, education and enjoyment to maximise educational and social benefits with minimal environmental impacts.
- Building accessibility, design and construction standards have changed and the new build will meet the Building Code of Australia and Australian Standards technical requirements for the design, construction and performance of buildings, plumbing and drainage systems.
- The innovative concept design for the rainforest centre has an adaptable layout that allows for changing priorities and uses over time.
- We are investigating options for additional car parking with safe pedestrian pathways and crossings.

### Concept designs

#### *What will the final Arc elevated walkway look like?*

- The Arc elevated walkway concept (indicative design) will be refined as more data is gathered. Specialist investigations to date include:
  - ecological study of wide area to allow flexibility of alignment of the Arc
  - individual tree mapping by surveyor and value assessment by arborist
  - topographic and geotechnical assessment.
- The environmental assessment (i.e. review of environmental factors) will assess the maximum likely impact of the draft alignment of the Arc and outline mitigation strategies that will be implemented as part of the project.
- Extensive planning is underway to protect and enhance native vegetation including rainforest regeneration initiatives.
- Construction methodology and efficiency and will also influence the scale and alignment of the final Arc.



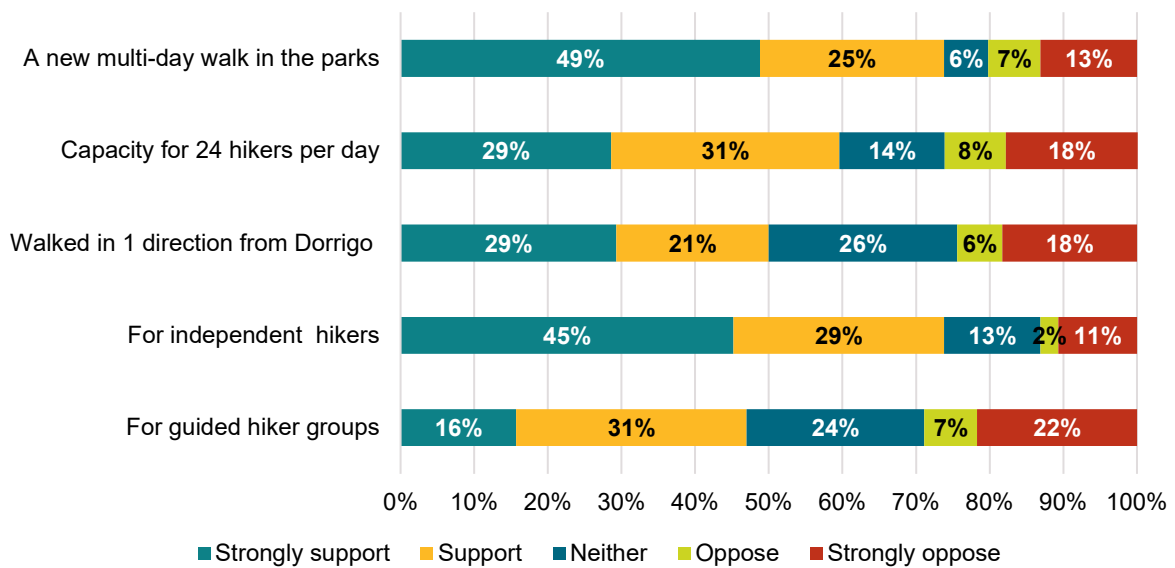
**Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre building siting plan (extract from master plan)**

## 3.2 Dorrigo Escarpment great walk

### Survey responses

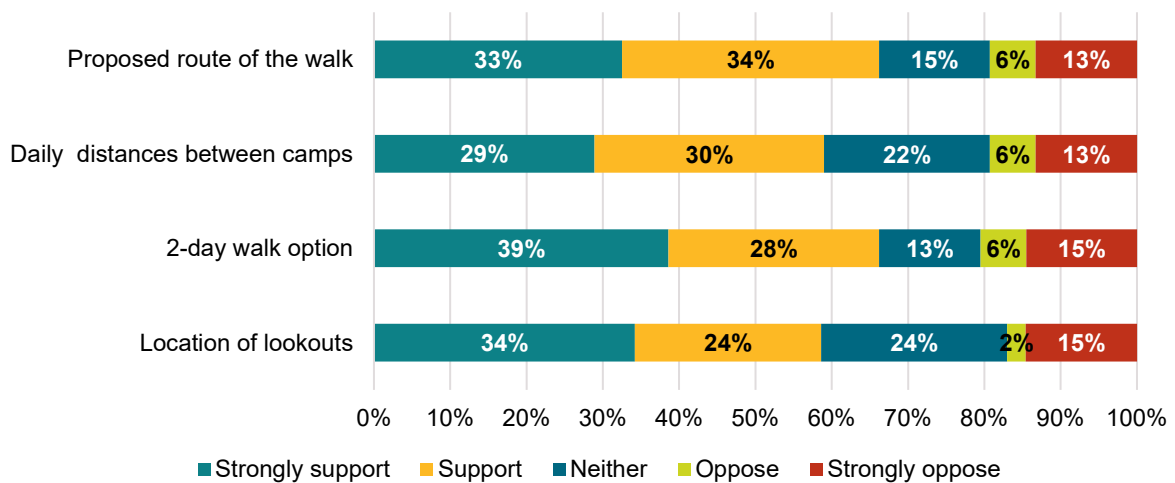
Most respondents supported or strongly supported broad aspects of the proposed multi-day walk proposal. The concept of providing a new multi-day walk in Dorrigo and Bindarri national parks was supported by 74% of the 87 respondents. The proposed daily capacity of 24 walkers was supported by 60%, while its use by independent hikers was supported by 74% with just 13% opposed. Guided hiker groups on the multi-day walk had the lowest level of support at 47% with 22% strongly opposed.

