# Reimagine KI -Western Kangaroo Island Parks

# Western Kangaroo Island Parks Framework: community vision, guiding principles, opportunities and ideas

Prepared by: ProManage on behalf of the Western Kangaroo Island Parks Community Reference Group for the Department for Environment and Water

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# Contents

Contents	2
Acknowledgement of Country	2
Abbreviations	3
Acknowledgement	4
Community Reference Group membership	5
Objectives and purpose of the Western Kangaroo Island Parks	
Community Reference Group	6
Phase 1 reimagine engagement summary	10
Western Kangaroo Island parks vision	14
Western Kangaroo Island parks guiding principles	18
Western Kangaroo Island opportunities and ideas	23
Future engagement and communications	31
Appendix 1	32

# **Acknowledgement of Country**

The Department for Environment and Water acknowledges Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and waters we live and work upon and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and respect the deep spiritual connection and the relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to Country.

The Department works in partnership with the First Peoples of South Australia and supports their Nations to take a leading role in caring for their Country.



# Abbreviations

Acronym	Term / definition
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
CRG	Community Reference Group
CTOs	Commercial Tourism Operators
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DEW	Department for Environment and Water
FCNP	Flinders Chase National Park
KI	Kangaroo Island
KIWT	Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail
NPWSSA	National Parks and Wildlife Service South Australia
Parks	Collective term for the network of Conservation Parks and National Parks on Kangaroo Island
SATC	South Australian Tourism Commission
WPA	Wilderness Protection Area



In what continue to be difficult circumstances, the Kangaroo Island community has been incredibly generous in sharing their time and contributing to the reimagine engagement program.

We acknowledge the local community's passion for, and knowledge of, the Parks on the Island and the custodianship it feels to preserve them for future generations.

On behalf of ProManage and the Department for Environment and Water, we extend our thanks to everyone who has taken part – and in particular we thank the members of the Western Kangaroo Island Parks Community Reference Group for their time, commitment, enthusiasm, ideas and contributions.



### Western Kangaroo Island Parks Community Reference Group members

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This document has been endorsed by the Group and is acknowledged to be an accurate reflection of the discussions held and perspectives discussed and agreed.

The views of First Nations are critically important. Engagement has commenced and First Nations inputs will be incorporated into future projects arising from the Reimagine process. Objectives and<br/>purpose of the<br/>Destern KangarooMestern KangarooIsland ParksCommunityReference Group



# Background

The combination of bushfires followed almost immediately by local, national and international travel restrictions due to COVID-19 have significantly impacted communities, businesses and individuals across Kangaroo Island.

### This continues to be the case.

The South Australian Government has committed up to \$52 million of works to rebuild and rejuvenate Kangaroo Island's nature-based tourism economy, with a focus on the Western Kangaroo Island Parks and Seal Bay.

It is anticipated that these works will provide a boost to the local economy and help Kangaroo Island's naturebased tourism industry bounce back.

The Government furthermore committed to involving community and stakeholders on the Island in a collaborative process to provide input towards what this investment to rebuild and rejuvenate Kangaroo Island's nature-based tourism economy could look like.



# Reimagine engagement program

A bespoke engagement program was developed to support community, stakeholder and business input within the constraints and context of bushfire recovery and COVID-19.

### Phase 1:

- Publicly available survey, open for a period of 2.5 months.
- Series of workshops, one on one meetings, presentations and small group meetings held on the Island and in Adelaide over a period of 1.5 months.
- Three all-day drop-in sessions at Penneshaw, Parndana and Kingscote.
- Email contributions via online Engagement Hub.

584 people participated in the engagement program, contributing an estimated 591 hours of their time.

### Phase 2:

The Western Kangaroo Island Parks Community Reference Group (the Group) was formed on completion of the Phase 1 engagement.

There are 15 members in the Group, comprising a crosssection of interests and businesses on the Island.

The key themes, ideas, concerns, opportunities and challenges identified in Phase 1 were used to structure the topics and issues to be explored in greater depth by the Group as part of Phase 2.

In addition the Group referred to and utilised the following to refine their thinking:

- Visitor personas based on tourism research and Department for Environment and Water (DEW) data
- The Kangaroo Island brand values
- A summary of desktop research conducted for DEW by an independent consultancy regarding best practice nature-based tourism and trends and potential opportunities for Kangaroo Island.

A summary of this information can be found in Appendix 1.

### Final deliverable of the engagement program

This document is the final outcome of the Reimagine engagement program as it relates to Western Kangaroo Island Parks.



# **Objectives and purpose**

### The Western Kangaroo Island Parks Community Reference Group was asked to:

- Review the feedback received from industry sectors and the community as it relates to enhancing the visitor experience in Western Kangaroo Island Parks.
- Take account of tourism trends research and how it might relate to the visitor experience in the Western Kangaroo Island Parks.
- Reflect on the types of visitors travelling to the Island, what they are looking for in terms of experiences and how better to accommodate their interests.
- Explore the key themes that emerged from the Phase 1 engagement program to provide ideas and options for visitor experiences.
- Identify infrastructure options and ideas that might be needed to support visitor experiences.
- Explore visitor centre models consistent with broad industry sector and community feedback and identify options and ideas.
- Explore how a broad network of experiences within Western Kangaroo Island Parks could be established to encourage longer visitor stays and grow the visitor economy.
- Develop guiding principles to support activities, experiences and infrastructure development.

### Purpose of this document

This document will be one of the inputs used to inform a master plan to support the visitor experience in the Western Kangaroo Island Parks, subject to relevant legislation (National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 and Wilderness Protection Act 1992 and EPBC Act 1999) and the adopted Park Management Plans.

