

Worimi Conservation Lands and Worimi LALC freehold lands

Tourism partnership opportunities



www.worimiconservationlands.com



WORIMI CONSERVATION LANDS



Foreword

The Worimi Conservation Lands Board of Management want to see the Worimi Conservation Lands respected and acknowledged as part of Worimi Country.

We must continue the legacy our Elders have left for us. This legacy ensures that we continue to care for Country and protect her. When we do this, she will protect and provide for us.

The Lands include our sites, burials, beliefs, cultural practices, ceremonies, and places of significance. Our Elders have given us this right to protect and maintain our connection for our cultural identity and the responsibility to make the decisions that respect and protect the Lands, we must do what is right for them.

The Worimi Conservation Lands is a special place, it is a cultural landscape that we want to protect and pass on our legacy to future generations.

The Board's vision is to Protect, Respect and Connect with Country, with these Lands. The Board's vision ensures that a Cultural lens is at the forefront of the work that we do.

The Worimi Conservation Lands Board of Management acknowledges the Worimi people, the custodians of these lands on which we walk and pay respect to Worimi Elders past and present.

Nyirun gathay wakulda
(Let us go together)

Jamie Tarrant
Chairperson
Worimi Conservation Lands Board of Management

The Aboriginal-owned
Worimi Conservation
Lands is managed
through a Board of
Management on behalf of
Aboriginal Owners, in
partnership with the NSW
National Parks and
Wildlife Service.



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Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Yii Warrimayguba barray wanyimbuwanyimbu

Ngarralgal barra gatambigal ngarral

Nyiirun gathay wakulda

We acknowledge the Worimi People, the Traditional Custodians of the land where the Worimi Conservation Lands and adjoining private lands resides.

We pay our respect to Elders past and present. Let us go together.



Activating nature-based and cultural experiences that protect, respect and connect to Country

Worimi Conservation Lands

GUUDJI-YIIGU : A WORIMI
WELCOME

Stockton Beach, Worimi Conservation Lands, Erin McGauley/DPE

Worimi Conservation Lands — Protecting, respecting and connecting to Country

Introduction

Worimi Conservation Lands (WCL) Board of Management (BoM) and Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council (WLALC), in partnership with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), acknowledge tourism operators offer invaluable visitor experiences that connect people to Country and contribute to local visitor economies. The purpose of this document is to introduce the commercial opportunities that will be made available in the coming months to support the sustainable management of Worimi Conservation Lands.

The WCL is located 2.5 hours drive north of Sydney and only a short drive from Newcastle Airport. It is managed by the local Worimi Traditional Owners, in partnership with NPWS and covers approximately 4200-hectares of land, spanning 25.5 kilometres of coastline. The Aboriginal-owned park is managed to ensure the protection of the natural and cultural values of the Stockton Bight landscape, while providing public access and promoting safe and sustainable recreational and commercial use.

The WCL Board is responsible for the care, control and management of the Aboriginal-owned park and sets the strategic direction. The 13-member WCL Board of Management is comprised of Worimi Aboriginal Owners, Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council, Port Stephens Council, neighbouring landholders, conservation and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service representatives. NPWS works with the Board to implement its decisions and carry out the day-to-day

operational management of the WCL. This includes commercial tour operator licensing.

We want to ensure continued public access, while also achieving recognition and protection of the WCL important cultural values. A key goal of the **Worimi Conservation Lands Plan of Management** is to ensure that visitors gain an awareness, understanding and appreciation for the cultural values of the WCL and that their visit is sustainable and has a minimal to no negative impact on this culturally and environmentally sensitive landscape.

Commercial activities provide a practical means to access the park for many visitors seeking to experience the WCL and it is integral that commercial opportunities available contribute to achieving sustainable visitor access by promoting the importance of respecting the rules and regulations that protect the cultural and natural values of the area.

The commercial opportunities offered have been assessed to ensure any environmental impacts are avoided, mitigated, or managed and we recognise that public visitation and enjoyment must always be compatible with park conservation and cultural values.

We will be engaging with the market to deliver a range of visitor experiences that build high-quality, sustainable, memorable connections with the natural environment and cultural landscape via Expression of Interest opportunities. The opportunities will be available via **NSW Supplier hub**.

Worimi Conservation

Lands vision

We want to see the Worimi Conservation Lands (the Lands) respected and acknowledged as part of Worimi Country.

Caring for our Country and sharing the respect and knowledge of the Lands to share and care like our Elders. We want everybody to work on caring and sharing for our Worimi Country.