**Do you support the following broad aspects of the proposal for a new 46-km walk in Dorrigo and Bindarri national parks? (n = 87)**



There were also generally good levels of support for the proposed route of the walk and the 2-day walk option (both at 67%), as well as support for the daily distances and location of lookouts (59% and 58%, respectively).

**Do you support the following aspects of the proposed route of the walk? (n = 87)**

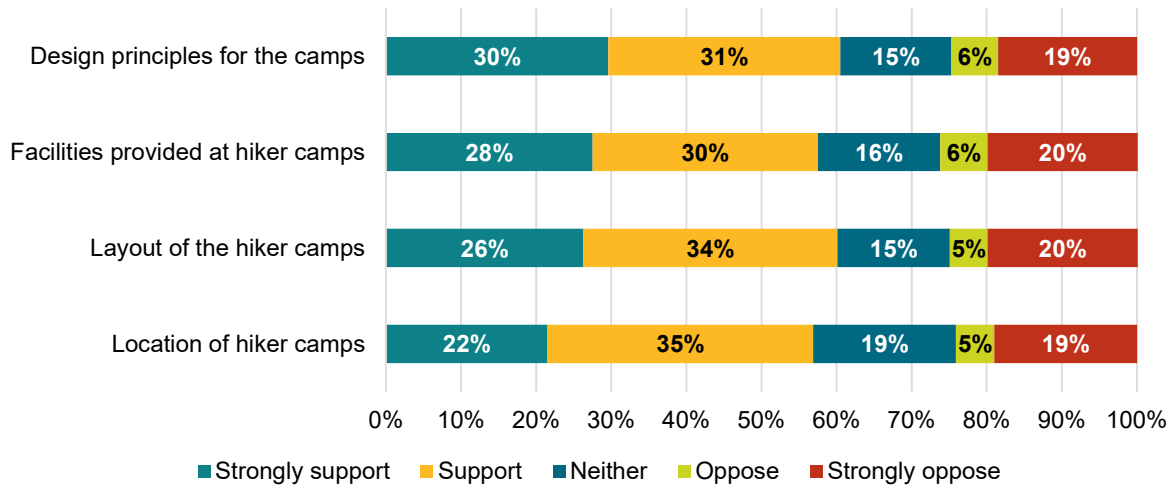




## Submissions report for Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk project

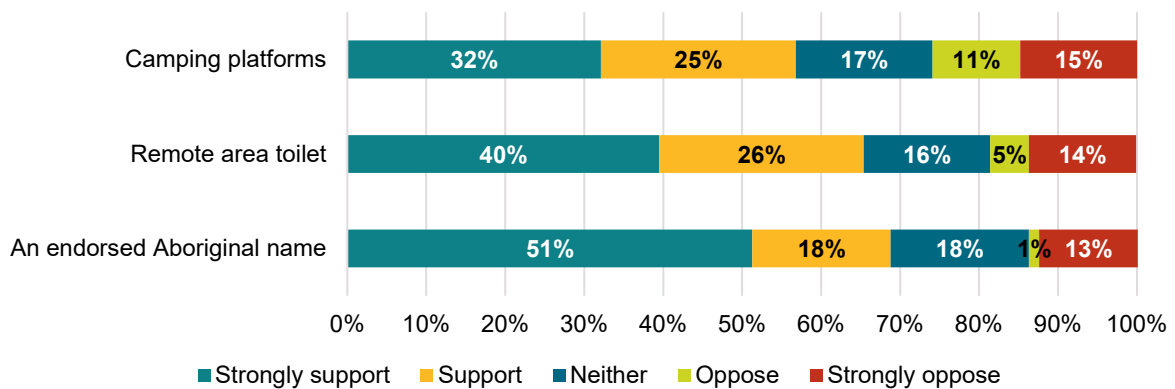
Most respondents supported or strongly supported the concept plans for the hiker camps, with 57 to 60% supportive and 24 to 26% opposed.

**Do you support the concept plans for the hiker camps for the Dorrigo Escarpment great walk? (n = 87)**



There was also good support for the proposal to upgrade and name the existing remote camp near Wild Cattle Creek on Slingsbys Road.

**Do you support the proposal to upgrade and name the existing remote camp near Wild Cattle Creek on Slingsbys Road? (n = 87)**



## Comments and submissions

Analysis of the survey comments and written submissions identified 218 comments that addressed the concept and details of the multi-day walk proposal including specific objections. There are also a number of comments that generally opposed the walk that are summarised in other sections. Comments were grouped by topic point and themes were discerned and explored (Table 3).