This document reflects the Kangaroo Island community's perspective, refined by the members of the Group.

The Group considers that if any of these ideas and opportunities are pursued, then the sentiments presented in this document be taken into account.

It is acknowledged that the Group is not a decision-making body and that DEW is the ultimate decision maker with respect to master planning for the visitor experience in the Western Kangaroo Island Parks.

The master planning process is likely to be informed by other inputs, facilitated by DEW, such as feasibility studies, business case assessments, Government priorities and ecological considerations.

# Phase 1 reimagine engagement SUMMARY



# **Engagement summary**

The following is a high level summary of what we heard from stakeholders and community in the Phase 1 engagement, which informed Western Kangaroo Island Parks Community Reference Group discussions.

### **Conservation first approach**

- The principle that DEW takes a conservation first approach on Kangaroo Island is widely supported across the community.
- What is sought is the careful management of visitor volume and the sensitive development of visitor experiences and infrastructure in ways that protect conservation values and areas that have seen little to no human impact.
- In National Parks and Conservation Parks, it is preferred that only existing impacted and disturbed areas are used for visitor infrastructure. Any form of light touch development that may be considered outside of these areas (such as new trails, shelters etc.) must be subject to a due diligence process to ensure a conservation first approach is upheld.

# Flinders Chase National Park (FCNP) Visitor Centre (as it was prior to bushfire)

- Too small for visitor volume in busy periods, poor visitor flow / queues causing bottle-necks, picnic / eating areas not separated or designed to accommodate different visitor groups, interpretive space hidden away and underutilised.
- Visitor centre felt to have had too much of a ticket sales / café / retail focus to the detriment of interpretive experiences, conservation and education and revenue opportunities driven by experiences.
- Car park on the opposite side of the road to the visitor centre was viewed as impractical and unsafe.
- When rebuilding visitor facilities within FCNP, it was

felt important to either reuse the existing footprint and already developed areas or shift the centre to the entry gate or near to the gate, potentially outside of the park.

# Information hub and satellite nodes (network of experiences)

- It is felt some visitors still need to access an "information hub" which supports them to plan their itineraries and this information hub should ideally have a "whole of Island" role.
- This information hub would be supported by satellite nodes that could have a network of park and non-park visitor experiences in their vicinity, with each satellite node having a clear point of difference to the rest.
- Overall, there is consensus that visitor facilities are essential at FCNP but that replicating what was there is not seen as the solution.

### Parndana Conservation Park

• Viewed as having lower conservation values when compared to FCNP and could potentially be opened up as a satellite hub for bike riding and walking trails, picnic areas and camping / other accommodation styles.

### **Gosselands (FCNP)**

• Seen as an untapped opportunity for potential walking trails and bike riding.

### Kelly Hill Caves

- It is widely felt the Kelly Hill Caves present an opportunity. The location could serve as a very attractive satellite hub, potentially offering picnic shelters, interpretation, storytelling experiences, accommodation and walking trails.
- End of the Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail at Kelly Hill lacks a "destination / celebration" feel.

### Management of visitor experience (numbers)

 Visitors come to Kangaroo Island to enjoy the wilderness, the views and landscapes, unique flora and fauna, peace and tranquillity - experiences that are relatively "untouched" by humans.



• The ability to quietly enjoy the sights and sounds is lost at peak times at the Visitor Centre, Remarkable Rocks and Cape du Couedic due to visitor volume and poor visitor dispersion. There is concern this will, over time, damage the reputation of the Island due to a disconnect between the brand promise and reality.

### Other opportunities

- Science and research facility (potentially pooling resources with universities).
- Alternate accommodation options such as cabins, glamping, pods, traditional camping, A-frames and tiny houses.
- Viewing platforms / areas, "Instagram" photo opportunities and other types of stopping points to slow down and disperse visitors.
- Evening opening / night walks and other night-time experiences and events are an untapped opportunity.
- Sustainable transport options to high visitation iconic sites (remove self-drive) such as Admirals Arch and Remarkable Rocks.
- Picnic areas and shelters, food trucks, nature play space, wildlife observation, ranger led small group talks / walks, "behind the scenes" experiences.

### Future-proofing

- Ensure visitor infrastructure is highly adaptable and flexible so it can adjust to current as well as future unknowns and circumstances, particularly in relation to visitor origin, expectations, type and volume.
- Design and build with a long-term view of 20 plus years as opposed to what might be needed now.
- Implement bushfire appropriate design and construction.

### Take the time to do it right

• Take the time to plan and build back better.

### In the parks versus outside the parks

 Clarity is sought as to what will be offered inside the Parks versus outside of the Parks. This in turn gives direction to potential private sector investment opportunities in and out of Parks. The community identified that Parks should not, in the interests of a sustainable economy, try to be "everything to everyone" to ensure opportunities are distributed between the public and private sector.

### Technology and social media

• Wi-fi should be available to visitors at key hubs in Parks. This supports the immediacy of involvement in citizen science initiatives, social media posts from Parks and itinerary research amongst other things.

### Interpretation and storytelling / science and education

- It is generally felt information, education and storytelling in the Parks is either inadequate and / or poorly done (too traditional in approach).
- Storytelling topics have the opportunity to go beyond a focus on iconic species and incorporate: First Nations, flora and fauna, geology, fossils and science, whaling and sealing, shipwrecks, primary production, fire and fire recovery and more.
- This would be enhanced by a discrete indoor space and some form of outdoor amphitheatre that is sympathetic to the environment in scale and design.

### Bike riding and additional walking trails

• Opening up more walking trails and bike trails of various difficulties and durations across the network of Parks on the island is seen as a huge opportunity and something visitors are looking for.

