SNOWY MOUNTAINS SAP TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STUDY

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PREPARED BY: STAFFORD STRATEGY
FOR: NSW DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY AND ENVIRONMENT

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staffordstrategy.com.au **ACN** 079 055 100 **ABN** 34 565120 454

SYDNEY OFFICE
A 3.02 POST 46a MacLeay Street, Potts Point NSW 2011, Australia
E sydney@staffordstrategy.com.au
P +61 2 9331 6222

MELBOURNE OFFICE
A 36 Cobden Street North Melbourne VIC 3051, Australia
E melbourne@staffordstrategy.com.au
P +61 416 200 458

BRISBANE OFFICE
A PO BOX 265 Sandgate QLD 4017, Australia
E brisbane@staffordstrategy.com.au
P +61 417 721 342

WELLINGTON OFFICE
A Level 1, 2 Broderick Road, Johnsonville 6037, Wellington, NZ
E wellington@staffordstrategy.co.nz
P +64 21 337 377

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Image Credit: Destination NSW

PART 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Image Credit: Destination NSW (Blue Cow)

1.1. About the Project

Stafford Strategy (Stafford) was commissioned by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) to complete a Tourism Development Study for the Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct (SAP). This study is part of a group of studies commissioned to deliver an exciting and sustainable vision for the SAP region out to 2061.

As a tourism development study, the recommendations are very much guided by the objectives and direction of the SAP, which are to maximise economic activity and sustainability for the region, based on strategic state government funding and resourcing being provided to support growth over 40 years. Importantly, the desired outcomes are therefore far more aspirational and wide-ranging, than a traditional tourism destination management plan which at best would be covering a 5-10-year period.

This has led to additional opportunities being identified and greater clarity around what development should be within KNP as opposed to in and around Jindabyne. These additional development opportunities were requested by the State Government, to support government funding for far stronger visitor growth and spend potential for the SAP region and to offer local communities far greater social and economic uplift.

A SAP – as defined by the NSW Government – "is a dedicated area in a regional location identified by the NSW Government to become a thriving business hub."[1] There are currently five designated SAPs (see Figure 9 on page 16).

Benefits offered by a SAP include streamlined planning, government-led developments and a business concierge service which combine to make it easier for new businesses to set up and for existing organisations to thrive in the region.

The Snowy Mountains SAP is focused on identifying mechanisms to "increase year-round tourism and ensure this beautiful alpine location attracts visitors from Australia and around the world."[2] The SAP area is illustrated in Figure 2 on the following page and comprises Jindabyne, Lake Jindabyne, Lake Crackenback and most of KNP including Perisher Range Alpine Resort, Charlottes Pass Alpine Resort, Thredbo Alpine Resort and Bullocks Flat Terminal.

The Snowy Mountains SAP is concentrated on Jindabyne's town centre, the ski resorts and surrounding sections of Kosciuszko National Park, with the potential to:

- grow year-round tourism to reduce significant current seasonality impacts;
- grow Jindabyne into Australia's Alpine Capital at the heart of the Snowy Mountains; and
- increase year-round adventure and eco-tourism in the region through strengthening and broadening the product base.