## Submissions report for Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk project

**Table 3 Dorrigo Escarpment great walk feedback topic points and themes**

Topic point	Comments received	Themes raised in the comments
<b>Concept and objectives</b>	44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong support for the concept of a new multi-day walk</li> <li>• Support for the walk with some concerns about management</li> <li>• The walk will have educational, health and economic benefits</li> <li>• Great example of sustainable nature-based tourism development</li> <li>• Support for improved access to the spectacular Gleniffer Falls and iconic plateau views from Dome Mountain</li> </ul>
<b>Route of walk</b>	39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily distances are realistic and achievable</li> <li>• 2-day walk option will broaden appeal and be good starter</li> <li>• Both support and opposition to walking in 1 direction – better hiker experience vs flexibility and choice</li> <li>• Support for using existing tracks and trails for walk and access</li> <li>• Support for buffer to safeguard neighbouring landholders</li> </ul>
<b>Hiker camps</b>	38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for location of camps in previously disturbed areas</li> <li>• Strong support for camp platforms to avoid mud and leeches and reduce impacts, and for group platforms for schools</li> <li>• Support for low-key hiker huts and proposed capacity</li> <li>• Support for proposed layout but some like it compact (1 hut only), others want separate sleeping pods to avoid snorers</li> <li>• Support for showers, non-smelly toilets and charging points</li> <li>• Strong sentiment opposing hiker huts:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ inconsistent with the remote natural setting</li> <li>○ footprint will be too large with multiple buildings</li> <li>○ disturbed sites contain regenerating rainforest</li> <li>○ divides walkers according to price</li> <li>○ concern over greywater management</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Day walks and other routes</b>	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong support for access to sections of the walk for day walks</li> <li>• Support for maintaining independent access to existing bushwalking routes along the walk including remote campsite</li> <li>• Suggestions for side-trips to waterfalls and day loop walk from Urumbilum Falls picnic area</li> <li>• Suggestion to add side-track (or alternate Day 4) east from Triple Peak to link with proposed Great Koala National Park</li> </ul>
<b>Walk experience</b>	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommended themes for interpretation e.g. old-growth forest</li> <li>• Opportunity to step away from digital world to benefit wellbeing</li> <li>• Need signage at camps regarding minimal impact behaviour — helps to self-regulate hiker behaviour</li> <li>• Lookouts should be minimal impact without decking or rails</li> <li>• Concerns over river crossings at Rosewood Creek and Dairyville</li> </ul>
<b>Trail running and biking</b>	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowance for runners to do the walk in 1 or 2 days</li> <li>• Interest in establishing an annual 45-km trail running event</li> <li>• Several survey comments requesting additional provision for mountain bikes — on track where route follows management trails, at limited times or alternate tracks</li> </ul>
<b>Operational management</b>	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equitable access for independent hikers relative to licensed guided tours</li> <li>• Request for maximum flexibility for hiker itineraries</li> <li>• Support for mandatory briefings and education on minimal impact, Gumbaynggirr culture and biosecurity protocols</li> <li>• Access to paper-based and digital maps and track notes</li> <li>• Recommendations for hiker safety and emergency exit routes</li> </ul>

## Submissions report for Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk project

Topic point	Comments received	Themes raised in the comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning and ongoing resources for safety and compliance</li><li>• Support for maintenance access and service scheduling</li><li>• Support for track ranger model and/or volunteer camp hosts</li></ul>

### Example comments

'The initiative of the proposed multi-day walk is an outstanding concept'

'This project has the potential to enrich the lives of students and create lasting connections to our natural heritage'

'Generally approve of the walk especially in relation to low key track construction but not in favour of cabin construction along the walk'

'The mandatory check-in process and track briefing is an excellent idea'

'We strongly support the idea of imbedding a Park Ranger on the walk who would walk from hut to hut and undertake track maintenance, public liaison etc'

### NPWS response

NPWS has considered comments on the location, concept design and capacity of the tracks, camps and lookouts in the Dorrigo Escarpment great walk draft master plan, and will continue planning for the walk as proposed, subject to environmental assessment and further investigation.

The following aspects of the proposed multi-day walk have been further examined in response to constructive feedback received during public exhibition.

### Hiker camps

#### *The inclusion of roofed accommodation (huts) at the 3 hiker camps*

Some submissions supported the walk route but wanted to remove hiker huts from the camp concept plans and provide camping platforms and cooking shelters only. We recognise that purpose-built hiker huts are a new concept for multi-day walks in New South Wales, however, there is strong support for the proposed camp facilities as outlined in the draft master plan.

The proposal will proceed to detailed planning, subject to environmental assessment, for the following reasons:

- Hiker huts support participation by a broader range of walkers by reducing pack weight.
- The Dorrigo Escarpment great walk is well-suited to a hut experience, and shelter for sleeping will be appreciated in the wet and cold conditions.
- The proposed huts are not luxury offerings. They are low-key and compact with minimal facilities and will not be visible due to forest setting.
- There may be opportunities for off-park accommodation to provide better standard accommodation with access to some parts of the track.
- Wastewater treatment and micro-hydro ventilation options are being investigated.
- Potential impact will be determined with Commonwealth World Heritage oversight.

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### *Location of Camp 3 within Bindarri National Park*

Some submissions raised concerns about the walking times and distances proposed for Day 3. It is difficult to estimate the walking times for Day 3 before a track is constructed due to the rugged nature of this section of the route. The location of Camp 3 will be further field tested to ensure Day 3 and Day 4 are optimal length walking days. Scoping for an alternative nearby location has identified potential sites for further investigation.

