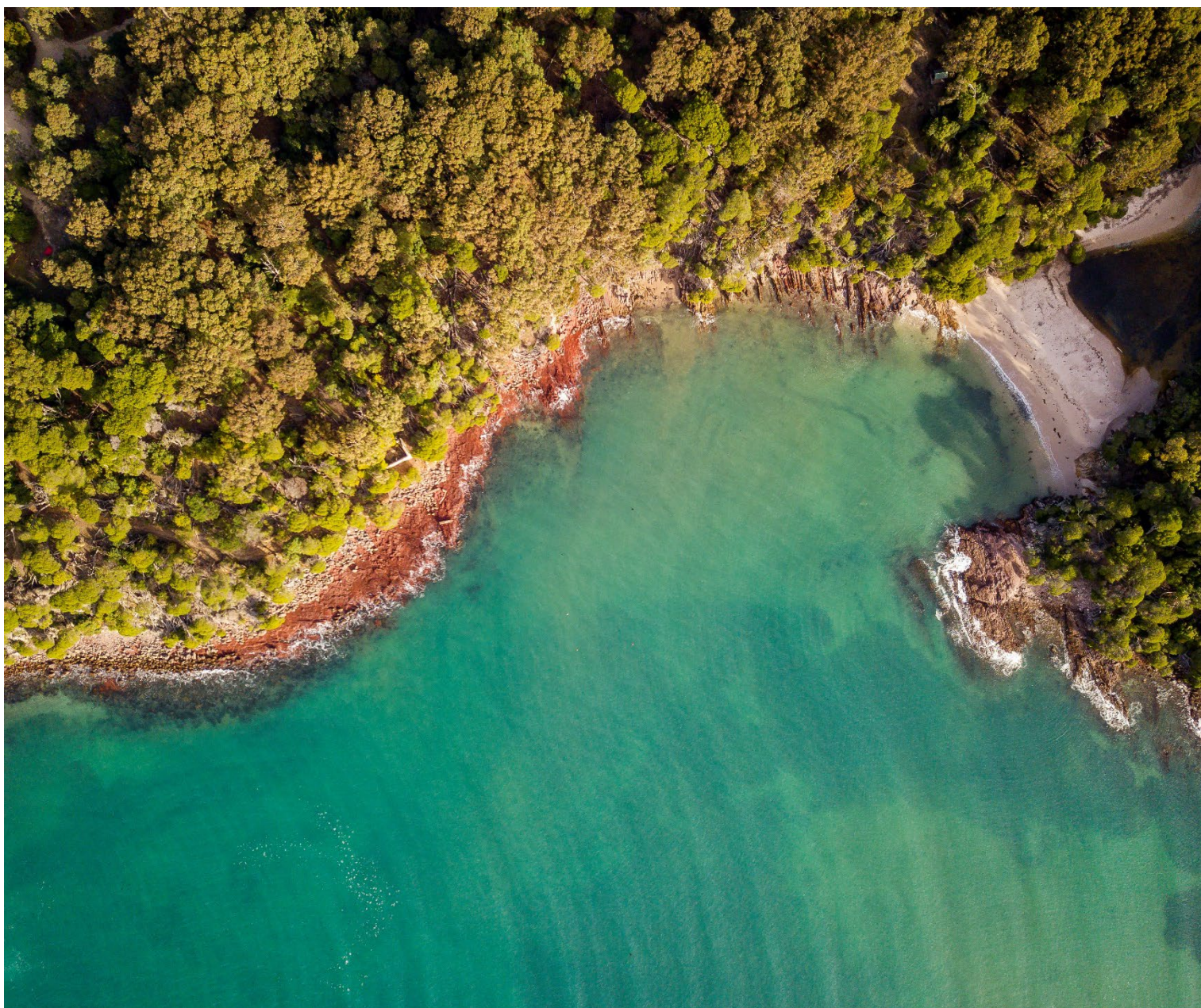




NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

Light to Light Walk Strategy

Beowa National Park



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Summary

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has been awarded \$7.9 million from the NSW Government's Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund to upgrade and partially realign the existing Light to Light Walk and provide new accommodation options for walkers in Beowa National Park near Eden. Construction will be undertaken in a staged approach. Provided necessary approvals are granted, the first stage is expected to be completed by late 2022.

The upgraded Light to Light Walk will allow visitors to undertake an immersive nature-based multi-day walk experience that highlights the many special characteristics of the NSW Far South Coast, including remoteness, coastal connection and cultural heritage.

The project will deliver a signature multi-day coastal walk, transforming the existing campground walk experience with hut-to-hut and lighthouse style accommodation in addition to new walk-in campgrounds. The walk, along with all accommodation, will remain a public walk and be managed by NPWS.

The walk will be able to be undertaken self-guided or guided with a licensed commercial tour operator. Additional commercial tourism related services will also be offered which complement the Light to Light Walk. All licences for commercial tourism related services for the Light to Light Walk will be issued via a fair and transparent competitive expression of interest (EOI) process managed by NPWS.

Pack-campers will continue to be able to experience the Light to Light Walk and will benefit from the provision of new, purpose-built walk-in campgrounds and the continued use of existing park campgrounds.

The walk upgrade is designed to increase visitor appreciation and engagement with the conservation values of the park, while protecting park values and reducing environmental impacts. The upgrades aim to encourage a greater diversity of visitors to undertake the walk, cater to the demand for high quality walking experiences and support the ongoing management of the walk.

This strategy provides direction for NPWS to complete the Light to Light Walk project, explains the background and context, objectives and expected outcomes, and visitor market research that has informed the project. The strategy details the assessment and approval processes that NPWS has undertaken and will apply to guide the development, implementation and management of the walk.

The project involves a range of works which will be undertaken in line with relevant environmental and cultural heritage assessments, and ongoing community and stakeholder engagement. These works include construction of new walking tracks, realignment of existing tracks, closure of sections of existing tracks, construction of new hut accommodation and walk-in campgrounds. The extent to which these works will be delivered is subject to funding.

1. Introduction

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has developed this strategy to guide the proposed upgrades to the existing Light to Light Walk and associated visitor experiences located in the Beowa National Park on the Far South Coast of New South Wales. The project will aim to deliver a spectacular 30-kilometre coastal walk supported by hut and lighthouse accommodation, in addition to existing campground and new walk-in campgrounds.

The upgraded Light to Light Walk will allow visitors to undertake an immersive nature-based multi-day walk experience that highlights the many special characteristics of the NSW Far South Coast including remoteness, coastal connection and cultural heritage. When combined with purpose-built hut accommodation, the walk will enhance the region's reputation as an iconic, coastal nature-based destination in Australia and encourage a greater diversity of visitors to undertake the walk.

1.1 Purpose of this strategy

This strategy details the background and context for the Light to Light Walk project, explains the project's objectives and expected outcomes, including the development of commercial partnerships with the tourism and services industry. It also details the assessment and approval processes that NPWS will apply to guide the development, implementation and management of the project. Delivery of this strategy is subject to funding, with some elements of the project dependent on further detailed costing and feasibility assessment.