### Extend the visitor season

 Businesses on the Island state they are working to broaden the visitor season and in particular, encourage visitation in winter. This could be supported by Parks through experiences, promotional activity and appropriate infrastructure.

### Set the example

 Parks should set the example for the sustainable development and operation of visitor infrastructure and facilities including (but not limited to) building materials, water and power and waste management.

### **Buy local**

• There was strong sentiment against the high proportion of imported, plastic souvenir items and lack of local product and produce in retail areas in the Parks. This is viewed as being out of sync with the expectations of the typical Kangaroo Island visitor looking for a nature-based, unique and authentic experience.



# Western Kangaroo Island Parks covered by this document are identified as being:

- Flinders Chase National Park (inclusive of Cape Borda)
- Kelly Hill Conservation Park
- Parndana Conservation Park
- Lathami Conservation Park
- Mount Taylor Conservation Park
- Cape Bouguer Wilderness Protection Area
- Ravine de Casoars Wilderness Protection Area
- Western River Wilderness Protection Area

The view of the group was to exclude the Gosselands (FCNP) and Cape Torrens Wilderness Protection Area from conversations as there is a desire for these areas to remain unchanged in relation to visitor infrastructure.

The remaining Wilderness Protection Areas listed above are included in relation to commentary around existing walking trails and associated facilities / infrastructure.

# Western Kangaroo Island Parks vision



# Western Kangaroo Island Parks vision

The Group was asked to express in words how they would like a visitor to Western Kangaroo Island Parks to describe their experience. These words and phrases were used to construct a vision for reimagining the visitor experience in Western Kangaroo Island Parks.





# Western Kangaroo Island Parks vision





# The Group has agreed the following vision for Western Kangaroo Island Parks.

Kangaroo Island parks leave you wanting more. More time to connect with nature. More days to explore the wilderness. More nights to stare at the stars.

Visitor experiences place sustainability, and conservation at their core to protect the unique beauty and species of this incredible place.

There's something for everyone, from learning about local sights, sounds, plants and animals through to breathtaking walks, amazing views, meandering trails and precious moments to reflect and enrich the mind and soul.

Adventure, fun, relaxation and inspiration – founded on conservation.

# Western Kangaroo Island Parks guiding principles



# **Guiding principles**

The following guiding principles reflect the broad beliefs and values identified by the Group to guide development and activity across the Western Kangaroo Island Parks.

They provide clarity as to what is important to the Group and the wider community. The guiding principles are interlinked and are to be applied collectively.

## 1. Conservation first

Areas of high conservation value must be protected when considering the development of new infrastructure, experiences and facilities.

- A genuine conservation-first knowledge-based ethos must be implemented in the design, planning and location of activities.
- In the development of facilities and infrastructure, it is particularly important to also respect guiding principle number 5: pre-developed areas and exceptions.
- Seek to enable a proportion of visitor spend (excluding donations) to be invested back into research and conservation within Western Kangaroo Island Parks.
- The loss of the physical and visual barrier of trees in many areas due to bushfire increases the potential for visitors to leave roads and tracks and risks disturbance to threatened species - the management of visitor movement, in this context, is sought.

## 2. Biosecurity

Biosecurity, through the management of risks relating to pests and diseases entering, emerging, establishing or spreading in Parks, is a priority.

 This is undertaken via the design, planning and ongoing operation of visitor experiences, facilities and infrastructure and underpinned by scientific research and community education.

## 3. Sustainability

Parks must set the example for the sustainable development and operation of visitor infrastructure and facilities (such as building materials, water and power, waste management) in appropriate locations (refer guiding principle 5).

Design and build taking into account long-term resourcing and maintenance requirements for experiences, infrastructure and facilities to ensure consistent quality continues to be offered even if funding and resourcing arrangements change.

- Ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that retail products are sustainable and ethically sourced (notwithstanding commercial realities and market trends).
- Souvenirs and gifts for sale should be, where practicable, locally (Kangaroo Island/South Australia) designed and produced.
- Food and beverages for sale should be, where practicable, sourced from and use local producers (Kangaroo Island/South Australian).



 To align with the clean and green brand for Kangaroo Island, packaging for food, gifts and souvenirs should be minimised and be, to the greatest extent possible, fully recyclable, biodegradable or compostable.

## 4. Safety and emergency management

Safety and emergency management considerations must be built into planning and design processes. Priority is placed on bushfire appropriate design and construction, accident prevention and education and information sharing with visitors for their safety, linked to the activities they choose to undertake in Parks.

- Consider how fire resistent and low fuel load plants can be used as part of the fire protection zone.
- When new activities/experiences are developed, emergency access and methods of visitor tracking must be considered.

## 5. Pre-developed areas and exceptions

Buildings and infrastructure need to predominantly use existing impacted and pre-developed areas of low conservation value. Where exceptions to this are sought, an assessment process that includes, but is not limited to, the following categories be considered and applied:

- The cumulative impact of the development (positive or negative)
- The biodiversity value of the site (rating)
- Ecological sensitivity relative to bushfire impact
   and recovery
- The opportunity for biodiversity offset (level / scale)
- Evaluation of sustainable design versus sustainable location
- Visitor safety

- Threatened species impact
- Fire management assessment
- Appropriateness of the development in Parks
- Cultural significance (First Nations and European)
- Possible flow on effect to local businesess and economy
- Community engagement (type and extent)
- Communication around the decision-making process and outcomes
- Existing legislation and regulatory frameworks, including park Management Plans

The level of assessment and detail to be considered for each of the above categories should be commensurate with the scale, nature and type of development, ranging from a visual and desktop assessment through to a more comprehensive analysis.