Any possible new site would be assessed on the following criteria:

- A previously disturbed footprint with sufficient level terrain to allow for camp configuration.
- Suitable vegetation setting to minimise tree risk and mitigation works.
- Proximity to flowing water for potential micro-hydro power for building ventilation.
- Existing road access for camp facility construction and maintenance.
- Optimal Day 3 and Day 4 walk distances.

Any new site option for Camp 3 will be fully investigated and, if selected, would be subject to the same environmental and cultural heritage assessments, and approval of a modified review of environmental factors.

### *School group camping*

NPWS will consider the best way to provide equitable access for larger group bookings such as school groups. This may include access to block bookings for schools at the proposed hiker tent platforms or dedicated group camping platforms within the camp footprint.

### **Day walks and other routes**

Some submissions proposed an additional side-track (or alternative route for Day 4) from Tuckers Knob to Triple Peak and east towards the coast. Reasons cited were to reduce visitor impacts on the Urumbilum River valley, protect water quality and link to proposed Great Koala National Park visitor facilities. NPWS is not making these changes to the draft master plan route at this time for the following reasons:

- There was strong support for the proposed Day 4 route and for creating access to the Urumbilum River valley. This is an opportunity to create additional nature-based recreational facilities close to Coffs Harbour.
- Most of Day 4 is on existing management and historical trails with minimal additional disturbance required.
- A side-track to link to the proposed Great Koala National Park will be considered in future planning. Any such link would currently involve walking on roads or through private property as well as state forest, so is unable to be completed in the timeframe of this project.

Several submissions suggested additional side-tracks to a number of waterfalls on the Urumbilum River and one very detailed track proposal was received. These side-tracks require significant investment due to very steep terrain and will be considered as funding allows.

Suggestions to reduce new track construction by using existing walking tracks for the Dome Mountain to Baliiga section and by using Whitneys Trail for the Lanes lookout to Camp 2 section have been considered but would not provide the same quality of hiker experience. The existing tracks and trails do not include key highlights of the route such as Dome Mountain view on Day 1 and old-growth forests and Anscombes Hill lookout on Day 2. The Dome Mountain section is essential to the 2-day walk experience and will also provide a spectacular new full-day loop from Baliiga picnic area.

### Walk experience

One detailed submission questioned the safety and suitability of a stepping stone crossing at Rosewood Creek on Day 2 of the walk. The project team have reviewed this proposal in light of new hydrological and streamflow data and agreed that a suspension bridge is required.

### Trail running and biking

NPWS will consider a limited number of trail running events per year. Independent occasional runners will be allowed, subject to bookings and monitoring of social and environmental impacts.

The Dorrigo Escarpment great walk is planned to be for walkers only. The proposed standard of the walk (Grade 4) will not allow dual use by bike riders and walkers. The terrain includes steep rocky areas, steps, rock boulders and river crossings, and along with the high rainfall experienced in the area, it's likely that the impacts of bike use on the Grade 4 track will not be compatible with environmental protection or the walking experience. Mountain bikes are allowed on management trails, including Plateau Circuit loop trail in Bindarri National Park (via Range Road, Bangalore, Loudens and Urumbilum roads) and Slingsbys Trail to Lanes lookout in Dorrigo National Park.

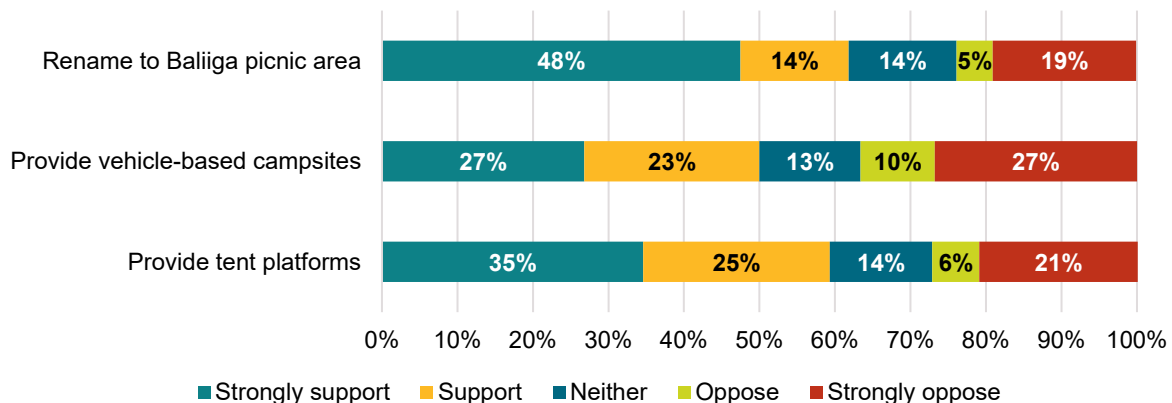
## 3.3 Baliiga precinct plan

The draft Baliiga precinct plan was exhibited at the same time as the master plans to seek input into the future use of the precinct. The draft plan included proposals to provide low-key overnight camping at the Never Never picnic area, and to rename the picnic area Baliiga (the Gumbayngirr word for the rosewood tree).

### Survey responses

Survey respondents generally supported the proposal to rename Never Never picnic area to Baliiga picnic area, with 62% of the 87 respondents in favour and 24% opposed. Half of respondents (50%) supported the proposal to provide a small number of bookable vehicle-based campsites at Baliiga. The same proportion of respondents (27%) were strongly opposed to campsites as were strongly supportive. More survey respondents supported the introduction of tent platforms (60%).