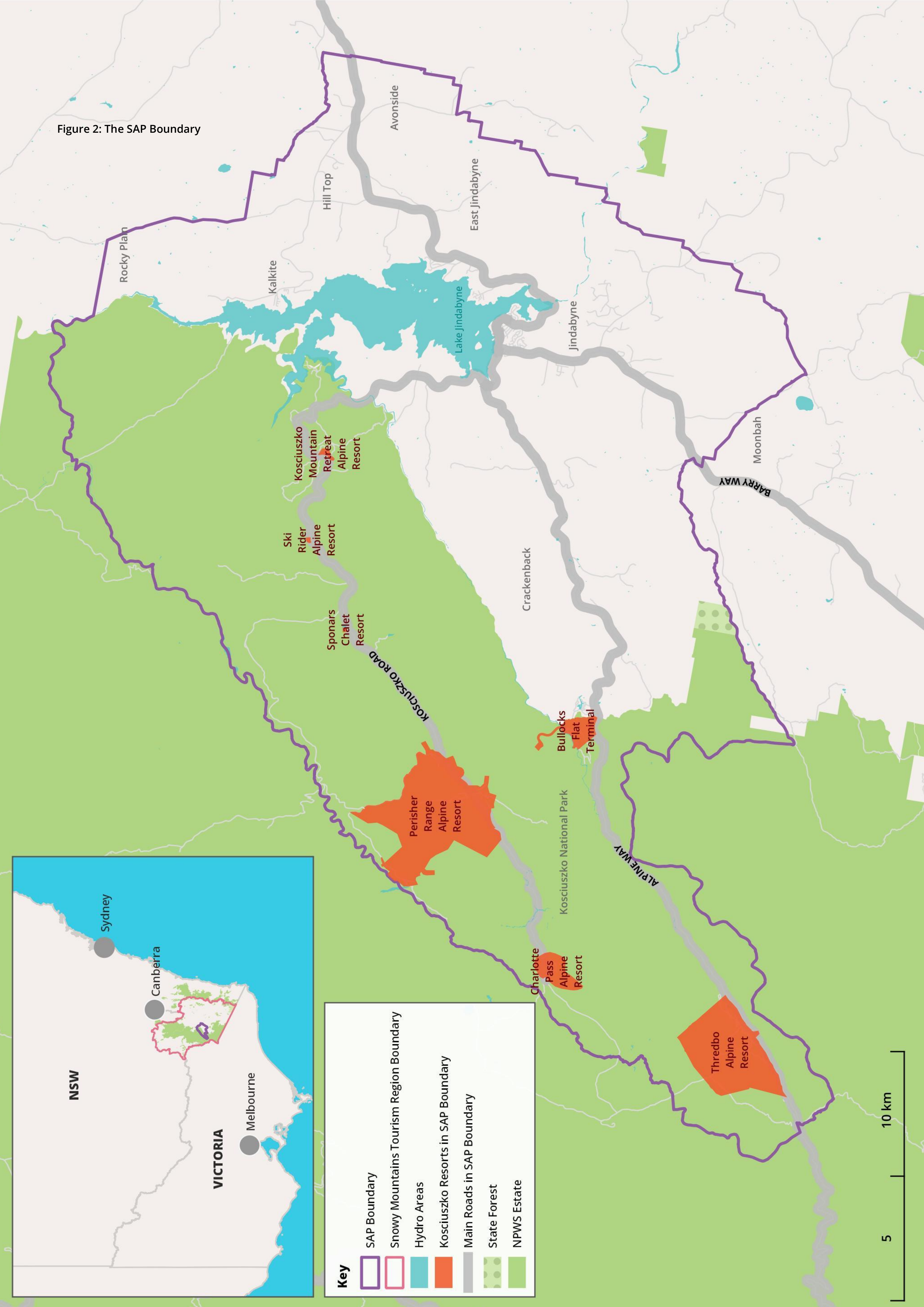
Linked to these but separately, the tourism objectives of the Study are as follows.

Figure 1: Tourism Development Study Objectives

1 Determine tourism development opportunities for the SAP	**2** Assess current tourism product and amenities, along with product gaps	**3** Identify future tourism market demand
4 Identify locations for tourism development clusters	**5** Integrate with other planning and economic assessments for the SAP area	

[1] https://www.nsw.gov.au/snowy-hydro-legacy-fund/special-activation-precincts#:~:text=Special%20Activation%20Precincts-,Special%20Activation%20Precincts,industries%20and%20fuel%20economic%20development.
[2] Ibid

Figure 2: The SAP Boundary



1.2. Tourism Development Study Goals

To guide the sustainable development of the visitor economy in the SAP, several goals have been identified and are outlined in Figure 3 (note these are not in any priority order). These goals deliberately link to the five destination management components identified for this tourism development study (see Figure 12), and the broader goals and objectives identified for the SAP Master Plan overall.

Importantly, to achieve these goals will likely require a paradigm shift across the sector going forward. A status quo "do nothing" scenario will not address the challenges being faced nor will it allow the SAP to capitalise and leverage off the many opportunities that potentially exist. Sustainable and strategic change, therefore, needs to be embraced or delivery of a workable and valuable SAP vision and objectives is likely to be compromised.