The Lands include our sites, beliefs, cultural practices, ceremonies and places of significance. We want to be able to teach others about our land and culture and in return developing respect for our land and culture for the future, as our Elders have entrusted to us.

The Worimi Conservation Lands is a Worimi cultural landscape that we want to protect for future generations. We will protect, respect and connect the Lands and our Country will connect and protect us.



Protecting Country

Protecting Country means looking after the traditional, cultural and environmental landscape. The plants and animals, our sites and places and beliefs and knowledge are all part of our culture and heritage that we will protect.



Respecting Country

Respecting Country includes our respect of 'Elders and Knowledge Holders', past, present and future generations. The Lands must be respected, and those who visit and enjoy the Lands must understand its values. This is important in respecting our Country.



Connecting Country

Connecting with Country is about spending time on the Lands and learning the values of the Lands. It's about understanding that we are Worimi People belonging to this Country. We have a spiritual connection to this Country, and will pass this on to our present and future generations.

About Worimi Conservation Lands



The WCL includes Worimi National Park along with Worimi State Conservation Area and Worimi Regional Park. The land forms an important coastal link in a network of protected areas that includes Tomaree National Park to the northeast, Tilligerry State Conservation Area to the north and Hunter Wetlands National Park to the west.

The WCL is a place abundant in Aboriginal cultural history, providing unique cultural landscapes that are highly significant to the Worimi community, and is an important part of their cultural and spiritual identity. As a result, the protection and management of Worimi Country is fundamental. The Worimi People have always been and remain today the Traditional Custodians of a large area of land considered Worimi 'Country'.

There are an extraordinary number of Aboriginal cultural sites that pre-date European settlement, scattered throughout the dunes. All of these sites reflect the cultural use of the land and have special cultural significance to the Worimi people.

The southern hemisphere's largest mobile sand dunes provide a dramatic backdrop to endless adventures on WCL. Whether it's 4WD driving along the beach front or riding in the Recreational Vehicle Area, beach fishing, or enjoying the sunshine and beach activities— the park offers a variety of opportunities to develop tours that respect the values, rules and regulations of the Worimi Conservation Lands.

Additionally, the Birubi Point Crown Reserve (managed by Port Stephens Council)

is one of the most culturally significant places in the Stockton Bight landscape, and is culturally connected to the WCL. From the Worimi perspective the Birubi Point area and the management of the Crown Reserve must be complementary to the WCL.

The WCL has a long history of heritage values in particular history of use associated with the military and defence strategies during World War II. The military history of the WCL is associated with the establishment of formal defence strategies along the WCL and the use of the area for military training activities.

The Fern Bay Armour Plate Proof Facility was established in 1941 and situated near the south-west boundary of the WCL adjacent to the Stockton Rifle Range. The facility covered 168 hectares, with permanent facilities constructed within a 10-hectare compound that is in the WCL.

What was known as the Northern Defence Line was established along WCL in 1942 in response to concerns that the area was a suitable point of entry for enemy forces. The Northern Defence Line was north-east of the Fern Bay facility, and was manned principally by infantry including heavy and light anti-aircraft artillery. Tank traps were also put in place at a number of locations along the WCL to deter shore invasions

The WCL BoM retains the right to access and utilise the park and as how they deem fit, including for social, commercial and/or cultural purposes.