This strategy is consistent with the management strategies and programs outlined in the *Ben Boyd National Park and Bell Bird Creek Nature Reserve Plan of Management* (the plan of management) as amended in 2021.

This strategy has been developed to be a 'living document'. It will be updated to address community and stakeholder feedback, the outcomes of environmental and cultural heritage assessments, further detailed costing and feasibility, operational and design requirements, and visitor expectations. This version of the strategy incorporates the changes made as a result of the public exhibition of the June 2019 draft strategy, which was exhibited alongside the draft plan of management amendment in July and August 2019.

Table 1 outlines the key changes and updates made to the strategy due to public feedback on the earlier draft strategy and further planning and assessment work that NPWS has undertaken.

Table 1 Key changes made since the June 2019 draft strategy

Project development	Key change
Comments raised during public exhibition of the draft strategy and plan of management amendment	
Concerns raised about the potential loss of remote walk-in camping opportunities	NPWS will formalise a low-key, walk-in only public campground at Mowarry Point and develop a new purpose-built walk-in campground at Bittangabee Bay for use by pack-campers doing the walk (see Section 3.4 for pack-camping itineraries).
Concerns raised about the privatisation of on-park accommodation	This strategy affirms that the walk and all accommodation will remain a public walk and managed by NPWS.
Concerns raised about no longer being able to stay at Green Cape Lightstation for casual short-stay accommodation	NPWS is committed to offering casual short-stay bookings for visitors not doing the walk for a minimum four-week period each year.
Preliminary assessments	
Preliminary environmental, Aboriginal cultural and heritage assessments along the length of the proposed route have been undertaken	<p>As a result of assessment work, many of the proposed new sections of track between Boyds Tower and Bittangabee Bay will not be constructed, and the route will revert to the existing track. Maps in Appendix A show the current existing and proposed new sections of track.</p> <p>Note, the final walking track alignment is subject to approval of these assessments and will be guided by the review of environmental factors and funding.</p>



Photo 1 Green Cape Lighthouse. John Spencer/DPE



Light to Light Walk Overview

Beowa National Park

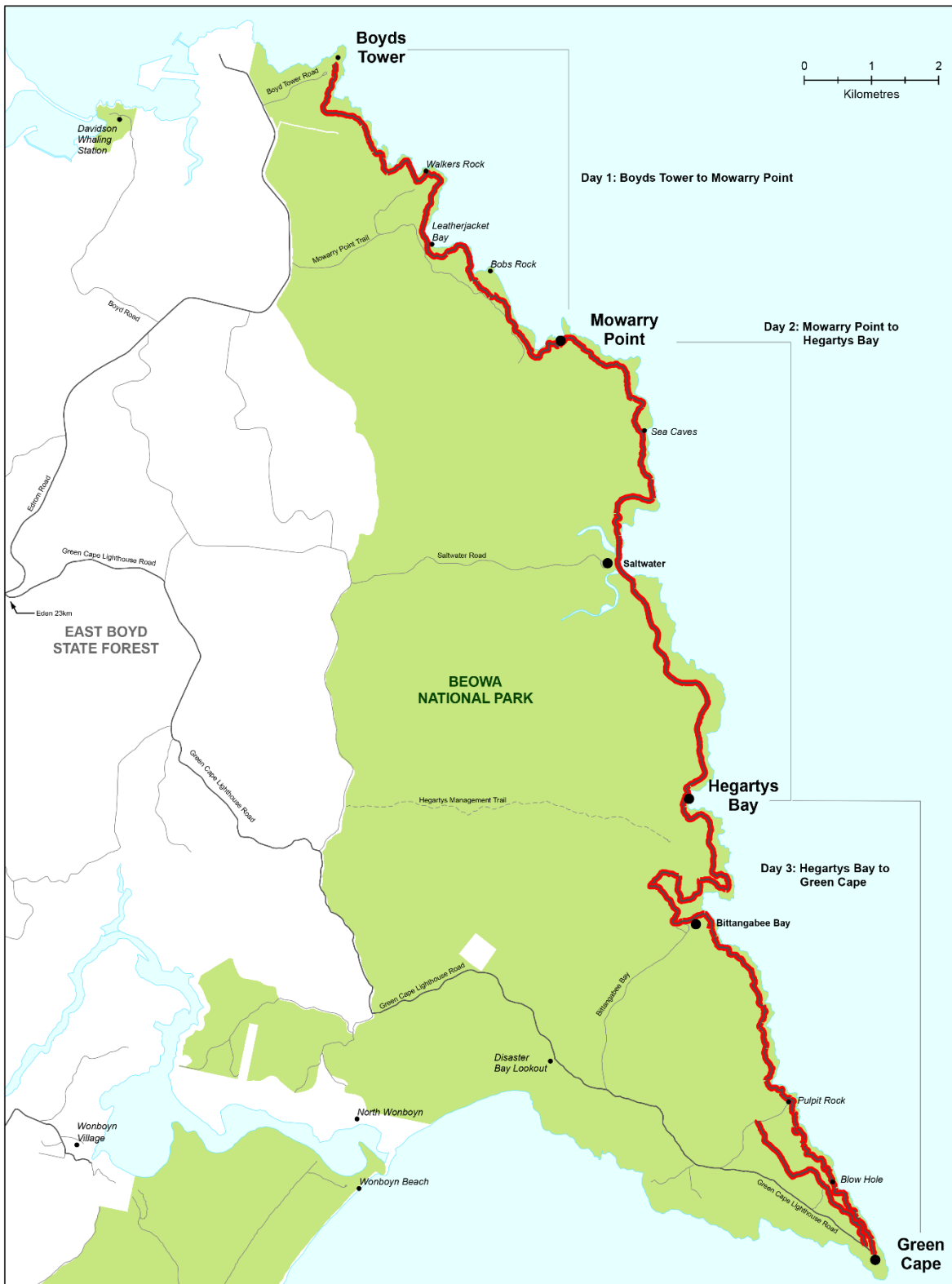


Figure 1 Light to Light Walk

1.2 Objectives of this strategy

This strategy will:

- set the vision and standards to achieve project objectives (detailed further)
- guide NPWS in the design and development of the upgraded Light to Light Walk
- provide clear parameters for the design of new track alignments and the design and construction of new accommodation
- guide NPWS decision-making in relation to development and management of relevant tracks and accommodation in Beowa National Park
- guide NPWS decision-making in relation to visitor management for the Light to Light Walk and visitor sites along the walking route.

Explanation of terms

- Accommodation sites refers to:
 - two new hut sites which will include huts, a communal kitchen/dining/seating area, toilets and NPWS staff accommodation and facilities
 - existing accommodation at Green Cape Lightstation which will be reconfigured to accommodate hut-to-hut and lighthouse walkers.
- Walk-in campgrounds refers to the new low-key walk-in campgrounds specifically designed to support pack-campers.
- Park campgrounds refers to the existing, well-established campgrounds at Saltwater Creek and Bittangabee Bay.
- Walker types refers to:
 - hut-to-hut and lighthouse walkers refers to walkers staying overnight in hut sites and at Green Cape Lightstation accommodation
 - pack-campers refers to walkers who carry all their camping equipment including tents, sleeping bags, cooking equipment in a backpack and stay overnight in one of the designated camping areas.