Unlike usual tourism studies and destination management strategies which deliver outcomes over a 5-10-year period, the SAP requires visitation forecasting out to 2061, a 40-year period. This is a particularly important factor as the research and analysis, particularly due to forecasted climate change impacts by government, indicates that post-2045, visitation and the associated value of the visitor economy for the region could be adversely impacted.

Key considerations, such as strengthening the SAP region as a year-round destination are therefore seen as critical and introducing new initiatives and development to support this need for destination sustainability, are therefore important.

This assumes that development may need to occur in various locations throughout the SAP region, though tourism development generally works best when it can be clustered together with other tourism product and amenities so each can leverage visitation off the other.

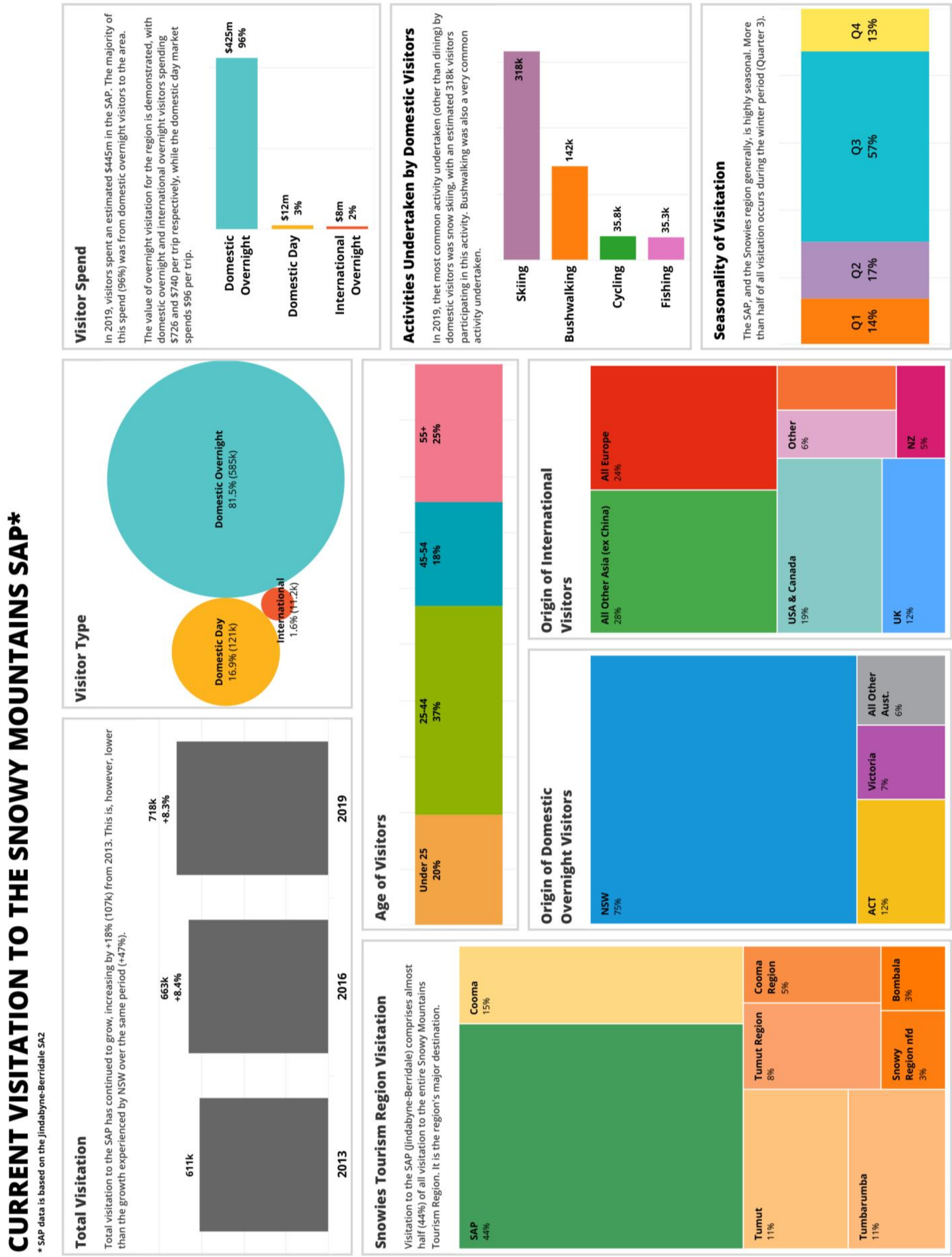
For this same reason, and due to Government concerns relating to environmentally based challenges already impacting on Kosciuszko National Park (KNP), the focus of the mechanisms and initiatives suggested in this Study are more strongly focussed on land areas outside of KNP other than where existing developed sites in the KNP can be repurposed and/or enhanced and carefully contained, and /or as advised by NPWS.