**Do you support the proposal to rename Never Never picnic area to Baliiga picnic area and provide a small number of bookable campsites at the Baliiga precinct? (n = 87)**



## Comments and submissions

Analysis of the survey comments and written submissions identified 58 comments that addressed the concept and details of the Baliiga precinct plan. Themes are summarised in Table 4 by topic points.

**Table 4 Baliiga precinct plan feedback topic points and themes**

Topic point	Comments received	Themes raised in the comments
<b>Camping at Baliiga precinct</b>	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support low-key camping at Baliiga precinct consistent with the remote natural setting</li> <li>• Oppose camping due to limited capacity of precinct and increasing demand for day walks</li> <li>• Concern camping would ruin the aesthetics and ambience of the precinct and encroach on day use facilities</li> <li>• Oppose camping for environmental reasons including intensification of use, impacts on wildlife and fire risk</li> <li>• Oppose camping as it could compete with campgrounds in Dorrigo township</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental values</b>	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern that advanced blackbutts will be removed</li> <li>• Concern that campers will negatively impact rivers</li> </ul>
<b>Historic heritage conservation</b>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for the conservation works on picnic shelter</li> <li>• Disappointed by previous maintenance and disrepair</li> </ul>
<b>Renaming with Aboriginal name</b>	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong support for new Gumbaynggirr name</li> <li>• Nostalgic attachment to the name Never Never</li> <li>• Concern over authenticity of proposed Gumbaynggirr name</li> </ul>

### Example comments

'Camping will simply just congest the picnic area and the precinct overall. This space will be needed to cater for the anticipated future day walking demand'

'Really do love our beautiful national parks that we can camp in so yes I agree'

'This proposal aims to develop what should be pristine. Ruin nature and make it city friendly'

## NPWS response

The draft Baliiga precinct plan is not funded or managed as part of the Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk project. Improvements to the precinct may occur as required and as funding becomes available.

### Environmental values and historic heritage conservation

#### *Historic picnic shelter and tree removal*

Conservation and restoration work on the shelter is underway. Prior to this work, arborist contractors removed high-risk trees to make the area safer for the workers and for future visitors. Five trees directly around the picnic shelter were removed to reinstate the original open feel of the picnic area and reduce damp in line with the heritage report recommendations. Following community feedback, some of the blackbutts around the

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shelter that had been identified for removal were able to be retained, with strategic de-limbing sufficient to make the trees safe. None of the trees removed were hollow-bearing. NPWS will continue to monitor and manage vegetation in the picnic area for safety and accessibility.

### Camping at Baliiga precinct

The proposal to add camping facilities to Baliiga picnic area is permitted by the recently adopted plan of management (NPWS 2024), but is currently unfunded and not part of the Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk project. The concept plan for the multi-day walk proposes a walk-in camp 400 m from the picnic area for both 2-day and 4-day walkers which may meet some of the current demand. NPWS will monitor visitation demand and may decide to activate camping at Baliiga in the future or investigate alternative locations in other parks.

### Other works

- NPWS has upgraded the 5 ageing bridge culverts on Dome Road to secure ongoing vehicle access to Baliiga picnic area.
- A new accessible dual-stall toilet has also been installed in the picnic area.
- More accessible pathways will be provided between the car park, picnic shelter and toilets.

## 3.4 Protecting natural and cultural values

There were 166 references to protecting natural and cultural values from 40 submissions and 31 survey comments on the master plans. It is noted that natural values are also inherently Aboriginal cultural values of healthy Country in this cultural landscape. Themes of these comments are outlined in Table 5.

**Table 5 Protecting natural and cultural values feedback topic points and themes**

Topic point	Comments received	Themes raised in the comments
<b>Aboriginal cultural values and connection</b>	34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support for integrating Gumbaynggirr culture and perspectives into the visitor centre and walk experiences</li><li>• Support for Aboriginal joint management of national parks</li><li>• Support for further studies into Aboriginal cultural heritage</li><li>• Support for adopting Aboriginal place names</li><li>• Support for increased opportunities for employment and training for Aboriginal people</li></ul>
<b>Environmental impacts</b>	76	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Construction of the walking track will require clearing of natural habitat and will disrupt endangered species</li><li>• Need to prevent bird strike on windows of the rainforest centre</li><li>• Potential for proposals to degrade World Heritage values</li><li>• There are alternative locations for a multi-day walk in the area that would not impact World Heritage values</li><li>• The impacts of increasing informal access for canyoning could be managed by providing resilient tracks</li><li>• Support for proposed survey and assessment processes</li></ul>
<b>Pathogens and diseases</b>	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concern about hikers spreading plant pathogens and diseases including phytophthora and myrtle rust</li><li>• Concern for significant Gondwana frog species at risk from amphibian disease chytridiomycosis</li><li>• Need for robust hygiene and biosecurity protocols</li></ul>

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Topic point	Comments received	Themes raised in the comments
<b>Rivers and water quality</b>	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for further research and monitoring of pathogens</li> <li>• Concern about erosion from construction impacting water quality of clean rivers</li> <li>• Concern about impacts of increased visitor use of upper catchments on drinking water quality</li> <li>• Need for education to reduce pollution e.g. insect repellent</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental benefits</b>	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for increasing opportunities to access and connect with nature leading to pro-conservation behaviours</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for participation in rainforest rehabilitation and conservation activities</li> </ul>