## 6. Visitor education and information

The provision of interesting, comprehensive and readily available information plays an important role in fostering awareness, appreciation, understanding and support of conservation and other aspects related to Parks and Kangaroo Island. This should be enhanced by location interpretation, diverse communication methods, storytelling, staff/visitor interactions and supported by technologies, facilities and infrastructure.

- Broaden information provision and interpretation topics to incorporate: First Nations, flora and fauna, geology, fossils, whaling and sealing, shipwrecks, fire and fire recovery.
- Include important information about appropriate behaviour in Parks and biosecurity.
- Interpretive experiences need to share what is special about Kangaroo Island and build an emotional connection through storytelling.



## 7. Science and research

Science and research activities in Parks will be encouraged through the proposed provision of facilities and spaces (in partnership with educational institutions) and through the participation in interpretation, education and Citizen Science initiatives.

Research and monitoring activities are key input to making decisions relating to management, planning and operating practices within Parks, as well as contributing towards a wider scientific knowledge base.

# 8. Visitor facilities, associated infrastructure and experiences

Services, facilities and associated visitor infrastructure must take into account future growth and be flexible enough to suit diverse local and overseas visitor types, interests and incomes. They must also be consistent with approved management plans and regulatory structures and policies.

- Visitor facilities in FCNP and at other satellite hubs (such as, but not limited to, Kelly Hill and Parndana) in the Western Kangaroo Island Parks are required.
- Ensure visitor infrastructure is highly adaptable and flexible so it can adjust to current as well as future unknowns and circumstances.
- Design and build with a long-term view of 20 plus years.
- Deliver functionality in design e.g. sliding all-weather doors, multi-use spaces that offer flexibility, low maintenance, durable building materials.
- Design and utilise built forms and materials which are sympathetic to the environment and which complement the landscape. Built forms should, subject to commercial assessment, absorb and blend into the natural environment, connecting the experience with the park and making visitors feel they are stepping into nature.

- Toilets must be environmentally appropriate, sufficient in number and in appropriate locations.
- Access should be provided to a wide range of facilities and experiences while recognising that not everything will be suitable for everyone.
- Visitor centre focus should be on experiences, education, conservation and interpretation.
- Offer diversity, layering and tiered experiences so experiences, accommodation and things to see and do are not all "clumped" together.
- Investment must balance bricks and mortar with interpretive information, experiences and storytelling

   many of which do not require significant infrastructure yet have the potential to generate revenue.
- Utilise the visitor facilities to educate visitors in relation to waste, biosecurity, campfires and appropriate behaviour in parks.
- Accommodation should be limited to predeveloped areas and/or existing trails, avoiding sensitive coastal dunes and headlands, and include traditional camping, glamping or discreet pod-like structures blended to the environment.
- Camping and accommodation in Parks needs to have a strong point of difference, which is the ability to offer a nature-based experience with seclusion / distance between sites, less light pollution and a true sense of being in the wilderness. To achieve this, consideration should be given as to where larger vehicle access will be permitted.

## 9. Community advocacy and support

Local knowledge, passion, advocacy and information sharing about Parks is valued and should be nurtured. Relationships with volunteers and community-based organisations should be fostered and supported, to increase the number of volunteers and facilitate their role in Parks conservation, management and visitor interactions.



### 10. Dispersion of visitor load through the development of a network of experiences

Parks will support the development of a diverse range of facilities and infrastructure across a number of existing nodes to disperse the visitor load, encourage visitors to linger, learn and discover and enable more effective management of visitor volumes and impacts at Remarkable Rocks and Cape du Couedic in particular.

 The ongoing expansion of car parks to service increasing visitor numbers detracts from the experience of being in a natural, wild place. It also has detrimental impacts on the surrounding environment and biodiversity. Different methods need to be identified to manage visitor numbers and achieve dispersion. This does not exclude car park redesign to improve flow and movement within the constraints of cultural sites and high biodiversity values.

# Western Kangaroo Island Parks opportunities and ideas

Part and



# Western Kangaroo Island Parks opportunities and ideas

## Main visitor hub / visitor centre

- The design, layout, capacity and functionality of the previous visitor centre is not felt to be commensurate with the stated vision.
- If a new visitor centre at FCNP is to be contemplated, it could offer:
  - high class interpretive centre that is sensory, tactile, three dimensional and immersive connecting with visitors from all ages and backgrounds
  - a retail offer
  - a food and beverage offer (relatively small-scale, cafe style featuring local produce)
  - a multi-use space for research, education, school groups, storytelling and events
  - toilet facilities with internal and external access
  - indoor and outdoor seating, ensuring separation between large CTO groups and other visitor types
  - a possible research facility (with possible links to the Universities)
  - an outdoor nature play space
  - an outdoor amphitheatre
- Toilets should be sufficient in quantity to efficiently manage an influx of 50 visitors at the same time, environmentally and aesthetically appropriate for a state of the art facility.
- The amphitheatre should be discreetly designed and relatively compact and easily accessible from the visitor centre. This should not require much in the way of "built" form, other than shade / weather protection. Seating is preferred to be removable for minimum impact. If walls are required, it is preferred these are made of local stone.