Existing operators within KNP have also indicated they are working on solutions to address ongoing sustainability etc. where this is possible, to also help maintain the viability of in-park tourism operations for the longer term. This includes the introduction of new snowmaking technology to ensure that on snow experiences for skiing and snowboarding primarily are protected for the longer term, despite climate change forecasts.

The ecological issues and challenges especially around threatened species (as noted by the biodiversity and Conservation Division (BCD) both within KNP and off-park as well, may create limitations on elements of new development. There are high ecological values within the SAP boundary, particularly at higher elevations within KNP which will need to be addressed through the SAP process as development options are considered.

Figure 3: Tourism Development Study Goals

Figure 4: Summary of Historic Visitation to the SAP



1.3. Existing Visitation to the SAP Region

Figure 4 on the previous page distils the visitation data collated for the SAP. It demonstrates the following.

- The domestic overnight visitor market is crucial for the SAP. Not only is it the largest market (representing 82% of all visitors), but it is also the largest market by spend (comprising 96%) of all spend.
- Visitation to the SAP is highly seasonal, with an estimated 57% of annual visitation occurring between July – September (peak winter period).
- If spend is broken up according to season, this would further demonstrate the highly seasonal nature of the SAP region, with high average spend levels in winter and low spend levels in summer.

It is important to note that SAP visitor forecasts (both status quo and development scenario modelling) were out of the agreed scope of this Tourism Development Study. All total visitor projections to the SAP have been undertaken by The Centre for International Economics (CIE) and is available as part of their report. This tourism study, however, has helped inform the likely visitor forecasts created with various new tourism development elements, helping to generate visitation by new visitors and offering an improved length of visitor stay and higher spend levels, especially outside of the winter peak period.

1.4. Future Visitor Markets to the SAP Region

Forecasting likely visitor demand out 40 years is a challenging exercise as predicting macro events (such as pandemics) and their likely impacts are near impossible. However, based on industry feedback, comparative analysis from other major leisure destinations, and the assumption that various new forms of product will be introduced as proposed, the following top-line visitor market forecast observations are provided.