### Example comments

'Developing major new infrastructure in a gazetted World Heritage Area will degrade the conservation, heritage and water security values of this globally significant public asset'

'The Great Walk proposal is inappropriate for these parks due to the risks of pathogenic organisms being spread by people and harming key World Heritage values'

'The continued value of Aboriginal Culture awareness of place and presence through employment, art and management should be high on the objectives'

## NPWS response

### Environmental impacts

#### *Environmental approval process*

Conservation and environmental protection are fundamental objectives of NPWS. The Dorrigo Escarpment great walk proposal aims to balance the natural, cultural and social values of Dorrigo and Bindarri national parks by providing exceptional nature-based visitor experiences that inspire visitors and create a valued legacy for future generations. Similarly, the Arc Rainforest Centre proposal aims to protect, respect and promote the park's environmental and cultural heritage.

As part of its environmental responsibilities as a public land manager, NPWS ensures that no activities within its parks and reserves occur without environmental impact assessment required under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

Before a proposal is approved, NPWS must be satisfied that the proposal is:

- consistent with the objectives of the National Parks and Wildlife Act (permissible)
- consistent with an adopted plan of management
- appropriate for the park and that any adverse impacts on park values can be avoided or mitigated to an acceptable level.

A draft review of environmental factors has been prepared for each proposal by independent consultants in collaboration with NPWS and stakeholders. They examine the significance of likely environmental impacts of the proposals, including impacts raised in submissions, and the measures required to mitigate adverse impacts.

Public exhibition of the reviews of environmental factors and supporting documentation aims to raise awareness of the proposed activities and to assist the determining authority to assess the significance of likely environmental impacts. The reviews and approval process



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will also involve consultation with the Australian Government regarding World Heritage values.

### *Managing environmental risks*

A key outcome of the project's 2 proposals is future-proofing the park, by ensuring existing and future visitation demand is managed in a safe and sustainable way. The investment in this project will improve the ability of NPWS to meet increasing visitation demand and ensure sensitive locations, and ecological and cultural values are protected.

Construction of the track will involve the removal of some native vegetation, however, it is important to note that the impact would be limited to linear clearing of groundcover and understorey vegetation only (up to 2 m wide with a 600 mm track pad). No mature or hollow-bearing trees will be removed during track construction, avoiding and minimising potential impacts to fauna.

Both construction and operations for each proposal will be guided by environmental management plans that outline specific actions to mitigate risks. Expert technical advice has been sought to ensure mitigation measures are relevant and achievable and appropriate to the specific project area. For example, the environmental management plan for the Dorrigo Escarpment great walk will include:

- best-practice hygiene infrastructure and protocols to help reduce the risk of introducing or spreading pathogens and weeds
- micro-sighting of the walk route alignment and use of hand tools during construction
- track closures during periods of high fire risk or severe weather events
- management of toilet waste at hiker camps through full capture and removal.

There are also significant opportunities to rehabilitate degraded sections of rainforest in the parks, for example where vines have smothered regrowth south of the current skywalk in the rainforest centre precinct.

## **Aboriginal cultural values and connection**

### *Protecting Aboriginal cultural values*

The reviews of environmental factors are supported by Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment reports. Access to the cultural heritage assessment reports is restricted to registered Aboriginal parties and nominated knowledge holders.

Aboriginal land councils and organisations were consulted extensively throughout the planning process and endorsed the track route and location of Camps 1, 2 and 3. Consultation will continue to ensure the project delivers Aboriginal community aspirations and outcomes.

The new plan of management for the parks (NPWS 2024) also proposes actions to support research and cultural surveys that assist in the understanding, recording and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage values.

## **3.5 Equity and community wellbeing**

There were a range of comments related to the social and community aspects of the proposed developments. Some of these addressed the potential impacts on local communities and neighbours, and others referred to the equity and affordability of experiences in national parks. Themes relating to equity and community wellbeing are outlined in Table 6.

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**Table 6 Equity and community wellbeing feedback topic points and themes**

Topic point	Comments received	Themes raised in the comments
<b>Equitable access and affordability</b>	58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An entry fee for the rainforest centre contradicts objectives to increase accessibility and enhance wellbeing</li> <li>• The multi-day walk should be affordable, and free for day use</li> <li>• NPWS should ensure equitable booking access for independent hikers relative to commercial operators</li> <li>• Hut accommodation is unnecessary and creates exclusivity</li> <li>• Support for partnership opportunities with credentialled and experienced tour operators</li> <li>• A request for any change to stated principles of NPWS management of the walk to undergo public consultation</li> </ul>
<b>Traffic and road access</b>	41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congestion and safety of travelling on the Waterfall Way</li> <li>• Increased impacts to road infrastructure and funds required for upgrades including for Dome Road</li> <li>• Increasing extreme weather events impacting Waterfall Way and need for alternate route via Cascade</li> </ul>
<b>Social impacts and wellbeing</b>	32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New walking tracks will improve health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Enhanced recreational opportunities will generate further public support for conserving and protecting the parks</li> <li>• Overcrowding on the rainforest centre tracks will detract from quiet experiences of nature such as birdwatching</li> <li>• Need for active transport link (bike path) to Dorrigo</li> </ul>
<b>Neighbour amenity</b>	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park neighbours value the forested areas of their properties</li> <li>• New track is in close proximity to unfenced boundaries</li> <li>• Track construction may impact rainforest microclimates</li> <li>• Concern about loss of amenity, illegal access, fire, biosecurity, safety of livestock, parking, overlooking and dust from traffic</li> <li>• Detrimental visual impact of new Arc Rainforest Centre</li> <li>• Neighbours may consider seeking compensation for loss of amenity</li> </ul>