- It is anticipated the talks and presentations held in the amphitheatre are primarily chargeable in some form, whether they be included in the ticket price as a package or available to purchase on arrival. The amphitheatre would also act as a multi-use space for school groups.
- The interpretive experience within the visitor centre should take visitors "on a journey of discovery" that informs their activities and encourages further exploration and learning in other locations.
- Outdoor seating, some with tables and shelter to eat a picnic lunch, should be dotted around the visitor centre in appropriate locations.
- For school groups, there is a need for space to work, reflect, interact, write, draw, research and think.
- Accommodation should be located separately from a visitor centre type facility to disperse the infrastructure.
- A main visitor centre / hub could be located at the gate to FCNP, at Allotment 5 or be rebuilt at Rocky River, noting there is a preference for the visitor facilities to act as a transition point between the Island and the wilderness in function and design. If the visitor centre is to be relocated outside the Park this provides an opportunity for the Rocky River precinct to be redesigned for accommodation and other visitor services.
- Building design, access and traffic flow should be planned to support compliance (such as payment of park fees and prevention of camping in unauthorised areas).



- The food and beverage offer needs to be pitched at the right level to ensure year-round sustainability and an appeal to both the local and visitor market - fresh, simple and wholesome is preferred, in alignment with the natural setting.
- Explore models of retail operation that provide for local product and produce to be included.

### **Experiences**

- It is agreed there is significant opportunity to diversify the visitor experiences available at Western Kangaroo Island Parks to enhance the experience, provide choice, increase potential visitor spend and disperse visitor numbers.
- Consideration must be given to offer a range of activities for a range of age, mobility, capability, language and interest.
- Not all experiences need to be available all the time. Some would be seasonally driven. This could be used as a drawcard for specific, interest-focused visits at strategic times. This could encourage long-term visitation planning, off-peak visitation and repeat visitation to access different experiences across seasons. This approach would also help protect endangered species at particular times (e.g. breeding).
- In school holidays, additional free experiences could be added such as a "wildlife detective checklist" or a Ranger talk specifically pitched for children.
- A variety of walking and bike trails to suit a range of skills, mobility and visitor demographics should be explored, noting these could extend across Parks and private land to offer a variety of lengths and associated facilities and stopping points.
- Across walking trails and bike trails, it is felt the inclusion of "nodes" where visitors can pause, sit down, seek protection from the weather (rain / sun), take in a view or look at interpretive information or interact with a Ranger would add value and aid visitor dispersion by encouraging them to stay longer and slow down.
- Adventure and tourism activities should be considered on merit, ensuring they are consistent

with the guiding principles within this framework document.

- Interpretive experiences, education and storytelling are seen as a significant and critical part of visitor experiences in the Western Kangaroo Island Parks and should be dispersed around all nodes and attractions - not concentrated only at a visitor centre. These are to be a mix of paid and free of charge.
- It is noted interpretive experiences should be designed so they can be refreshed and revitalised, approximately every three years, without significant investment.
- While it is acknowledged that technology is critical to delivering modern interpretive experiences, planning and design must consider longevity and maintenance requirements in order to ensure a quality experience can be sustained long term.
- Technology should be used in different ways, such as providing the ability to download or listen to information in different languages or participate in an interactive experience in different languages.
- Digital experiences should combine with touch tables, visuals, signage and other forms of displays to provide variety and to enable people with a range of technological expertise to gain access to displays. It also provides access when digital connectivity fails.

## **Pricing structures**

- There is a need for an easier and more efficient payment system that is straightforward to manage on the ground for Parks entry and experiences. Retaining a level of human interaction in pass / ticket sales is seen as an important value-add that supports sales.
- Offering a number of pass and ticket purchase options is supported e.g online or in a visitor centre to ensure there are options to suit visitor preferences.
- The general consensus is to simplify pricing and consider charging by car (subject to commercial assessment) as opposed to a per person charge for Parks entry. An advantage of this method of charging is that it could encourage car pooling and thus less vehicles in the parks. The option to add a second day for a "package price" that is more cost effective than purchasing two separate one day passes is also supported.



- Guided tours and activities should be "extras" which are chargeable on top of the Parks entry pass, except for special interest days as determined by Parks.
- A layered or tiered pricing system is supported for experiences. Consideration can be given to grouping some of them to form packages of experiences. Tiered pricing should also be implemented, linked to the nature of the experience itself, what it includes and the resources required to offer it.
- It is accepted that it is a positive outcome to have income and expenditure roughly in balance in relation to Kangaroo Island Parks. Revenue generation is supported for the purposes of maintaining and running operations and experiences and for conservation.
- A "locals" special price for Parks entry is supported, as is the continuation of the Island Pass and Schools Pass to support the local connection with and support of Parks.
- An appealing and "solid" set of experiences should form part of any day pass park entry.
- Existing structures, such as Friends of Parks, Campground Hosts and the Volunteer Ranger Program, that enable community to volunteer in Parks, together with associated reward for effort initiatives, should be retained.

# Public private partnerships and private investment

There is a place for this, aligned to the following key points:

- **Common Purpose:** A prerequisite for engagement with any private sector investor is alignment with the guiding principles in this Framework document and the achievement of mutually beneficial objectives (including the Kangaroo Island community).
- Integrity: Ensure integrity of process that also gives strong consideration to the role and opportunities for local businesses, market demand and commercial sustainability. Be mindful of flow-on impacts and replication.
- Accountability: The partnership should clearly identify and clarify each partner's role and responsibilities, contemplated activities and management structures to ensure a transparent and accountable process.

 Transparency: There must be enough transparency and check-in points along a project journey that the community has visibility and confidence in what is proposed, without releasing private commercial (financial and contractual) information.

### **Research centre**

- The opportunity should be explored to partner with a / several universities to incorporate a research facility at the Western end of the Island.
- The research facility could connect to a multipurpose room that could be used for research but could also be used for school groups, education, events and presentations.
- Possible operating models and funding options require further consideration.