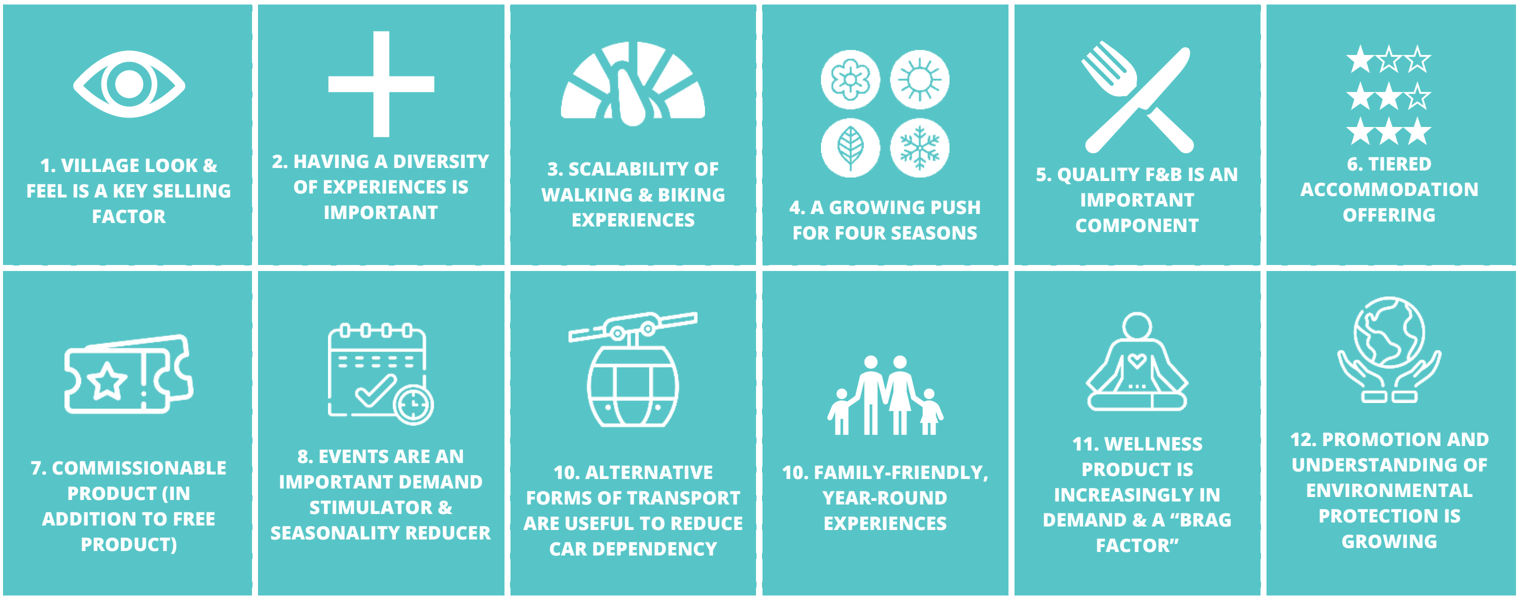
- Until such time that direct flights are introduced from other states and territories into the SAP region and new product is offered, most visitors are still likely to originate from the ACT, greater Sydney and, to a lesser extent, regional NSW.
- Improving access to the region is considered crucial in delivering stronger, year-round visitation overall, especially for a conference, business and event market.
- International visitation to the SAP region is very low, however, the introduction of improved air access and a broader and better-quality product range has the potential to encourage a stronger international visitor market in a post-COVID-19 period (so potentially post-2030).
- Encouraging stronger international visitation, is, however, dependent on the introduction of higher quality and internationally branded hotels, resorts and lodges, and nationally significant attractions and recreational amenities such as world-class mountain biking trail networks.
- To grow the wider Sydney, NSW and ACT visitor market will likely necessitate new product such as “snow play” in winter, for the many who want to experience snow but who do not want to ski or snowboard as well as introducing stronger events and festivals during the remaining nine months of the year to address the extreme seasonality which has existed for many years.
- The potential impact of climate change on natural snow conditions post 2045 could reduce market demand and encourage greater snow visitation offshore (NZ, Japan etc.).
- Improving the competitiveness of the region through introducing new products and experiences as a year-round leisure destination has the potential to mitigate alpine competitors such as the Victorian Alps and to raise competitiveness against New Zealand alpine destinations such as Queenstown, Wanaka etc who generate stronger visitor numbers in summer than winter.
- And the introduction of a wider and year round product base will also support higher levels of visitation, extended length of visitor stay and higher visitor spend levels across most market segments.

In summary, the potential does exist to grow annual visitation from a wider range of domestic visitor markets especially, but this is highly dependent on introducing new product (accommodation, attractions, experiences, transport services, retail and food and beverage offerings) and including improved access, so visitors can get to the SAP region far faster than the current 5-hour drive ex Sydney, for example.

1.5. Comparative Analysis

Looking at other destinations with similar attributes or features offers the ability to analyse factors of success. As part of this Tourism Development Study, 19 primarily alpine-based mountain villages/towns have been evaluated (including in NZ, Australia, the USA, Canada, and Europe). Figure 5 provides a summary of some of the key findings identified in this analysis. These findings are further explained in Section 3.3 of this Tourism Development Study.

Figure 5: Comparative Benchmarking Key Findings



1.6. Barriers to Growth

For the SAP (and the Snowy Mountains region more broadly) to develop and grow as a sustainable and year-round visitor destination, various challenges and barriers need to be addressed.

Importantly, these have not been included as a criticism – many other destinations have similar challenges – however, to mitigate or resolve these, first requires an acknowledgment of them.

The barriers – which are alphabetically ordered - have been aligned with the destination management components of product development; infrastructure; governance; sustainability; and marketing & promotion.

Table 1 provides a summary of the barriers and their relationship to the destination management components. This is followed by an explanation of each barrier.