### Example comments

'The development of more extended walking tracks and routes will contribute to better physical and mental health and improve people's connectivity to the natural world'

'I'm very concerned about access on Waterfall Way from Bellingen. The road is unsafe at the best of times and increased traffic will only make this more of a concern'

'Dorrigo is a small country town and we don't want throngs of people stressing our infrastructure and clogging the road further'

'I would strongly advocate for the right of independent walkers to continue to have unencumbered access to existing use routes throughout the park, even if Great Walk'

### NPWS response

NPWS provides nature-based tourism experiences that meet conservation and economic development goals and are in line with NPWS key objectives. The project will need to balance conservation of natural, cultural and social values with economic and tourism opportunities.

### Equitable access and affordability

The Dorrigo Escarpment great walk will be managed and operated by NPWS. Hikers will be able to do the walk independently or guided with a licensed commercial tour operator.

NPWS values and respects commercial tour operators in our parks, and we will continue to work closely with operators to deliver a range of associated services to support and add value to the multi-day walk experience. These may include, but not be limited to:

- licensed commercial tour operators offering various levels of assistance to individuals or groups, including catered walks
- Aboriginal cultural guided tours/walks
- guided day walks
- shuttle bus transport package options.

All licences for commercial tourism related services and experiences for the Dorrigo Escarpment great walk will be issued via a fair and transparent competitive expression of interest process managed by NPWS. The walk will not have separate commercial or private exclusive use components. The same facilities available to independent walks will be those used by guided walkers. Pricing is yet to be decided and fees will be determined along with other NPWS Great Walks and benchmarked against other similar walks in Australia.

### Traffic and road access

NPWS and Bellingen Shire Council are working together to manage and mitigate traffic and road safety concerns. A traffic impact assessment has been developed and the recommendations will be delivered as appropriate.

The final detailed design phase for the Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre will consider movement patterns and dispersal of visitors, especially in peak periods, aspiring to retain the tranquil nature of the current rainforest experience.

### Neighbour amenity

NPWS will continue to consult with park neighbours about the potential impacts of the proposals on their operations and amenity. A track ranger for the walk can identify and manage emerging risks and implement pest and weed control and monitoring as well as fire risk mitigation works.

Daily limits on multi-day hikers, signage, education and pre-walk briefings will also help minimise the impacts of visitor behaviour on park values and neighbours.

### 3.6 Project alignment, planning and engagement

Comments from submissions summarised in this section include justification for the project, alternative expenditure options and coordination with planning for the proposed Great Koala National Park. Many comments supported the proposals presented in the draft master plans, while some submissions raised concerns that the proposals do not align well with the primary purpose of national parks. Themes relating to project alignment, planning and engagement are outlined in Table 7.

**Table 7 Project alignment, planning and engagement feedback topic points and themes**

Topic point	Comments received	Themes raised in the comments
<b>Justification for new facilities</b>	131	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and recognition of the need for the new facilities</li> <li>• Benefits are clear and well-articulated in draft master plans</li> <li>• The walk plan is extensively researched and well informed</li> <li>• Tourism development is out of sync with worsening climate impacts and changing social situation</li> <li>• Environmental awareness benefits could be achieved without introducing more people into this remote natural environment</li> <li>• Visitor facilities should be kept out of pristine wilderness areas</li> </ul>
<b>Alignment with the legislative purposes of national parks</b>	90	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management focus should be on addressing threats to biodiversity and strengthening climate and disaster resilience</li> <li>• Budget should be directed to rehabilitation of degraded areas of the Great Koala National Park and post-fire recovery, rehabilitation and restoration in Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage property</li> <li>• Maintenance of proposed facilities will continue to divert funding and staff from managing conservation values</li> <li>• Compliance monitoring, reporting and review are required to ensure public confidence and support for proposals</li> </ul>
<b>Project inception and planning</b>	78	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for sustainable visitor facility funding package</li> <li>• Concern over full transparency of private business interests</li> <li>• Questions about rationale for NSW Great Walks program</li> <li>• Request for business case and visitor data to be shared</li> <li>• Planning should include wider area of escarpment to coast, including New England and Great Koala national parks</li> <li>• Support for multi-day walk with local NPWS management</li> </ul>
<b>Economic, tourism and recreation opportunities</b>	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spectacular proposal that will draw visitors to Dorrigo and bring economic prosperity to the region through tourism</li> <li>• Cafe could compete with outlets in Dorrigo and Bellingen</li> <li>• Walk will enhance recreational values in the region and contribute to better physical and mental health</li> <li>• Enhanced accessibility will be welcomed and utilised</li> <li>• Opportunity for waterfall loop walk in Bindarri National Park</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement process</b>	47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appreciation for public opportunity to provide feedback</li> <li>• Information provided in the draft master plans is very helpful</li> <li>• Master plans reduce public accountability of planning process</li> <li>• Some statements in the master plan are biased or misleading</li> </ul>

## Example comments

'Wonderful accessible plan. Have a disabled daughter and we plan to utilise this development when it's done. She currently cannot access'

'It is obvious that the skywalk is getting tired and is about due for major refurbishment or decommissioning... the new design will no doubt set a new benchmark'

'NPWS is to be congratulated for creating a network of spectacular multi-day walks'

'An excessive, wasteful and misdirected allocation of substantial funds to capital works'

## NPWS response

### Justification for new facilities

The proposal to replace the Dorrigo Rainforest Centre was locally driven by a range of current and emerging challenges. The existing Dorrigo Rainforest Centre and The Glade picnic area facilities were built in the late 1980s and are approaching the end of useful asset life in terms of safety, capacity and performance, with increasing maintenance liabilities.