## Car parks and vehicle volume

- Car park flow and pedestrian movement requires careful planning.
- A dropping off point with shelter is needed for school groups and CTO's bringing large visitor groups to FCNP. This needs to support mobility impaired visitors.
- From a safety and accessibility perspective, it is preferred car parking and drop-off points are located on the same side of the road as the visitor centre.
- It is felt that the concept of a large car park external to FCNP in particular, with electric cars and shuttles moving visitors back and forth to various nodes within the park has merit. A staged approach to implementing such a system could be considered over time and in line with market acceptability.
- Options such as capped vehicle numbers by destination, directing visitors to specific locations to manage visitor volumes and car pooling are further measures which would merit consideration to better disperse the visitor load.



## **Other ideas**

- Consideration should be given to "Instagram" opportunities, such as points of visual interest (perhaps developed by local artists) and lookouts to act as stopping points to slow visitors down so they do not "rush" from the Remarkable Rocks to Admiral's Arch.
- Biodiversity hub: The potential for commercial products, featuring a citizen science focus, to create a momentum and 'buzz' around the site, by expanding knowledge of the species composition of the Park and promoting the breadth of the Park's biodiversity. This may result in the attraction of a diversity of visitors, interested in a wide range of natural values.
- Identify administrative initiatives to free up Ranger's time to enable more visitor interactions as Ranger interactions are a highlight for visitors at key locations and specific nodes throughout the Parks.
- Developing and maintaining connections with the Kangaroo Island community is critical, as is promoting to them new experiences, seasonal highlights and opportunities for participation in Parks activities, including as volunteers. These connections will encourage them to promote the Island's Parks to others and support visitation of Parks in off-peak times with friends and family. Opportunities to enhance a feeling of ownership and responsibility towards the Parks should be encouraged by various means.
- Consider broadening the hours of business to incorporate sunrise and sunset, particularly for night time experiences and to enable access to the food and beverage offer for evening meals.

# Location specific ideas and opportunities

## **Rocky River**

- The Rocky River precinct (former visitor centre, car parks, campground, area around May's and Postman's cottages, former maintenance compound, staff housing and research centre) presents a development opportunity.
- Development could include, but is not limited to, accommodation, visitor centre, interpretive and

storytelling infrastructure, picnic / seating and shelters with BBQ facilities, car parking, short walks, nature play and a food and beverage offer. What is developed here will be informed by the broader network of experiences within Western Kangaroo Island Parks e.g. final location of visitor centre and development of visitor infrastructure at Kelly Hill.

- The point of difference for accommodation at this location could be the sense of seclusion, tranquility and immersion in nature and the park.
- The Platypus Walk should be reinstated and its name changed to more accurately highlight the experiences to be encountered on the walk. Limestone trail surfacing should be used to minimise the spread of Phytophthora.

## Kelly Hill Caves Conservation Park

- Kelly Hill Caves is viewed as an appropriate location for a satellite visitor hub and able to accommodate a heavier visitor load than it has to date, subject to appropriate design and management. Facilities specific to Kelly Hill are proposed to include a small scale food and beverage offer, guided walks and tours, places for reflection and relaxation and accommodation.
- Small footprint / low volume accommodation, such as glamping tents, A-frames or pods could be positioned around the dam and footprint of government house.
- It is recognised the grasslands are regenerated and have a number of threatened plant species present but ecological assessment could identify additional small footprint accommodation opportunities in proximity to other visitor facilities.
- Offer places for visitors to stop and rest, relax and enjoy the surroundings and potentially eat a picnic.
- Toilets are needed and should be environmentally appropriate and aesthetically located and designed.
- A BBQ shelter of sufficient size and scale for CTO's is needed.
- Further smaller BBQ shelters for visitors, distanced from the CTO BBQ shelter, are also recommended.



- The end of the Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail needs a sense of celebration at the finish. This does not need to be "grand" but instead offer the opportunity for rest and reflection, with easy access to welcome comforts such as amenities, a place to put packs and equipment and the opportunity for a drink and snack.
- Interpretive opportunities are plentiful, given wildflowers, funghi, native grasses, birds, fossils and more in the area and signage, shelters and digital technology can be used to share this information. In particular, there is an opportunity to link stories and interpretation between above and below ground.
- A facility that uses technology to showcase the geological forms, palaeontological research and flora and fauna in these places could add interest to interpretive and storytelling experiences.
- The opportunity for additional walking trails of differing lengths should be explored - preferably these would form a loop to enable one way movement rather than doubling back.
- Grassdale is supported for ongoing CTO use, together with possible upgrades in consultation with CTOs and DEW.

## Allotment 5

- It is understood Allotment 5 has been gazetted into FCNP. The area has been developed and was once farmed and from a fire risk perspective, is not surrounded by a heavy fuel load.
- At this stage, DEW is exploring its use for Ranger accommodation and workshop facilities. This is supported but consideration should strongly be given to other uses that better maximise the scenic opportunity and wildlife presence provided by the location.
- Consideration could be given, dependent upon DEW plans for the site, for CTO's, independent travellers and smaller guided groups to set up lunch / morning or afternoon tea stops across a number of dispersed locations, providing a sense of "getting away from the crowds".

- The location is beautiful and holds significant potential for the development of new looped trails with interpretation through the hills and old growth eucalypt.
- Small footprint accommodation, such as glamping tents, A-frames or pods could also be developed here, dispersed around the site to offer a feeling of being at one with nature.
- Allotment 5 could also be considered as an option for a new visitor hub instead of the former FCNP location.
- It is noted that development at Allotment 5 would need to consider, aligned to the guiding principles within this document, the potential flow-on impact on Cape Bouguer Wilderness Protection Area (Hanson Bay Beach).