Table 1: Barriers to Growth as a Destination Linked to Destination Management Components

Barrier	PRODUCT & EXPERIENCES	INFRA-STRUCTURE	GOVERNANCE	SUSTAINABILITY	MARKETING & PROMOTION
A 5-star natural environment, 3-star built environment	●	●	●	●	●
A lack of higher-quality accommodation properties	●	●			
A lack of room capacity in peak visitor periods	●	●			
Ageing infrastructure		●			
Climate change	●			●	
Competition from some Victorian ski fields	●				
Constraints on summer-based activity development	●			●	●
Differing lease arrangements	●	●			
Digital literacy of operators					●
Expensive lift tickets & hire	●	●		●	
Extremely high seasonality	●	●			●
Gaining agreement on acceptable levels of visitor economic growth from all stakeholders				●	
Lack of interpretive signage	●				●
Limited all-weather, paid visitor experiences	●			●	●
Limited commissionable tourism experiences	●				●
Limited evening activities to grow overnight visitation	●				●
Limited number of family-friendly visitor experiences	●				●
Limited public transport & connectivity		●			
Limited SP3 tourism zoning to support tourism development	●	●			
Limited tourism investment flows	●	●			
Overtourism concerns from community/stakeholders				●	●
P2P accommodation challenges	●			●	
Shortage of affordable worker accommodation		●			
The cost of trail maintenance and a desire for more trails		●			
The need to think larger than the status quo	●	●			


Image Credit: Rydges

1.7. Opportunities for Growth

1.7.1. The Development Elements Recommended

Table 2 demonstrates the various development elements that have been recommended and how they align with the desired SAP outcomes as requested by the State Government. It is important to note that these recommended development elements are proposed over the 41 years of this SAP, so many may not occur for some time.

Importantly, the development elements are proposed for within Kosciuszko National Park (KNP) and externally, based on consultation with National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), local developers and investors and the alpine resort operators. This is based on environmental and related policy restrictions on what could be located within KNP and in addition, what may be better located outside of the Park based on the economic outcomes possible.

Discussion on potential tourism development by existing alpine resort operators indicates a variety of tourism development projects are being considered already including the need for expanding on-site car parking, increasing and upgrading commercial accommodation, and assessment of ways to protect the ski season from the impact of climate change which some, but not all, acknowledge.

Figure 6 on page 11 provides initial approximate locations for the various development elements identified. These are indicative only and require further analysis to test their financial viability so would be subject to feasibility study assessments. The large number of development projects is driven by the desire of the State Government to generate stronger economic uplift in the SAP region including the need for government investment to leverage stronger private sector investment.

Table 2: Development Elements Alignment with Components and Goals

Development Element	**Continue to Protect the Environment**	**Reduce Tourism Seasonality**	**Grow Visitor Yield**	**Strengthen Social License for Tourism**	**Position Jindabyne as Australia's Alpine Capital**
1. Eco 4-5-star 250-room Hotel (Mixed-Use Development)	●	●	●		●
2. 120 Owner Occupied Apartments (Mixed-Use Development)	●	●	●	●	●
3. National Alpine Conference Centre (500-Seat) (Mixed-Use Development)		●	●		●
4. Hot Pools & Wellness Facility (Mixed-Use Development)	●	●	●		
5. Fly Fishing School (Mixed-Use Development)		●	●		
6. 18-Hole Golf Course (Mixed-Use Development)	●	●	●		
7. 250-room Athlete/Student Accommodation (as part of the Sports and Rec complex)	●	●			●
8. 4-5-star, 200-room Lakefront Spa Hotel (Copper Tom)	●	●	●		●
9. Outdoor Adventure Hub (Zip Lines & Mountain Coasters)	●	●	●		●
10. Airport/airfield enhancements (existing)		●	●		●
11. KNP Iconic Walk	●	●	●	●	
12. Snowy Mountains Heritage Centre	●	●	●	●	●
13. E-Bike Cycleways	●	●		●	
14. Hallmark Winter Sporting Event		●	●		●
15. Upgrade of Ngarigo, Thredbo Diggings and Island Bend Campgrounds	●			●	
16. New, Higher-Quality Destination Holiday Park		●	●		
17. Evening 2 Week Seasonal Sound & Light Show (1 x winter; 1 x summer)		●	●	●	●
18. Iconic Overnight Horse Treks		●	●		●
19. Water Taxi/Ferry Service	●		●	●	
20. Lake Jindabyne Water Activities & Experiences	●	●	●		●
21. Mountain Biking Hub (Master Planned)		●			
22. Hallmark Summer Sporting Event		●	●		
23. Aviation Tourism Experiences		●	●		
24. Tubing Park/snow play area (All Seasons)		●	●		●
25. Mountain Luge Experience		●	●		●
26. Zorbing Attraction		●	●		●
27. Indoor Fun Park		●	●	●	
28. Major Cantilevered Viewing Sky Deck at Porcupine Rocks	●				
29. Day Walk (Charlotte Pass to Mt Kosciuszko Summit)	●			●	
30. Perisher Branded 4-5-star Hotel (120 + rooms)			●		
31. Thredbo branded 4–5-star hotel (120+ rooms)			●		
32. Ranger Station Fishing Lodge & Glamping		●	●	●	
33. Parking area and turning circle at Charlotte Pass	●	●	●		