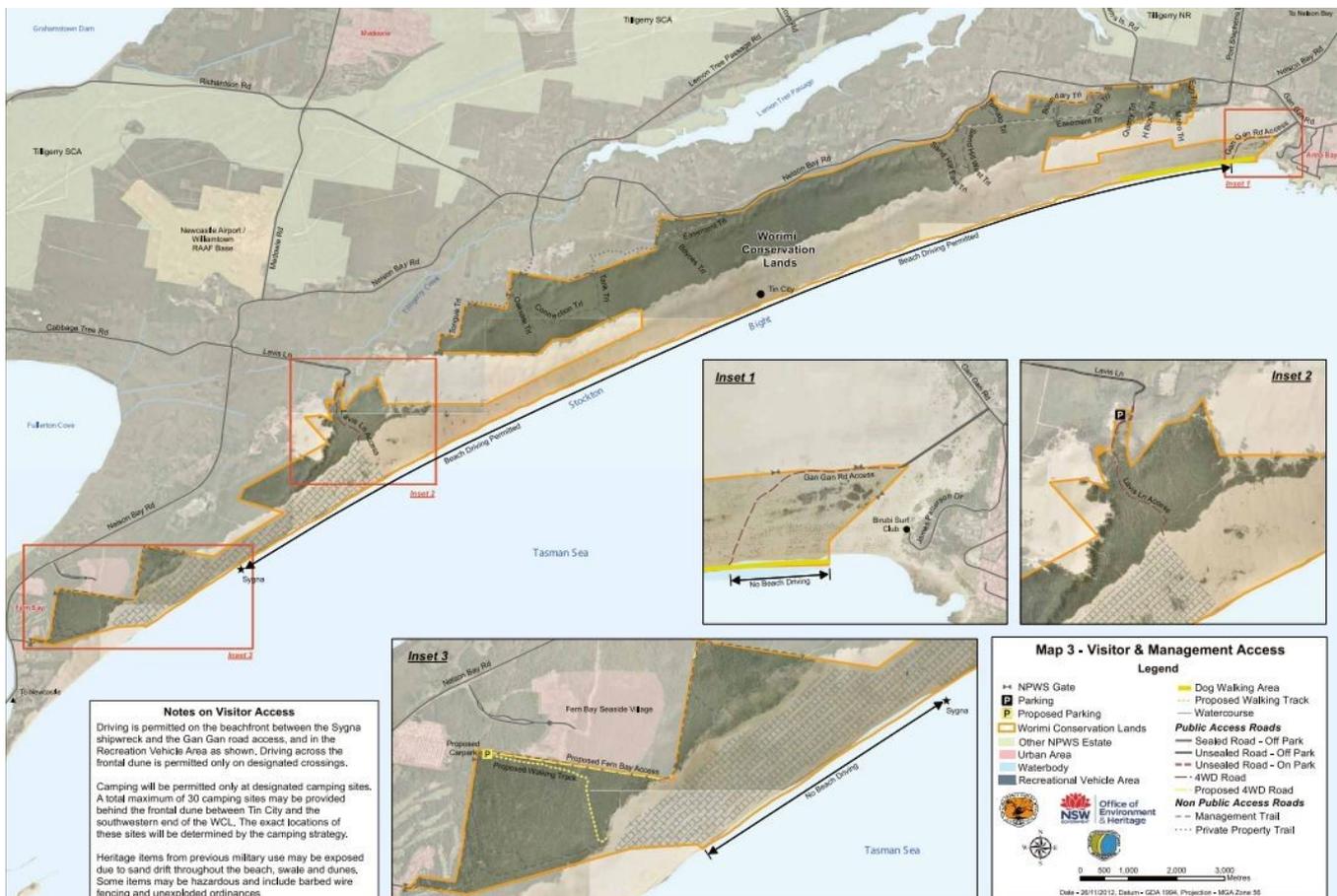


FIGURE 1—Map of the Worimi Conservation Lands reserve establishment ([WCL PoM page 104](#)).

About Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council



The vision of the Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) is committed to improving, protecting and fostering the best interests of its members and all Aboriginal persons within the Council's area.

To be proud, active and independent in our lifestyles, living environment and cultural heritage through connection to land and each other, enhancing the values of our Aboriginal cultural identity and achieving financial independence and self determination through action of the Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council.

Worimi LALC is a substantial landholder in the precinct commonly referred to as Worimi Conservation Lands and Stockton Bight. This includes:

- The title holder for the WCL on behalf of the Registered Aboriginal Owners (being one of the three parties that negotiated the WCL lease); and
- Private landowners of northern high sand dunes as shown on the map below. This land owned by the LALC consistently has the highest concentration of commercial tourism activities in this landscape and is one of the key tourism destinations in Port Stephens.

Worimi LALC agreed to a single licensing framework for commercial tour operations to be managed by NPWS (acting on behalf of the WCL Board of Management). This is documented in a formal agreement. The agreement will be reviewed to align with the outcomes of this Expression of Interest process.

The Worimi LALC retains the right to access and utilise their land and as how they deem fit, including for social, commercial and/or cultural purposes.