2. Background and project context

In 2018, NPWS was awarded \$7.9 million from the NSW Government's Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund to upgrade and realign the existing Light to Light Walk to create a signature nature-based walking experience. Construction will be undertaken in a staged approach. Provided necessary approvals are granted, the first stage is expected to be completed by late 2022.

The fund was designed to support the creation of regional environmental infrastructure projects on publicly owned and private land where there is a clear public benefit, and regional tourism benefits. To be eligible, projects had to demonstrate that the new or enhanced regional infrastructure will drive growth in the visitor economy, in particular, growing regional visitation and increasing overnight visitor expenditure.

This strategy has been designed in response to the funding criteria, and NSW Government priorities including the NSW Government's *Visitor Economy Strategy 2030*, *Destination Southern NSW Destination Management Plan*, and other regional strategies and policies.

Target markets for the Light to Light Walk have been identified through NPWS's primary research and market demand analysis for multi-day walks. Through integrating high conservation values and delivering an active sense of adventure and exploration, the upgraded Light to Light Walk will offer a wider range of visitors an immersive nature-based experience in Beowa National Park.

2.1 Light to Light Walk project objectives

The project will expand the current visitor market by addressing known barriers for some visitors undertaking a multi-day walking holiday in a national park. This will encourage new users to experience the park and build a connection with its conservation values. At the same time, better management of walk-related visitation will help protect park values and address environmental issues. The information below details the project objectives of the Light to Light Walk project.

Project objectives

- Create a new sustainable walking experience of internationally competitive calibre.
- Create nature-based experiences which encourage visitors to value their national parks.
- Create nature-based experiences which support the sustainable growth of the regional economy.
- Provides a culturally sensitive environmentally sustainable nature-based experience which delivers enhanced visitor management and environmental outcomes.
- Contributes to the financial sustainability of NPWS.
- Supports sustainable increase in overall visitation to Beowa National Park in non-peak periods.
- Contributes to a sustainable increase in overall visitor volumes in the region throughout the year.
- Contributes to an increase in non-peak visitor volumes in the region.
- Creates employment opportunities for host communities.

- Builds strong partnerships with industry, government and host communities.
- Provides new opportunities for the Aboriginal community to appropriately share their culture, participate in and benefit from the regional tourism industry.

2.2 Project considerations

2.2.1 Project budget

The detailed design phase of the project will determine what will be constructed as part of the \$7.9 million-dollar NSW Government funding. Further detailed costing, feasibility, assessments and evaluations are required during this next phase to deliver the Light to Light Walk to a high calibre. Delivery of infrastructure and experiences that are beyond the current funding will be subject to future funding becoming available.

2.2.2 Park values

The existing Light to Light Walk is beautiful. Many people already travel from intrastate and interstate to do the walk. Its popularity is a result of the diverse and unique coastal landscape that the walk traverses. The walk passes through a variety of coastal forests and heathlands, over rock platforms and along rugged red sandstone cliffs. The area is also very rich in Aboriginal cultural heritage and European history.

Conservation

NPWS is responsible for protecting and preserving the biodiversity, heritage sites and Aboriginal culture of national parks. Great care has been taken to ensure that the track alignment and accommodation sites have minimal impact on natural and cultural values. The route selected for the Light to Light Walk is based on protecting biodiversity values and minimising impacts to Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage values.

NPWS will manage the existing and potential environmental impacts of multi-day walkers by directing them to managed accommodation and campgrounds where toilets and other facilities are available. NPWS will monitor the number of visitors using the Light to Light Walk and will review the operating arrangements if usage is having a negative impact on the park or visitor experience.

The southern section of Beowa National Park contains a range of habitats and ecosystems, plant and animal species, geological features and landforms that are protected by state and Commonwealth legislation. Any activity or development within the park must be undertaken in accordance with this legislation, and appropriate approvals and permits must be obtained. In the case of the Light to Light Walk upgrade, a review of environmental factors (REF) is being undertaken to assess the likely environmental impacts of the proposed works together with measures required to mitigate any adverse impacts on the environment. If the proposal is considered to have a significant impact, then it can be refused.

Aboriginal cultural history

The existence of Aboriginal people in Beowa National Park area dates back tens of thousands of years, as evidenced by Aboriginal artefacts such as stone tools, rock arrangements and the many middens that exist along the coastline. Aboriginal cultural heritage also exists in the form of the memories, stories and associations of Aboriginal people to this traditional land or Country. Integrating education, awareness and respect for

the Aboriginal and historic heritage in the region into all relevant aspects of visitor experience is a key focus area for the project.

The *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* provides protection for Aboriginal cultural heritage. In the case of the Light to Light Walk upgrade, the NPWS must undertake an Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment and prepare a report that identifies the results of this assessment and recommendations for action to manage and protect the Aboriginal objects and declared Aboriginal places identified by the report. The Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment report forms part of the review of environmental factors, a summary of the report will be placed on public exhibition when completed.

Selecting a route that will minimise impacts to Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage values is a key focus area for the project. Since the draft plan of management amendment and June 2019 draft strategy were placed on public exhibition, NPWS has undertaken extensive Aboriginal cultural assessments along the length of the proposed route in consultation with the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC). As a result of preliminary findings during this fieldwork, many of the new sections of track north of Hegartys Bay proposed in the 2019 draft strategy will not be constructed. The route will revert to the existing walking track to avoid harm to Aboriginal cultural history. These changes remain consistent with the plan of management (as amended) and this strategy.

Historic heritage

The European history of the area is well documented and dates to the 1840s, when the Imlay family began whaling and grazing in the area. A range of historic and heritage features remain in the park along the length of the Light to Light Walk as a result of this occupation. These include, but are not limited to, Boyds Tower, the Green Cape Lightstation complex and ruins at Bittangabee Bay. The Green Cape Lightstation complex consists of the Green Cape Lighthouse head and assistant lightkeeper's residences, the stables and the telegraph station.

Historic and heritage features within the park that are listed under the Bega Valley Shire Council local environmental plan, a regional environmental plan or on the State Heritage Register are protected. Any proposed changes to a listed building or feature must be approved by Heritage NSW before the work can commence.

An historic heritage assessment of the Light to Light Walk upgrade is currently being undertaken by NPWS to determine if the proposal is permissible. This will include any proposed modifications to buildings and structures at Green Cape Lightstation.



Photo 2 Aerial view over Saltwater Creek. John Spencer/DPE

2.3 Research and analysis

NPWS has undertaken extensive track design investigation and site analysis, plus market research, to develop a new concept for the Light to Light Walk that will deliver an improved experience for walkers.