## **Cape Borda Conservation Park**

- Cape Borda attracts very low visitor numbers at the present time and the opportunity exists to develop a satellite visitor hub here with an attractive cluster of experiences including short walks, lighthouse tour, interpretive signage and creative storytelling associated with European heritage, shipwrecks, local geology and flora and fauna.
- It is felt accessibility is the main barrier to growing visitor numbers given the corrugated road and frequent washouts. This issue would need to be resolved by working with Council to maximise the opportunity that exists of making Cape Borda a thriving satellite hub.
- An opportunity exists to offer a limited range of picnic-style food and hot and cold drinks for consumption in the area given there is limited availability at present. Picnic tables and sheltered seating is also needed.
- The Harvey's return walk could be developed to a full loop trail. This would require basic facilities, stopping points, shelter and seating and interpretation at both ends subject to the WPA Act and guidelines, the guiding principles within this document and consideration of raptor breeding refuges.



- The reinstatement of the coastal trek from Cape Borda to Cape du Couedic is supported, noting a "light touch" approach is sought.
- Shackle Road could be positioned as a 4WD opportunity, finishing at the Cape Borda satellite hub.
   Friends of Parks developed an interpretive driving trail from Rocky River to Cape Borda using Shackle Road, featuring numbered stopping points and a guidebook. It is felt this would be of value to reinstate.
- Scott Cove offers a scenic lookout opportunity and could be enhanced with picnic facilities and a viewing point, subject to consideration of raptor breeding refuges.

## Lathami Conservation Park

- It is felt there is a strong opportunity to formalise the walking trail, with the inclusion of bird hides and stopping points.
- A CTO shelter and picnic facilities present an opportunity.

# Western River Wilderness Protection Area

 The existing alignment of the Waterfall Creek Hike includes walking on a steep and slippery gradient which is also prone to erosion. It would be enhanced by a more sustainable realignment to form a loop or potentially extended to the coast (subject to WPA Act, Regulations and Code of Management 1992).

## Parndana Conservation Park

The activation of Parndana Conservation Park, particularly for walking and bike trails, is strongly supported, noting consideration must be given to manage disturbance to the glossy black cockatoos in the southern portion of the park and the management of Phytophthora.

### **Remarkable Rocks**

It is understood works to reinstate infrastructure at Remarkable Rocks is already underway, The following points are for future consideration:

- It is felt a loop walk that is a proper one-way system would be very beneficial. This could enable the walk to be lengthened and one portion of the loop to be visually concealed through use of vegetation and the landscape from the other, aiding visitor dispersion.
- Some form of viewing platform to enable visitors who do not wish to walk to the rocks to view them from a distance is recommended.
- Interpretive information is needed and it is felt this could be made more modern and interesting than what was there in the past.

## Visitor information hub at Kingscote

- It is felt a main visitor hub for whole-of-island information, ticketing, food and wine, a retail offer showcasing island product and produce, and museum / exhibition-based experiences at Kingscote would benefit the Island. Kingscote is a multi-visit destination and is felt to be best positioned for this type of facility - this could potentially be a partnership between Parks, SATC, Island-based tourism organisations, Kangaroo Island Council and private sector investment.
- A visitor information hub of this nature would still form part of the overall network of experiences across the Island and does not replace the need for visitor facilities / centre and satellite hubs at Seal Bay and in Western Kangaroo Island Parks.
- This concept goes beyond the scope of this document and would need separate consideration.



## **Existing documents**

A significant amount of work has been completed in recent years that provides further valuable information, research, concepts and ideas towards much of what has been described in this Framework document.

# These documents should be referenced and used as relevant and applicable:

- Kangaroo Island Strategic Natural Resources
   Management Plan 2017 2027 (KI NRM Board)
- Flinders Chase National Park Discovery Walk and Nature Play (Exhibition Studios, 2015)
- Flinders Chase National Park Bridging Document (Exhibition Studios, 2015)
- Cape du Couedic Interpretation Plan 2016 2026 (InterpMatters)



# Future engagement and communications

- In general terms, the Group states that communication and transparency with the whole community on the Island across all stages and phases of planning, design and construction are critical to ensure community buy-in and support for future development in the Western Kangaroo Island Parks.
- The Group feels it does have, and would like to have, an ongoing role in working with DEW through the upcoming planning, design and construction phases.
- The current members of the Group all expressed an interest to continue their involvement and felt the sector representation model is effective and appropriate. It was felt new group members could be introduced to ensure this representation is broad and balanced.
- The Group would like to be a sounding board at key project milestones and have the opportunity to provide feedback and comment in efficient and effective ways.
- Subject matter experts could be brought into the Group at key milestones to enable the Group to delve into specific topics in more detail, should this be appropriate and sought after.
- The Group expressed their contributions to date have felt valued and respected and they would like to see this continue.
- The Group felt it could support DEW decision-making around the "what, when and how" to communicate with the wider Island community as the future plans for Western Kangaroo Island Parks progress.



# **Appendix 1**



# **Visitor personas**

The following visitor persons were identified by tourism research, DEW data and the DEW team on Kangaroo Island and were used by the Western Kangaroo Island Parks Community Reference Group to inform their ideas and thinking:

- Domestic day visitors (inter and intrastate)
- Domestic multi-day visitors (inter and intrastate)
- Adventure tourists, empty nesters and highlights tourists (inter and intrastate)
- Backpacker / young traveller
- European honeymooners
- International independent travellers
- International large group tour
- School groups
- Local community / residents of Kangaroo Island
- Volunteers
- Special interest groups
- Research / conference groups



## Our brand values

#### Connected to unspoilt nature

Nature is fundamental to our concepts of humanity and wellbeing; it is why communities like Kangaroo Island's rise up to protect and preserve it. Our secluded beaches, pristine ocean, well managed national parks and prolific wildlife all reflect Kangaroo Island's soul. And a connection to nature is at the heart of much of what happens on Kangaroo Island – our products, experiences and lifestyle are all inspired by our unique environment and natural features.