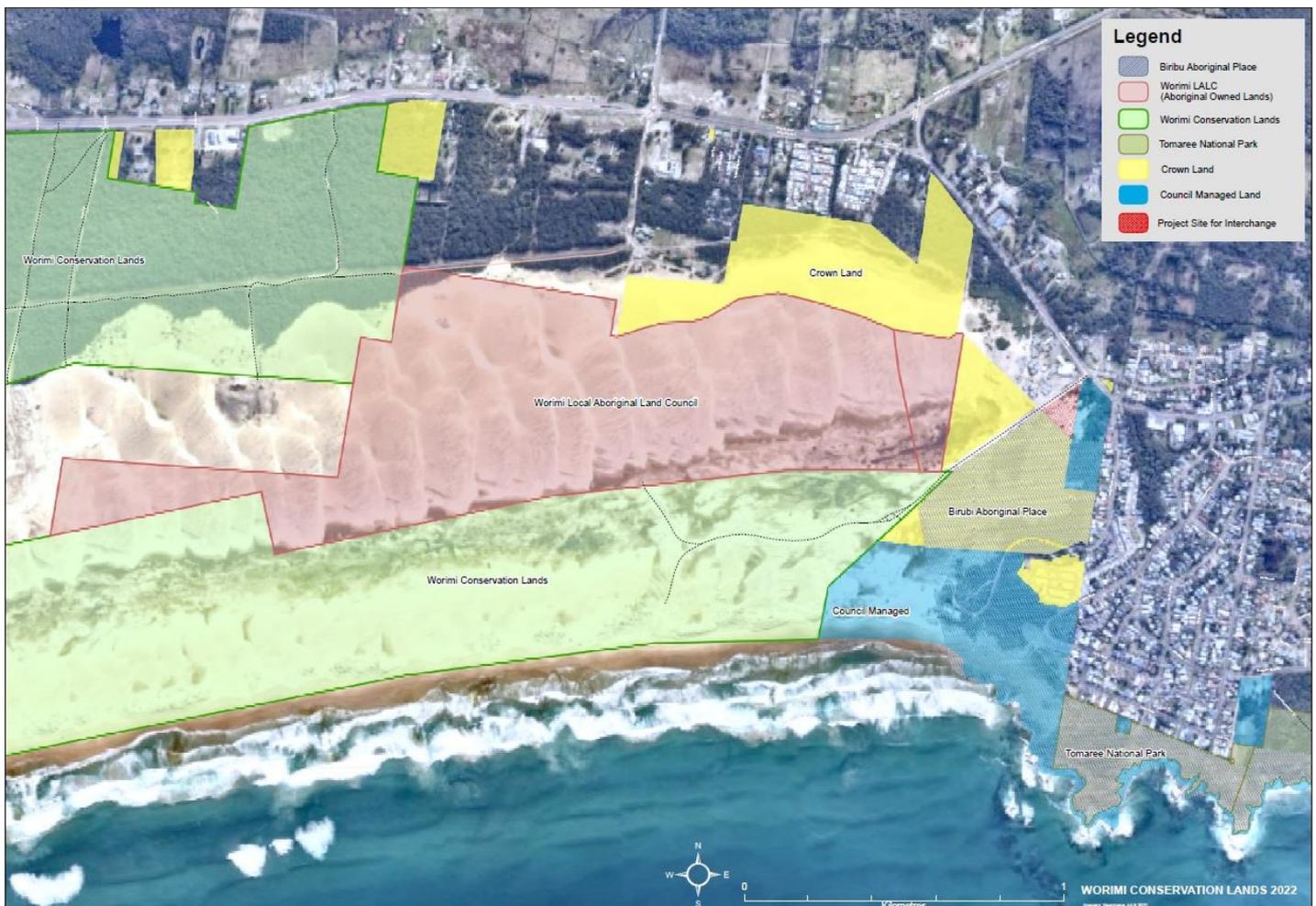


FIGURE 2— Map of the northern end of Worimi Conservation Lands, including Worimi LALC private freehold lands.

The commercial opportunities

We will be seeking viable commercial tourism and recreation opportunities that acknowledge Worimi Country, Worimi cultural values of the Worimi Conservation Lands and Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council private lands, and provide sustainable culture and nature based experiences. This will include:

- Creating and delivering a diverse range of iconic and world-class sustainable visitor experiences
- Developing innovative nature-based tourism experiences that build high-quality, memorable connections and awareness of the cultural and natural values of Worimi Conservation Lands
- Delivering tourism experiences that provide Aboriginal interpretation, sharing a deeper appreciation of the culture
- Exploring opportunities for passive recreation
- Forming opportunities to partner and package with other tourism service providers to add value and enhance the overall visitor experience
- Offering experiences that contribute to employment, training and economic outcomes for Worimi People and Worimi LALC members.