The project has been developed following benchmarking of best practice operational models in New Zealand, Tasmania and Victoria; research on barriers to visitors undertaking multi-day walks; and specific market testing of multi-day walk experience options in a national park setting.

Guidance and advice on track and accommodation design and operating models have generously been provided by the New Zealand Department of Conservation for their Great Walks program of premier tracks, Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service for the Overland Track and the Three Capes Track, and Parks Victoria for Grampians Peak Trail.

Market and demand modelling research indicates that barriers to undertaking a multi-day walk include:

- a lack of accommodation options other than camping
- heavy pack weights required for self-sufficient walks
- lack of supporting facilities and services (toilets, shelter)
- overnight temperatures and uncertainty over weather conditions
- track distances longer than 10–12 kilometres per day
- track conditions potentially requiring high levels of fitness
- challenges with meeting the needs of multigenerational walking groups.

In addition, the strategy is informed by research on multi-day walk user markets. This has provided insights into walker preferences, price range, group and room size, facilities, ages and group types, booking and transfer options. This information coupled with information from other existing multi-day walks in similar regions and markets, and direction and guidance from regional stakeholders has ensured the strategy has been informed by multiple perspectives. Planning and fine-tuning will continue as the project progresses and is implemented, to deliver the planned outcomes.

2.4 Opportunities

The 2018 NPWS Park Visitor Survey showed that domestic visitation to NPWS parks on the South Coast has grown by 29% in 10 years and that walking is undertaken by 66% of park visitors (higher than the state average). At the state level, participation in nature-based walks has grown year on year, while demand for guided multi-day walks grew by 45% each year between 2014 and 2017.

The Light to Light Walk upgrade responds to both the growing interest in nature-based experiences and for multi-day walks in national parks, alongside evolving market expectations for support services and facilities.

The hut-to-hut and lighthouse style accommodation in addition to new walk-in campgrounds will provide an experience which is appealing and accessible to a wider range of potential park visitors with varying capabilities, ages, walking experience and fitness levels. With the relatively short and achievable daily walking distances, walkers choosing to stay in hut and lighthouse accommodation will be able to do the walk without having to carry a heavy pack or buy the equipment necessary for a pack-camping style walk (such as a tent, sleeping mats and cooking equipment).

Walkers and pack-campers will continue to be able to experience the Light to Light Walk and will benefit from the provision of new, purpose-designed walk-in campgrounds and the continued use of existing park campgrounds.

The Light to Light Walk will promote the important environmental, cultural and heritage aspects of the region, and provide physical and mental health benefits through increased access to the natural environment.

Having NPWS staff permanently stationed along the walk at the hut and lighthouse accommodation sites is an opportunity for increased visitor engagement and appreciation of the natural and cultural values of the park. It will also be the first coastal hut style walk in a national park in New South Wales and will greatly improve the overall experience for walkers.

Additionally, the project will provide opportunities to strengthen local and regional partnerships, including working with the Aboriginal community in developing rich and engaging interpretation and opportunities for local Aboriginal-guided experiences and employment.

The Light to Light Walk will contribute to the local and regional economy, creating employment in tourism and hospitality sectors sustained through increased visitation that will generate intrastate, interstate and international tourism expenditure. The strategy envisages that a range of associated visitor services will be available to support and add value to the upgraded walk. These include, but are not limited to, licensed commercial operators offering guided experiences on the Light to Light Walk, various levels of assistance to individuals or groups, transfer services, equipment hire, food provisions and so forth. These tourism related services will be available via EOIs managed by NPWS.

The project will support and enhance opportunities for local business directly and indirectly associated with the walk, as walkers prepare for and complete their walk experience. This includes staying in nearby accommodation, purchasing food and beverage, other retail items, and exploring local attractions.

3. The Light to Light Walk

3.1 Multi-day walk experience

The Light to Light Walk will offer walking experiences in Beowa National Park that are bookable online:

- **Hut-to-hut and lighthouse walkers** will stay in the new hut accommodation at Mowarry Point (on Day 1) and Hegartys Bay (on Day 2), and at Green Cape Lightstation on the final night (Day 3). The new hut sites and lightstation will also have permanent NPWS staff in residence on-site to support operations and visitors.
- **Pack-campers** will have the choice to stay at the purpose-built walk-in campgrounds at Mowarry Point and Bittangabee Bay; and/or the existing park campgrounds at Saltwater Creek and Bittangabee Bay.

The proposed upgrades will deliver an easy, entry-level walk with short day lengths, typically 8–12 kilometres per day. This range will enable this unique nature-based experience to be appealing and achievable for a wider range of visitors with varying capabilities, walking expertise and ages, including multigenerational users.

The proposed purpose-built, walk-in campgrounds at Mowarry Point and Bittangabee Bay will be designed specifically for Light to Light Walk pack-campers and will be discrete, sensitively designed and include toilet facilities. The campground at Mowarry Point will also be able to be booked by other walk-in campers not doing the Light to Light Walk. The existing Saltwater Creek and Bittangabee Bay park campgrounds will be available for walkers undertaking the Light to Light Walk.

The carrying capacity of the coastal environment has been carefully considered in balance with the sense of immersion sought by multi-day walkers. The two new hut accommodation sites at Mowarry Point and Hegartys Bay are proposed to cater for a maximum of 36 walkers per night. The existing accommodation at Green Cape Lightstation will be reconfigured to accommodate 36 walkers.

The new hut accommodation options will extend the Light to Light walking season by providing shelter from poor weather, winds and cold nights. These conditions otherwise tend to limit visitors to the park to short peak seasons in warmer months, which are already busy periods.

The multi-day walks will be managed by NPWS, and the price point will be determined based on the quality of the packaged accommodation and experiences. The walk packages will be booked online.

Walkers will be able to undertake the walk self-guided or guided with a licensed commercial tour operator. NPWS is developing opportunities for commercial operators to add support services and value to the experience for both hut-to-hut and lighthouse walkers and pack-campers. NPWS will manage commercial opportunities for the Light to Light Walk through a fair and transparent expression of interest (EOI) market process managed by NPWS.

The Light to Light Walk

The walk

- The walk stretches 30 kilometres
- The walk uses:
 - existing tracks, with some sections being realigned
 - new sections of track
- Some existing tracks will be closed
- The walk can be undertaken as a self-guided or guided experience from north to south by:
 - hut-to-hut and lighthouse walkers
 - pack-campers staying in two new walk-in campgrounds, or existing park campgrounds
- The walk can be undertaken from either direction by:
 - pack-campers staying at existing park campgrounds

The accommodation

- All accommodation will need to be booked online.
- Mowarry Point
 - new walk-in campground
 - new huts with on-site NPWS staff
- Saltwater Creek
 - existing park campground
- Hegartys Bay
 - new huts with on-site NPWS staff
- Bittangabee Bay
 - new walk-in campground
 - existing park campground
- Green Cape Lightstation
 - existing accommodation to be reconfigured to accommodate 36 self-guided and guided walkers
 - existing accommodation will be able to be booked by casual visitors, who are not undertaking the Light to Light Walk, during certain times of the year (for a minimum 4-week period each year)
- The informal campground at Hegartys Bay will be closed

3.2 The Light to Light Walk sample itineraries

A number of walk itineraries are possible, depending on the style of walk; hut-to-hut and lighthouse or pack-camping, as detailed in the following tables. The distances provided for each day are estimates only and may change as the project progresses.