#### Authenticity

A truly authentic experience has become a rare commodity in a world of convenience. A sense of authenticity permeates our regional culture, our local characters, and the holiday experiences and products we offer. And Kangaroo Islanders understand that authentic doesn't mean perfect.

Authenticity

#### Personal relationships

Increasingly, people want to become re-engaged with their daily lives and to know the people in it – family, friends, community, neighbours and people they do business with. Kangaroo Island is a place that provides the space and time to rebuild and reconnect with these people.

On Kangaroo Island strangers wave to each other. Locals share their passion for what they do and why they do it – whether it's family farming handed down through generations, making handmade artisan food and wine, volunteer work for the environment and wildlife, or art inspired by the surroundings.

Personal

relationships

Connected to unspoilt nature

Kangaroo Island. Discover the things that really matter in life

Seclusion (Island)

#### Seclusion (Island)

Kangaroo Island is first and foremost an island, a place apart. It is one of the few remaining destinations where people can genuinely get away from it all. And our products and experiences are isolated from everyday routines, the commonplace and many mainland diseases. Peaceful/ Restored

#### Peaceful/Restored

People are seeking to scale back and restore balance in their lives. They want to get back in touch

with nature, relax and eat healthy foods. Kangaroo Island is an antidote for stress and busyness. It offers an escape and a restorative peace, through a holiday experience. Plus it offers healthy, natural and genuine products created on the Island that nourish the mind and body.



# **Tourism trends and insights**

Below is a summary of the desktop research conducted by independent consultancy regarding best practice nature-based tourism and trends and potential opportunities for Kangaroo Island.

### Challenges

- Seasonality
- · Length of stay / spend
- Transport / distances / road issues
- · Limited range of experiences / activities
- On-park visitor experience influences who visits, for how long, the design of each visitor itinerary and investment on and off park

### **Tourism mega-trends**

- · More for less: Parks have become increasingly visited and expectations around guality and management has risen while funding reduces - revenue has to be generated in other ways.
- Nature-based tourism continues to be a critical motivator for domestic and international travel.
- China and India likely to be growing markets for KI. •
- Ageing population that still travels means increased demand for accessibility provisions.
- There is a growing dependence on online services. Communications, user generated content and imagery play a larger role in travel planning and decision making.
- Experiences rather than things/ products are the key to travel. Stories help create the experience and customise it, to make a place relevant to each individual
- · Technology and innovation is changing travel: e-bikes, driverless cars and shuttles, phone apps etc.
- A major trend in Australia has been the rise of 'social reconnection' with people wishing to reconnect with families / friends and connect with the place and people they are visiting.
- 50 year tourism strategies are becoming more common. Developing tools to manage tourism, not just drive growth, are emerging.
- There is growing interest in understanding and respecting Aboriginal connections / understanding Country.

### **Possible opportunities**

#### DEVELOPING VISITOR HUBS

- Visitors want to be able to see the range of experiences available and readily be able to match their preferences to CTO and group servicing and the provision of core services and facilities (toilets, wayfinding, Parks operational work
- Clustering experiences around nodes can help disperse visitor numbers beyond current "icons" by providing a suite may be a 'drawcard', but collectively they act to become one.
- Many parks globally are working to remove self-drive vehicles from internal parks road networks to shift from const more experiential visits. This approach needs a departure point for shuttle buses / sustainable transport options.
- · The location and scope of a replacement to Flinders Chase Visitor Centre requires significant consideration there considered. Many examples exist that blend servicing needs and experiential interpretation objectives. The physical considered flexibly and allow for innovation in space / design.

### QUALITY AND DIVERSITY OF VISITOR EXPERIENCES

- Major visitor trends, both globally and domestically, are now appearing around sustainability and making value-base a variety of mechanisms so all visitors contribute back to meaningful and essential work around the Island's long-te
- Many locations are working on altering visitor behaviour away from parking the car, taking a short walk to the icon, car. Tools include diversifying the walk itself by creating stopping points / features or adding opportunities such as
- Parks need to encourage diversification to provide appeal to different types of visitors, ensure icons are not "loved • visitation, and achieve regional development goals. Globally many Parks use different forms of public-private partne
- Interpretation is important and has been thought of as face to face or via apps, websites, visitor centres where peop • see or have just seen. The current trend is 'storytelling', working across all five senses. Emotional connection is the experiences and connecting in a meaningful and lasting way with visitors.
- People management needs to be well planned. Attractions with large volumes of people have considered how to manage visitor flows and minimise peaks and congestion and deliver quality of experience. Multiple price points and products and capped numbers are some ways to do this.

#### DIGITAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- Technology is a key requirement for contemporary visitor management. Visitor nodes should have coverage. User generated content and imagery drives • much of the Island's global marketing.
- Sensitive sites, hard to access locations and shy or reclusive animals all can be revealed to visitors much better through improved technology that is engaging and interactive



them. Also need a service centre assisting rk, fee collection etc).
e of good options, where no single option
ructing larger car parking towards creating
e are a number of models that can be al interpretive needs of a Centre should be
ed choices. The opportunity exists to build rm conservation.
taking a few photos and heading back to picnic hire, bike hire and Segway tours.
to death", encourage longer stays / repeat erships to achieve this.
ole can 'learn' about what they are going to e key to the delivery of good quality