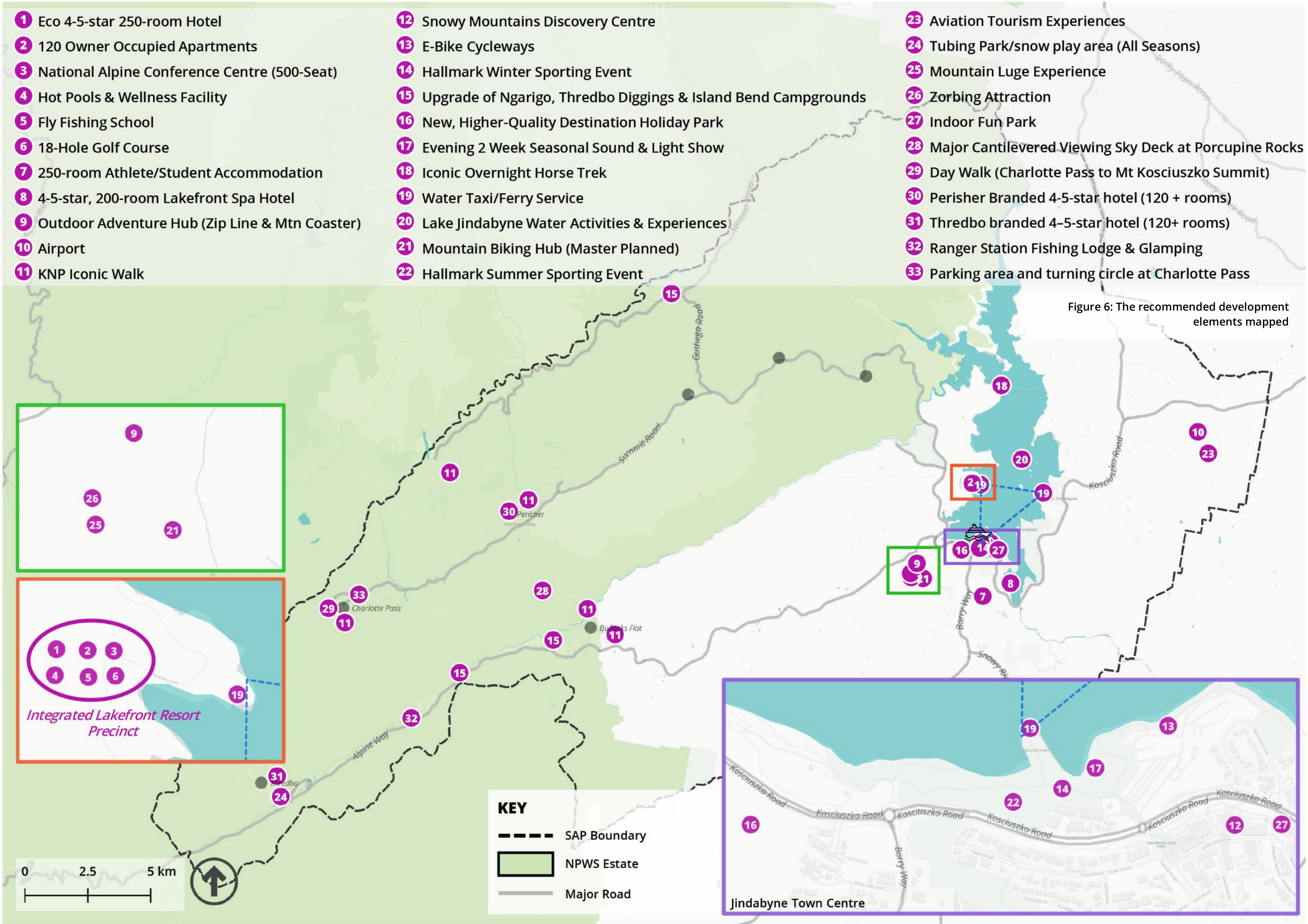


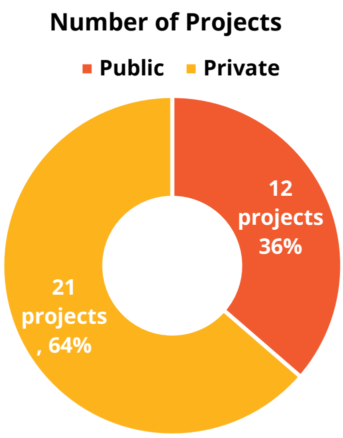
Figure 6: The recommended development elements mapped

1.7.2. The Top Line Investment Required

Figure 7 and Table 3 outlines the investment type for each project identified in this Study and demonstrates the following.

- Summarising the opportunities by project proponent type demonstrates that **36% (12) are public projects and 64% (21)** are private/commercial projects though further analysis and consultation is required to assess if some may be more easily activated as public-private partnership opportunities.
- The total capex requirement to implement all opportunities is estimated at **$558m**, noting that this does not include any capex associated with potentially upgrading the Jindabyne airfield and the Cooma Airport. Both projects have yet to be costed.
- The estimated capex only relates to specific tourism development projects and their associated infrastructure (access roads, utilities to sites etc.) and excludes any other forms of general infrastructure or development such as the proposed connector road in Jindabyne and facilities associated with the sport and recreation centre upgrades and town centre improvements etc.
- Of the total capex, **private/commercial funded investment opportunities total an estimated $413m, and public-funded projects total an estimated $146m** illustrating that 74% of estimated tourism investment is expected to be funded through private sector sources whilst public funding can leverage direct private investment on a ratio of 1:2.8.
- What the top-line investment elements do not include are the likely capex associated with improving the public realm, particularly in Jindabyne and in the alpine ski resorts such as Thredbo, Perisher, Guthega, and Charlotte Pass and in locations where additional infrastructure support is going to be required (covering road upgrades, car parking, utility supply etc). These elements are related to activating private investment for tourism projects but will require further appraisal with client stakeholders to determine this.