Table 2 Hut-to-hut and lighthouse walkers' sample itinerary

This option provides three nights' accommodation. Walkers will stay in hut accommodation at Mowarry Point and Hegartys Bay and at Green Cape Lighthouse for the final night. This itinerary can be undertaken self-guided or guided.

Day	Description	Activity
Day 1	Boyds Tower to Mowarry Point (8.7kms)	The walk starts at Boyds Tower in the north. Walkers could enjoy lunch at Leather Jacket Bay, before continuing to Mowarry Point for the night.
Day 2	Mowarry Point to Hegartys Bay (10.2km)	Setting off from Mowarry Point, walkers travel across the rocky coastline. Walkers could enjoy lunch at Woodburn Creek before continuing to Hegartys Bay for the second night.
Day 3	Hegartys Bay to Green Cape Lighthouse (11.6km)	From Hegartys Bay walkers continue on to Green Cape Lighthouse. Walkers could enjoy lunch at Pulpit Rock before reaching the final night's accommodation at Green Cape Lighthouse.
Day 4	Green Cape Lighthouse and surrounds	Changes pace exploring Green Cape Lighthouse and finishes with views from Disaster Bay Lookout.

Table 3 Pack-campers' sample itinerary: Mowarry Point and Bittangabee Bay walk-in campgrounds

This option provides two nights camping. Pack-campers will stay at Mowarry Point on the first night and Bittangabee Bay on the second night. At both locations, campers will stay in the purpose-built walk-in campgrounds. This itinerary can be undertaken self-guided or guided.

Day	Description	Activity
Day 1	Boyds Tower to Mowarry Point camp (8.7 kms)	The walk starts at Boyds Tower in the north and continues to Mowarry Point to set up camp for the night. This camp will be discrete, nestled amongst the melaleuca and away from the hut-based accommodation. Basic toilet facilities will be provided.
Day 2	Mowarry Point to Bittangabee Bay (14.7 kms)	After packing up the camp at Mowarry Point, pack-campers will walk on to Bittangabee Bay where they will spend their second night at the purpose-built, walk-in camp site.
Day 3	Bittangabee Bay to Green Cape (7.1 kms)	Starting off from Bittangabee Bay, pack-campers reach their final destination at Green Cape Lighthouse.

Table 4 Pack-campers' sample itinerary: Saltwater Creek and Bittangabee Bay park campgrounds

This option provides two nights camping. Pack-campers can choose to stay the existing Saltwater Creek and Bittangabee Bay park campgrounds for a variable length of stay. This itinerary can also be undertaken in reverse, from south to north and can be undertaken self-guided or guided.

Day	Description	Activity
Day 1	Boyds Tower to Saltwater Creek campground (13.6 kms)	The walk has the option of starting at Boyds Tower and continues to Saltwater Creek campground to camp for the night.
Day 2	Saltwater Creek to Bittangabee Bay (9.8 kms)	The walk starts off from Saltwater Creek and continues to Bittangabee Bay to camp for the night.
Day 3	Bittangabee Bay to Green Cape (7.1 kms)	Starting off from Bittangabee Bay, pack-campers reach their final destination at Green Cape Lighthouse.



Photo 3 Bush walking near Bittangabee Bay campground. John Spencer/DPE

Note: the daily walking tack distances may change subject to further on ground assessments.



Light to Light Walk Overview

Beowa National Park

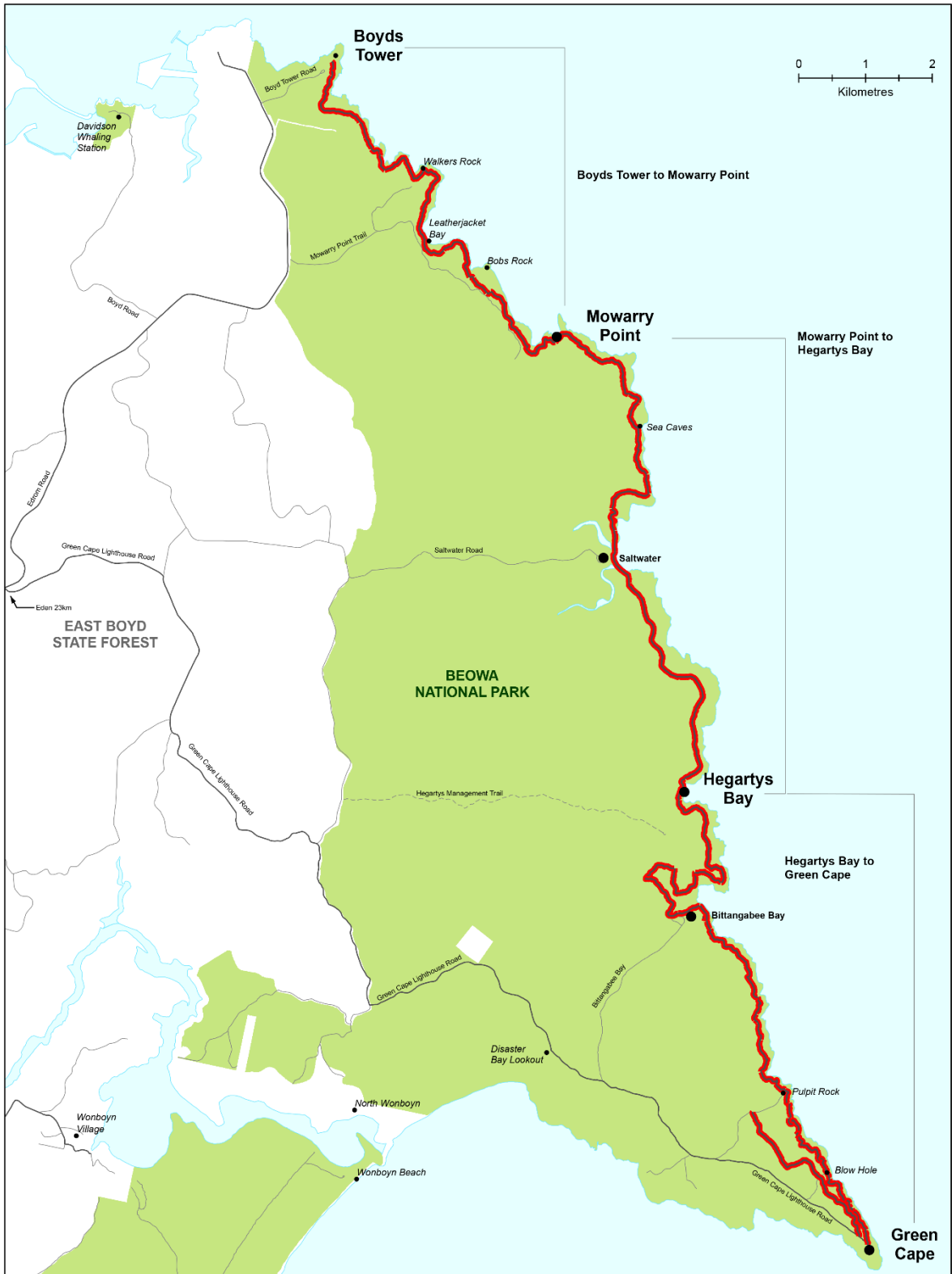


Figure 2 Light to Light Walk – sample walking itinerary

4. Upgrades to the Light to Light Walk

4.1 Project scope

The walk will deliver an upgraded 30-kilometre coastal track, with construction scope consisting of the following:

- **All track work is subject to available funding**
 - approximately 10 kilometres of new and realigned tracks
 - closure and rehabilitation of approximately 10 kilometres of existing tracks
 - approximately 20 kilometres of existing track receiving some upgrades
 - improved alignment of some existing track to better manage environmental impacts.
- **All hard-roof accommodation sites are subject to available funding**
 - two new hut accommodation sites comprising huts, communal building with kitchen/dining/seating area, toilets and NPWS staff accommodation, work area and storage, solar power and battery storage
 - minor refurbishment to the two lightkeepers' cottages and adaptive re-use of the historic stables building for accommodation at Green Cape Lightstation
 - modification of the telegraph station building for staff quarters including potential extension
 - upgrades to solar power and battery capacity, and sewerage at Green Cape Lightstation
 - provision of two new low-key, walk-in campgrounds at Mowarry Point and Bittangabee Bay
 - closure of the informal campground at Hegartys Bay campground.
- **All other works are subject to available funding**
 - refreshed start point at Boyds Tower lookout including accessible pathway from car park to an upgraded lookout
 - relocation and formalisation of Pulpit Rock car park less than 50 metres west of its current location
 - development of interpretation and storytelling for the walk, through signage and/or digital technologies.

Preliminary concept layouts are provided in Appendix B.

4.2 Minimum requirements for development

4.2.1 Developing tracks

Extensive investigation of design and alignment has been undertaken by NPWS and specialist track designers, with further advice sought from environmental specialists and the Aboriginal community to determine the final route. The track will predominantly consist of a natural surface offering an easy-moderate level walking track consistent with the track condition prior to the 2020 bushfire.

Track routing has been designed with the aim of providing connection with park features of interest while ensuring that safety and protection of the environmental and conservation values of the park are paramount. Safety and risk assessments have been undertaken during planning and will be revisited during construction of the track. NPWS environmental

and cultural heritage assessment and approval processes will be applied to the final track alignment.

4.2.2 Developing accommodation sites

Two sites have been identified as appropriate for hut accommodation. NPWS planning assessment and approval process will be applied to the sites. The accommodation design and development will be in keeping with park values for sustainability, visual amenity and environmental and conservation values.

4.2.3 Minimum requirements

Minimum requirements for the track and accommodation development shall include:

- alignment with NPWS objectives and values
- capacity to foster public appreciation of the park's natural and cultural values
- low or positive net environmental impact to the park
- conduct environmental, Aboriginal cultural and historic heritage assessments in accordance with relevant legislation
- compliance with the *Ben Boyd National Park Plan of Management* (as amended in 2021)
- compliance with Department of Planning and Environment sustainability policies and striving for best practice where feasible
- revenue generated supports conservation activities and asset maintenance.

4.3 Light to Light Walk track alignment principles

Some track realignment is an important component of the Light to Light Walk project.

Commencing at Boyds Tower, the route between Boyds Tower and Bittangabee Bay is generally proposed to be consistent with the existing track alignment. Several short sections will be upgraded and/or realigned to improve the track, to lessen track maintenance, and provide better exposure to significant park features and enable a more memorable experience.

The existing section of track between Bittangabee Bay and Green Cape Lightstation currently passes through several kilometres of sensitive heath environment. This section will be realigned to provide a new coastal track and allow rehabilitation of the heath. The existing track from Pulpit Rock to Green Cape Lightstation through the heath will be retained to allow for bird watching, nature tours, education and conservation purposes.

The new coastal track alignment in the southern section of the walk is proposed to pass through Pulpit Rock, which is a popular fishing location. Existing fishing activities at Pulpit Rock will continue to be permitted. The car park at Pulpit Rock will be relocated less than 50 metres to the west of its current location to help rehabilitate environmental damage, formalise the walking track on the coast and provide for more efficient parking. The proposal also includes several new short sections of track to access points of interest and coastal views.

NPWS has investigated options for extending the track from Green Cape Lighthouse to Disaster Bay. However, following cultural heritage surveys and consultation with the local Aboriginal community, the proposal to construct a new track in this section of the park will not proceed. NPWS has taken this decision to ensure ongoing protection of Aboriginal heritage sites.

The car park at Disaster Bay will be upgraded and a new accessible toilet will be provided to continue to cater for increased visitation at the lookout, including for the Light to Light Walk.

Preliminary environmental, Aboriginal cultural, and historic heritage assessments have been undertaken and used to guide the location of the current walking track route. Figure 1 indicates the general alignment of the upgraded Light to Light Walk. Preliminary detailed track maps are provided in Appendix A.

4.4 Light to Light Walk accommodation principles

4.4.1 Hut sites

The hut accommodation at Mowarry Point and Hegartys Bay will consist of hut accommodation, a communal building with kitchen and dining/seating area, toilets and NPWS staff accommodation and storage. Maximum carrying capacity across each accommodation precinct is proposed to be 36 walkers per night, subject to final planning and available funding.

The proposed huts for the walk are likely to be fully enclosed structures with weatherproof doors and windows. Subject to funding, the Light to Light accommodation areas are proposed to include:

- bunk style huts – final type, mix and configuration will be confirmed in further planning
- internal gear storage and drying facilities
- communal building with kitchen/dining area with preparation benches, built-in gas stoves and sinks
- verandah for weather protection and to serve as an outdoor common area
- LPG bottles for gas heating and cooking
- water tanks for collection of rainwater
- solar panels will feed a battery bank that runs a low power LED lighting system in communal areas only
- ecologically sustainable toilets – no showers
- separately located twin/double accommodation – final type, mix and configuration will be confirmed in further planning
- NPWS staff accommodation and work area
- equipment storage shed
- helipad for emergency access.

Preliminary site concepts are provided in Appendix B.

Hut design principles

The hut site buildings will be:

- tailored to each site and avoid impact on visual amenity, environmental and conservation values
- designed to make minimal footprint with a focus on environmental and cultural sensitivities
- designed to be best practice sustainable development, including lifecycle considerations, sustainable water, power and other services
- designed to meet fire prevention standards

- self-reliant for water collection, solar power, sewerage treatment and designed for maximum operating efficiency including equipment using renewable resources as feasible
- appropriately designed using natural materials, colours and finishes sympathetic to the natural surrounds; the level of appointment will be basic, but comfortable and easy to maintain.