The experiences

The Worimi Conservation Lands (WCL) Board of Management and Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council are taking a proactive view of future commercial tourism opportunities. The current experiences offered by licensed operators are described below. Also included are examples of other tourism experiences that may be suitable. This list is a guide and other proposals will be considered.

The number of licenses issued for each experience, and in total, will depend on the responses received, compatibility with the Plan of Management and what is sustainable within the dynamic coastal cultural landscape.

The Plan of Management is an important source of information for respondents. It outlines the important values of the park and how this has influenced visitor access to ensure these values are protected.

Experiences that promote and provide opportunities to better understand Worimi culture are welcome. It is important that Worimi culture is shared by Worimi People. Cultural experiences should be delivered by Worimi people and information about Worimi culture shared as part of any tourism experience must be approved.

Please note, responses to the EOI opportunities will not consider any proposals for the use of semi-permanent or permanent structures not already on park, or responses that include money for upgrading assets on park. Proposals relating to commercial helicopter services using the park and adjoining Worimi LALC lands will not be considered. Areas of the WCL and Worimi LALC Freeholds lands are subject to temporary closures for environmental and cultural reasons.

Interested parties should only provide a response that uses current access tracks (Gan Gan, Lavis Lane & Fern Bay) for the Worimi Conservation Lands. Access from other locations will not be considered.

Current commercial tourism activities available

The WCL Board of Management acknowledge there is ongoing interest from the private sector in developing new or expanding existing commercial operations on WCL.

Prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic in early 2020, an average of over 230,000 visitors annually participated in a commercial tourism activity provided by licensed Parks Eco Pass operators.

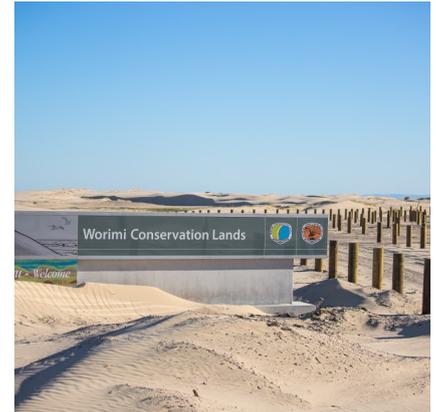
The current tourism activities and experiences that will continue to be offered for commercial tourism licensing are detailed below. These activities will all be offered via an Expression of Interest (EOI) opportunity available to interested businesses or individuals. A select number of licences will be offered for each experience as listed below.

Sandboarding experiences

WCL offers the southern hemisphere's largest mobile coastal sand mass, offering a visually spectacular landscape and a unique and exciting opportunity for visitors to sandboard down the forever changing dunes. Sandboarding involves riding down the sand dunes while standing, sitting or lying on a board.

Sandboarding experiences will only be permitted on the Worimi LALC freehold land. Please refer to Figure 2 on page 7.

There are currently five (5) operators licensed to undertake sandboarding experiences on the Worimi LALC freehold land.



The experiences continued

Four Wheel Drive (4WD) guided and tag-along tour experiences

4WD guided tour experiences will only be permitted along in the following locations:

- 19km of beach front
- 350 hectares of dunes in the RVA and
- Worimi LALC freehold land.

Please refer to Figure 1 on page 6 and Figure 2 on page 7.

There are currently four (4) operators licensed to undertake 4WD guided tour experiences on the WCL and the Worimi LALC freehold land.

4WD beach and dune driving is one of the most popular activities for visitors to the WCL. Visitors require a valid beach vehicle permit. The permit does not apply to the Worimi LALC freehold land.

4WD tours provide visitors with unique beach driving experiences.

Guided animal riding experiences

The WCL provides one of the few beach-based animal riding opportunities in the greater Newcastle – Port Stephens area. A guided animal riding experience along the beachfront offers a truly unique visitor experience.

Guided animal riding experiences will only be permitted along the 19km beach front within the WCL. Please refer to Figure 1 on page 6.

There is currently one (1) operator licensed to undertake guided animal riding experiences on the WCL. Previously the WCL Board of Management have issued two (2) licences to undertake guided animal riding experiences on the WCL.

Guided quad biking experiences

The sand dunes of the WCL offer exceptional views across the coastline and a fantastic opportunity for visitors to explore the highest sand dunes in the southern hemisphere on a quad bike tour.

Guided quad biking experiences are only permitted in the Recreational Vehicle Area (RVA) of the WCL, offering visitors a unique adventurous way to experience the magnificent coastline.

The RVA is the only remaining Recreational Vehicle Area on publicly managed land in NSW. Please refer to Figure 1 on page 6.