Visitation is already on the rise with higher regional populations and improved transport links, and preparing the centre to effectively manage congestion and reduce impacts is timely. A large injection of funding was required to provide a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reimagine and future-proof this enduring destination.

The concept plans also aim to address some of the access barriers that currently exist and encourage a greater diversity of the community to learn about Gondwana rainforests and enjoy the physical, mental and social wellbeing benefits of visiting the park.

The new Arc Rainforest Centre will also offer a place to acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal cultural values and perspectives and to work with Aboriginal partners to showcase local Gumbaynggirr culture and connections.

### Project rationale and inception

A multi-day walk linking the tablelands to the coast along the Great Escarpment has been proposed in different forms over many decades. More recently, a multi-day walk from Point Lookout to the coast along the escarpment was proposed as part of the broader Great Koala National Park proposal.

The Dorrigo Escarpment multi-day walk proposal was an initiative of local NPWS staff and had initial scoping and design input from experienced walk designers and builders. The driving philosophy is to provide an affordable experience with options for both camping and hiker huts that allows more people to connect to nature, culture and each other. Private commercial tourism interests have not been involved in developing the walk.

Regardless of tracks, more and more people are using trail apps to explore and share their adventures in remote natural areas. The Dorrigo Escarpment great walk will help to manage this increasing use with sustainable infrastructure and improved education to reduce impacts.

### Legislative alignment

The project aligns with the management principles of national parks in New South Wales as set out in section 2A of the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

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The new *Dorrigo National Park, Bindarri National Park and Bindarri State Conservation Area plan of management* (NPWS 2024) was recently adopted under the Act. The plan of management provides for the ongoing protection of the parks' significant natural and cultural values. It also ensures that visitors have an opportunity to experience and learn about the Gondwana rainforests through world-class facilities and interpretation, including the proposed new visitor centre and multi-day walk.

The proposals as outlined in the draft master plans are not inconsistent with the World Heritage management principles as set out in Schedules 5 and 5B of the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Regulations 2000.

## 4. Next steps

NPWS will continue to engage with local communities and inform them about the project's progress. Ongoing conversations with Aboriginal groups and key stakeholders will help realise the range of environmental, social and economic benefits of the project.

The next opportunity to provide feedback to ensure the best outcomes for the parks, the community and the project is the public exhibition of the review of environmental factors – the environmental assessment for activities proposed on land reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

Thank you for your interest and ongoing involvement in the Dorrigo Escarpment great walk and Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre projects.

## 5. More information

NPWS will continue to provide updates as the project progresses. Anyone who has not yet registered their interest in the project can do so on the [Dorrigo Escarpment Great Walk project webpage](#). Links to the draft master plans are also located on the project webpage.

NPWS (2024) '[Dorrigo National Park, Bindarri National Park and Bindarri State Conservation Area plan of management](#)', Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Parramatta.

# Appendix A

## Submissions from organisations

The following organisations made submissions on the draft master plans for the Dorrigo Arc Rainforest Centre and the Dorrigo Escarpment great walk:

- Bellingen Shire Council
- Protect our National Parks
- North Coast Environment Council
- Nambucca Valley Conservation Association
- Bellingen Environment Centre
- Shoalhaven Bushwalking Club
- Urunga Business and Community
- National Parks Association Coffs Coast Branch
- National Parks Association Tamworth Branch
- National Parks Association Armidale Branch
- National Parks Association NSW

And draft plan of management submissions from these organisations were included in this analysis:

- Forest Ecology Alliance
- DCCEE World and National Heritage
- Bushwalking NSW
- Wilderness Australia



## Appendix B

### Decision criteria

The following criteria were used to decide if the draft master plan should be changed or not changed, based on points raised in submissions.

#### Criteria to change the plan

<b>Criterion 1</b>	Provide an alternative strategy or action that would better support delivery of plan of management and project objectives
<b>Criterion 2</b>	Provide new, updated or additional information of direct relevance to the project
<b>Criterion 3</b>	Highlight a basic factual or editorial error or omission that should be corrected

#### Criteria to not change the plan

<b>Criterion 4</b>	Agree with or support the general intent of the master plan
<b>Criterion 5</b>	Discuss a matter beyond the scope of the master plan, including matters still subject to environmental assessment, and detailed information that does not need to be included in the plan
<b>Criterion 6</b>	Discuss a matter that is adequately addressed in master plan
<b>Criterion 7</b>	Are general comments or statements that are not specific enough to allow further consideration
<b>Criterion 8</b>	Are inaccurate or incorrect
<b>Criterion 9</b>	Are inconsistent with NSW Government policy or legislation
<b>Criterion 10</b>	Are considered a low priority relative to other commitments