4.4.2 Accommodation at Green Cape Lightstation

Hut-to-hut and lighthouse walkers will stay at Green Cape Lightstation on their final night. Further planning and feasibility assessments are still required to determine the final scope of works for the lightstation complex. Subject to funding, the existing buildings at the lightstation, including the lighthouse keepers' cottages and the telegraph station, will be used for visitor accommodation and tourism related services. Additionally, new buildings, either within or outside the lightstation complex, may be constructed to provide accommodation for visitors and staff and tourism related services.

All works, including any adaptive re-use of existing buildings or construction of new buildings, will be consistent with heritage requirements. Provision for on-site NPWS staff, maintenance and equipment storage, and workspace will be included, like the current arrangements at the lightstation complex.

Changes to Green Cape Lightstation casual bookings

The site's capacity to support casual short-stay accommodation will be reduced to support the upgraded walk's new accommodation model. Further planning and ongoing operational analysis will be undertaken to determine how casual bookings will be made available for a short period of a minimum of four weeks each year. Potential for additional accommodation outside of the precinct is enabled in the plan of management (as amended in 2021) and may be part of a future project to support casual short-stay accommodation in the vicinity. This would be dependent on additional funding.



Photo 4 Green Cape Lightstation cottages. Nick Cubbin/DPE

5. Assessments and approvals

Our national parks are managed to protect their unique values and provide for sustainable visitor use and enjoyment. This includes providing visitor experiences and, where appropriate, new visitor facilities, including tracks and facilities to support enhanced visitor engagement.

The *Ben Boyd National Park Plan of Management* (as amended in 2021) enables NPWS to deliver the proposed upgrades to the Light to Light Walk as outlined in this strategy. This strategy may evolve based on the outcomes of environmental and cultural heritage assessments and other final design adjustments but must remain consistent with the plan of management.

NPWS is undertaking environmental and cultural heritage assessments for all relevant works and will prepare a review of environmental factors (REF) in accordance with the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* for the track and building upgrades. The review of environmental factors will be publicly exhibited for consultation.

5.1 Assessments for new tracks and hut sites

5.1.1 Environmental assessment

Independent environmental assessments are being conducted for the project to investigate and assess potential environmental impacts at track and accommodation sites. These, and subsequent reports, will provide information to guide avoidance and/or mitigation actions and the development of environmental safeguards to maintain and improve environmental and heritage values.

NPWS has, for example, committed to increased predator control programs around new tracks associated with the Light to Light Walk as an environmental mitigation measure.

5.1.2 Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment

Consultants have undertaken Aboriginal cultural heritage assessments on the proposed walk and re-surveying has occurred post the 2019–20 fires. Due to findings of Aboriginal sites, the proposed extension to the walk south of Green Cape Lighthouse to Disaster Bay will not be pursued. Ongoing consultation with Aboriginal groups may include consideration of whether some form of access to cultural sites is appropriate and can be incorporated into the upgraded Light to Light Walk experience.

Aboriginal sites along the walk will be monitored to ensure impacts are not increased as a consequence of the Light to Light Walk.

5.1.3 Bushfire assessments

The December 2019 and January 2020 bushfire burnt much of the walking track infrastructure and surrounding landscape. The walking track was closed for several months in 2020 while NPWS made the area safe and restored the existing walking track. As of November 2020, all the track and campgrounds along the route have been reopened (apart from the informal campground at Hegartys Bay which remains closed due to the high risk of tree fall). Visitors have returned to the area to undertake the walk.

A consultant has been engaged by NPWS to undertake a bushfire risk assessment to determine the visitor risk and refuge opportunities and constraints as well as provide advice on 'fit for purpose' bushfire protection measures at Mowarry Point and Hegartys Bay hut accommodation sites.

The design, materials used and location of the hut accommodation at these sites will need to conform to the recommendations of this assessment and safety regulations for buildings in bushfire prone areas.

6. Opportunities for partnerships

6.1 Tourism partnerships

The visitor economy comprises a range of businesses with capability to provide guided experiences and support services on the Light to Light Walk. NPWS will explore commercial partnerships to deliver visitor experiences and services that complement the walk. Examples of these include guided tours, transfer services, equipment hire and food provision for walkers.

Guided experiences enable visitors to experience the Light to Light Walk with an expert tour guide for the hut and lighthouse walk experience. Additionally, visitors can also experience the walk with an expert guide as a pack-camper staying at Saltwater Creek campground, Bittangabee Bay campground or as an off-park accommodation experience.

Commercial operators will be given the opportunity to partner with NPWS to provide various additional services to support and enhance both the guided and self-guided Light to Light walking experience.

NPWS will manage the number of licences issued for commercial tourism related services via a fair and transparent competitive EOI process managed by NPWS. To provide equality and opportunity, local tourism businesses and the wider market will have the opportunity to respond to these EOIs.

NPWS has undertaken extensive market research to identify visitor demand for a range of additional services and experiences linked to the Light to Light Walk. In addition, extensive research insights from the tourism industry, indicates high levels of interest in the provision of future services and experiences on the Light to Light Walk.



Photo 5 Humpback whale breaching off Green Cape Lighthouse. Scott Blanch/DPE

7. Stakeholder engagement

7.1 Engaging stakeholders

Effective community and stakeholder engagement is critical to the success of this project. We will continue to engage with stakeholders and interested community members in a meaningful and timely way. Key stakeholders, including local government, the Eden LALC, Thaua Country Aboriginal Corporation, broader visitor economy stakeholders (regional/national government and private sector), the NPWS South Coast Regional Advisory Committee, and other interested associations have been regularly updated on the progress of the project.

Those interested in the project are invited to register their interest to receive updates on the progress of the project through the [project page](#).

7.2 Consultation

The flow diagram below shows where in the project phase we are up to and opportunities for public consultation.

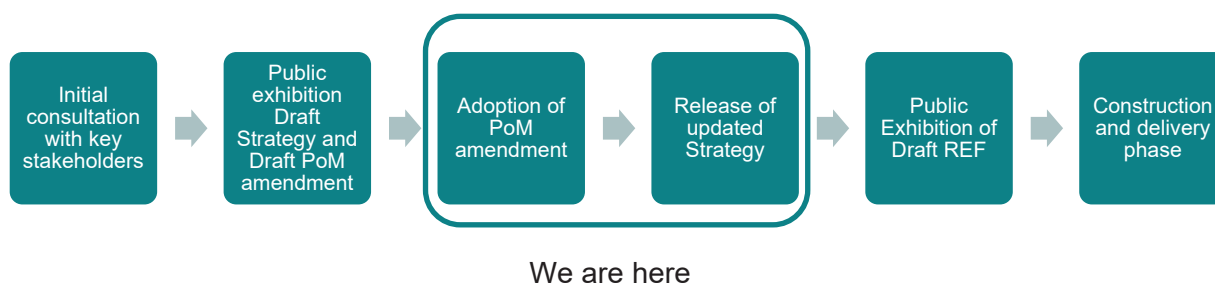


Figure 3 Consultation phases

In 2017, preliminary consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders for proof of concept to prepare the business case. Stakeholders included the Eden LALC, Destination NSW, Bega Valley Shire Council, Sapphire Coast Tourism and industry experts.