There are currently two (2) operators licensed to undertake guided quad biking experiences in the RVA.



The experiences continued.

New potential commercial tourism activities available

The Board displays a strong preference for any new or additional commercial operations to:

- provide different experiences and opportunities to those already available
- provide enhanced opportunities for passive recreation such as non-motorised activities
- improve visitor understanding and awareness of the cultural and natural values
- contribute to employment, training and economic outcomes for Worimi People and Worimi LALC members.

The Board will consider consenting new activities and experiences based on the appropriateness of proposals submitted. Please note, new proposals for construction of accommodation or facilities will not be considered for new commercial tourism activities on WCL.

The appropriateness of activities will be guided by the Plan of Management and other issues such as (not limited to) interaction with visitors, carrying capacity, as well as the protection of cultural and natural values.

New potential commercial tourism activities *may* include, but not limited to:

Fishing experiences

The WCL has a strong association with fishing and harvesting of marine resources. The Worimi People have a long history of fishing and shellfish collecting. This is reflected in the extraordinary number of Worimi cultural sites occurring throughout the WCL.

Fishing continues to be one of the most popular recreational activities in the WCL, including outside of peak holiday periods.

Overnight camping experiences

The Ganyamalbaa campground, meaning a 'place to camp' in Worimi Gathang language, is currently available for booked guests. It provides a unique family-friendly camping holiday at a remote beach campsite at the WCL. Camping is not permitted elsewhere in the WCL.

Guided walking experiences

The beach is a popular walking destination for visitors. The beach and swale area of the WCL, plus the potential use of management trails in forested areas, provide a unique long-distance coastal walking opportunity for consideration.



Selective licensing for commercial tourism

Parks Eco Pass is the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service program for licensing operators who conduct commercial tours and recreational and educational activities in parks. The WCL Board of Management and the Worimi LALC engage NPWS to manage commercial tour operator licensing on their behalf using the Parks Eco Pass framework.

Under the Parks Eco Pass program, NPWS can allocate licences for commercial tourism opportunities on a competitive basis. This applies when NPWS, or in this case the WCL Board with support of the Worimi LALC, determines that the number of licences for an activity or location should be restricted for reasons of visitor safety, to ensure the on-going protection of the site's natural and cultural values, and/or to enhance the visitor experience.

NPWS views the allocation of these selective licences as a means of entering into a partnership arrangement with a private operator who meets the specified selection criteria in the EOIs, in keeping with the principles outlined in the Parks Eco Pass licensing program. It is a partnership that not only promotes our parks and enhances the visitor experience but also encourages visitors to appreciate, understand, protect and conserve them.

You can read more about the Parks Eco Pass program at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/parksecopass.

Fees

The WCL BoM and the Worimi LALC (private freehold lands) can make it's own decisions in relation to fees. Negotiations are currently taking place regarding the annual licence fee and usage fee. The fee structure will be included in the Expression of Interest and excludes fees associated for any campground bookings.

Licensed operators who conduct camping experiences are responsible for booking and paying for campgrounds. Bookings for the Ganyamalbaa campground can be made through the camping webpage on Worimi Conservation Lands website <https://worimiconservationlands.com/camping/>

Evaluation criteria

NPWS, acting on behalf of the WCL Board of Management and Worimi LALC, is planning to release an EOI later in 2022 with detailed evaluation criteria.

All responses received from the request for EOI will be assessed against the evaluation criteria and how the responses contribute to the Traditional Owners objectives of protect, respect and connect. Successful respondents will be identified through this process.

Evaluation criteria will likely include:

- Detailed description of the visitor experience(s).
- Improve and enhance awareness of the cultural and natural values of the park and adjoining lands.
- Experience—current and previous tourism experience.
- Environmental and cultural sustainability of proposed activities.
- Contribute to employment, training and/or economic outcomes for Worimi people and Worimi LALC members.
- Demonstrated ability to implement safe and compliant working practices.
- Commercial viability.



The services

Vehicle recovery

There is currently one (1) operator licensed to undertake vehicle recovery services on the WCL.

The Expression of Interest will also consider vehicle recovery services for the Worimi Conservation Lands.

Hundreds of visitors four wheel drive at the WCL each day and there is a requirement for reliable vehicle recovery services to be available to assist visitors in need.

Licensed commercial operators may also need vehicle recovery assistance while operating at the WCL and the LALC freehold lands. Please refer to Figure 1 on page 6 and Figure 2 on page 7.

Vehicle recovery services will be licensed under an Activity Licence (rather than Park Eco Pass) with a specific fee structure. The fee structure will be included in the Expression of Interest.



Port Stephens—Destination & visitor economy

Port Stephens covers an areas of 979km² with the major areas within the Local Government Area (LGA) being the Tomaree and Tilligerry Peninsulas, Raymond Terrace and the Pacific Highway corridor, western Port Stephens and central southern areas from Salt Ash to Williamtown and Tomago. From a tourism perspective, the main area that currently attracts visitation and offers the majority of tourism infrastructure and services is the Tomaree Peninsula.

Port Stephens is a sophisticated tourism destination with established product and experiences. The area has long been a popular place for Sydneysiders heading north for short breaks or summer holidays. Tourism is the main activity on the Tomaree Peninsula and arguably the largest economic driver in the LGA.

The data below is sourced from the National Visitor Survey produced by Tourism Research Australia and is based on data from the year-end June 2021. In Port Stephens, the number of domestic overnight visitors increased (20%) with approximately 858,000 visitors spending 2.51 million nights in the Port Stephens area—at an average stay of 2.9 nights.

Due to the impacts of COVID-19, Port Stephens had a decrease in day visitation with domestic day visitors decreasing by 10% to 860,000.

Total visitation was up by 2% on the previous financial year, while total nights was up 5%.

Year end June '000	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	5yr Avg
Domestic overnight visitors	677	741	810	713	858	760
% change	9%	9%	9%	-11%	20%	-
Domestic nights	2,174	2,217	2,512	2,217	2,514	2,327
% change	4%	2%	13%	-12%	15%	-
Av. night stay	3.2	3	331	3.1	3	3
Domestic day visitors	633	818	917	952	860	836
% change	-17%	29%	12%	4%	-10%	-
International overnight visitors	37	49	43	26	0	31
% change	42%	32%	-12%	-40%	-100%	-
International nights	171	160	175	166	0	134
Year end June total visitors	1,347	1,608	1,770	1,691	1,718	1,627
% change	-4%	19%	10%	-6%	2%	-
Year end June total nights	2,345	2,377	2,687	2,383	2,514	2,461
% change	8%	1%	13%	-11%	5%	-
Visitor expenditure \$m	-	535	606	569	705	-
% change	-	-	13%	-6%	24%	-

Source: [National and International Visitor Surveys, Tourism Research Australia](#)