In July and August 2019, a draft of this strategy and draft amendment to the plan of management was publicly exhibited. The amendment to the plan of management was adopted in 2021. During the exhibition period, open house information sessions were held at Pambula, Bega and Eden to provide opportunities for the community and interested stakeholders to talk to staff about the proposed walk. The proposals in the draft plan of management amendment and June 2019 draft strategy generated 205 submissions. A submissions report summarising the feedback from the community and NPWS response is available on the project website. Changes to the Light to Light concept, based on community feedback, were made following this consultation.

Further consultation will be undertaken during public exhibition of the review of environmental factors which is planned to occur in 2021, and this strategy will be updated to reflect the results from the assessment process.

7.3 Light to Light Walk Stakeholder Reference Group

The Light to Light Walk Stakeholder Reference Group will be established to ensure the views and issues from a broad section of the community are considered when delivering the project. The involvement of the group will be key to the implementation of this strategy, and will provide advice on the design, interpretation and ongoing management of the walk. The group will be in place until the project is completed. More information on the Light to Light Walk Stakeholder Reference Group can be found on the project page.



Photo 6 Bittangabee Bay. John Spencer/DPE

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Track concepts



Light to Light Walk - Day 1
Beowa National Park



Figure 4 Light to Light Walk: Boyds Tower to Mowarry Point

Note: proposed new tracks are subject to funding and daily walking track distances may change subject to further on ground assessments



Light to Light Walk - Day 2

Beowa National Park



Figure 5 Light to Light Walk: Mowarry Point to Hegartys Bay

Note: proposed new tracks are subject to funding and daily walking tack distances may change subject to further on ground assessments



Light to Light Walk - Day 3

Beowa National Park



Figure 6 Light to Light Walk: Hegartys Bay to Green Cape

Note: proposed new tracks are subject to funding and daily walking tack distances may change subject to further on ground assessments.

8.2 Appendix B – Preliminary hut site locations

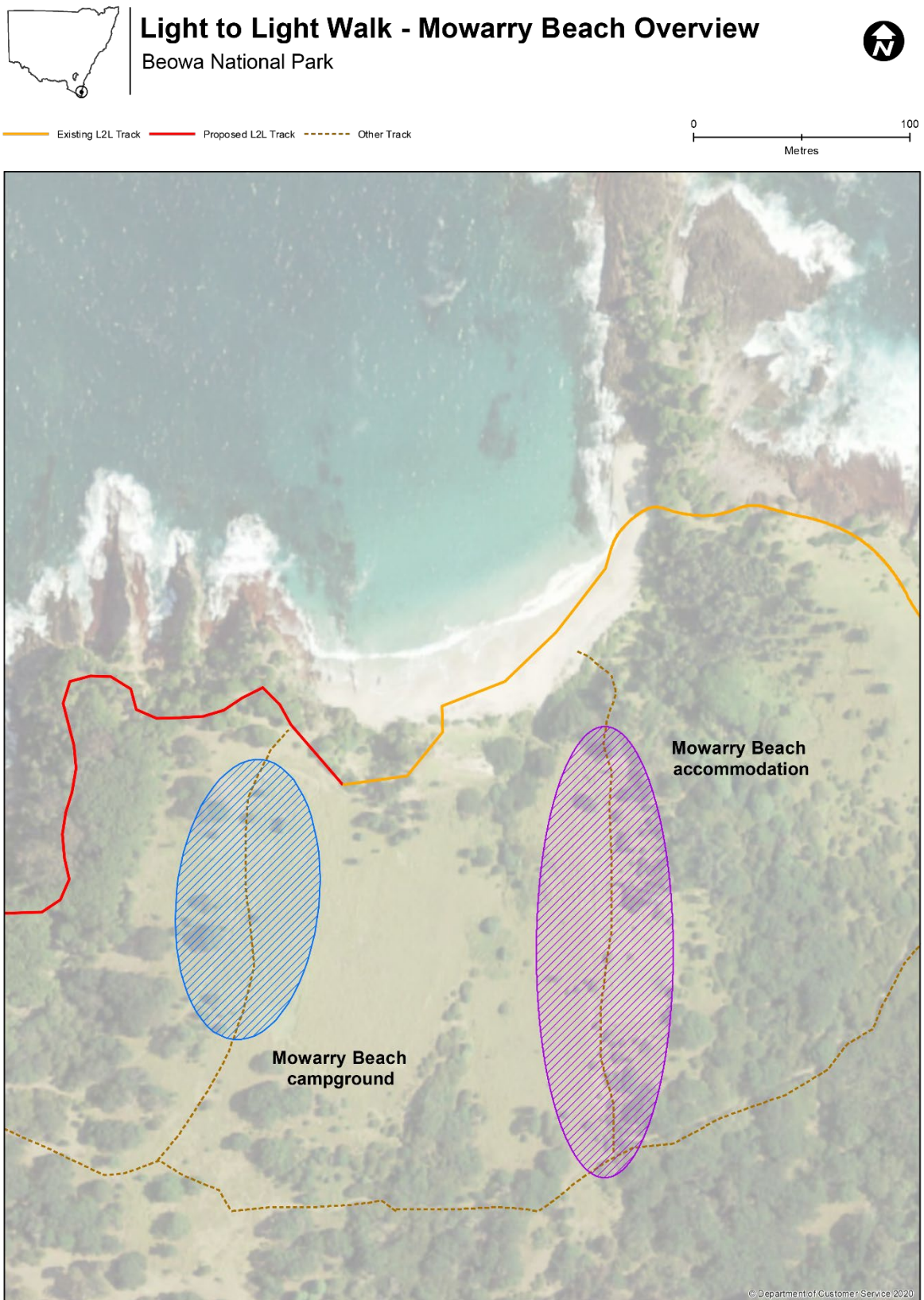


Figure 7 Mowarry Point proposed accommodation concept site area



Light to Light Walk - Hegartys Bay Overview

Beowa National Park



Existing L2L Track Other Track

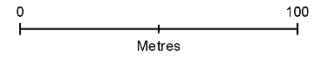


Figure 8 Hegartys Bay proposed hut accommodation concept site area

9. More information

[Ben Boyd National Park and Bell Bird Creek Nature Reserve Plan of Management as amended in 2021](#)

[Destination Southern NSW Destination Management Plan](#)

[Ben Boyd National Park Light to Light Walk Public Exhibition Report](#)

[Light to Light Walk Stakeholder Reference Group](#)

[Visitor Economy Strategy 2030](#)

Those interested in the project are invited to register their interest to receive updates on the progress of the project through the [project page](#).