Financial year
ending 2021



1.7 million
VISITORS



2.5 million
NIGHTS



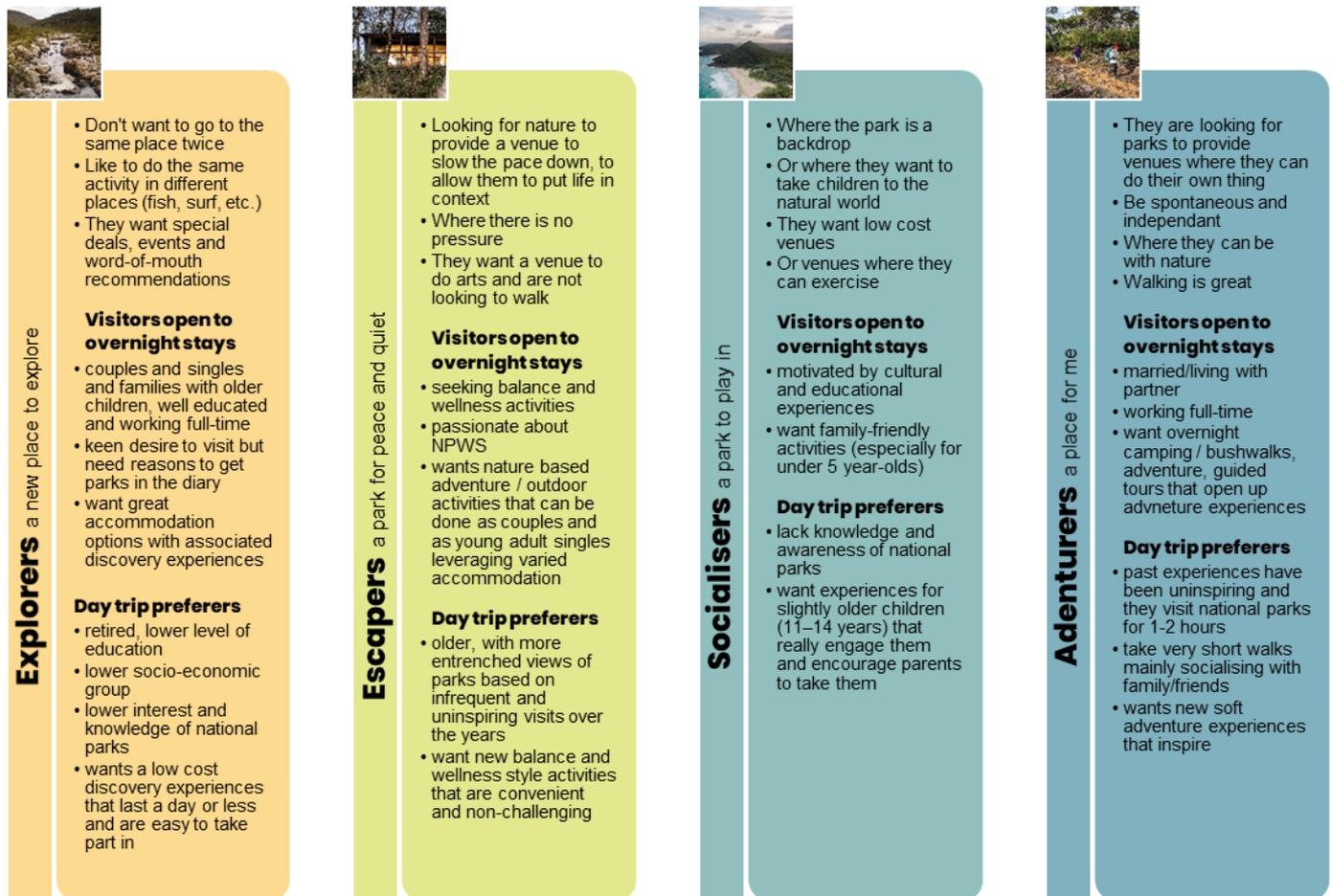
\$705 million
VISITOR
EXPENDITURE



\$1.9 million
DAILY VISITOR
EXPENDITURE

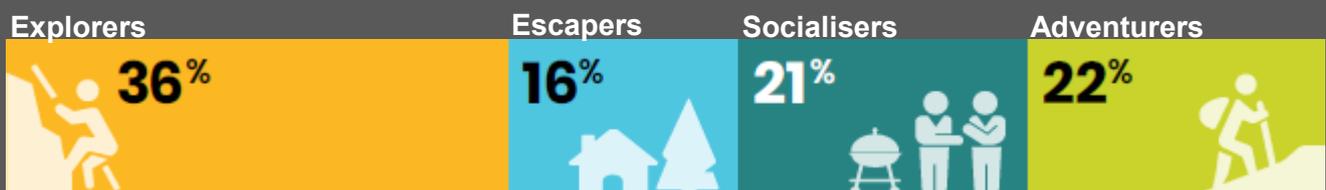
NPWS market segmentation

Through factor and cluster analysis, NPWS identified four core segments (explorers, escapers, socialisers, adventurers) that drive the way people engage with NSW national parks in different ways. The four core market segments were further broken down into eight sub-segments based on those who are generally open to an overnight stay in a park and those who are not open to an overnight stay (day-trippers). The following table provides an overview of these four core market segments.



Hunter Central Coast market segments

The below graphic provides a percentage overview of the NPWS visitor market segments for NSW national parks in the Hunter Central Coast region.



Responding to commercial partnership opportunities

NPWS will be seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) for commercial opportunities on the Worimi Conservation Lands. EOI opportunities will be available from later in 2022.



Information searching

Read about [Worimi Conservation Lands](#), the [Worimi Conservation Lands Plan of Management](#), [Destination Port Stephens](#) and the [Parks Eco Pass program](#)

Read this commercial partnerships document to understand the commercial opportunities available.



Register

Register with [NSW Supplier hub](#) to view EOI opportunities when they become available.

Log in or sign up [here](#).



Experience development

Start planning visitor products and experiences that align with the opportunities listed in this document. The EOI will have set criteria that must be addressed. This criteria will be available when the EOI is released on [NSW Supplier hub](#).



Respond to EOI opportunities

As EOI become available on [NSW Supplier hub](#) you will have approximately 6 weeks to respond to the EOI. Worimi Conservation Lands Board of Management, Worimi LALC and NPWS will assess all applications received, in response to the EOI, in line with the set evaluation criteria.



[Click here for more information about Worimi Conservation Lands](#)