- The estimated capex costs provided are top-line estimates only, to enable an initial understanding of the possible investment quantum from public and private investment sources. It is important to note that if this exercise was a traditional destination management plan without the support of government through a SAP or similar process, the number of projects would likely be far less as would the estimated capital investment indicated. But for the SAP and Government intervention, it would not be possible to introduce all the projects being proposed for the region. This, therefore, is a unique one-off opportunity to leverage far stronger levels of private investment due to government funding support.
- At this early stage of assessment, no provision is made yet for land purchase or lease costs and it is assumed that suitable sites can be found and secured. Importantly, and unlike traditional tourism destination management plans and strategies which generally only reflect requirements for 5-10 year forecasted periods, the following development elements are suggested to support a far longer 40-year time frame, which the SAP requires (out to 2061). They, therefore, need to be considered in this longer time frame context as many may not occur till post-2030, and as mechanisms to help:
  - support the repositioning of the region as a year-round visitor destination;
  - address the potential negative impacts of climate change on reduced snow conditions and potential winter-based existing activities;
  - stimulate a stronger and more sustainable visitor economy with associated social benefits for the local community and improved environmental outcomes; and
  - to support the government desire to invest in the SAP region to generate stronger economic and social uplift and sustainability of the region for the longer term, noting that without the SAP and government intervention, generating a stronger level of economic uplift is far less likely to occur.

Figure 7: Investment Requirements (by Project Type & Investment Type)



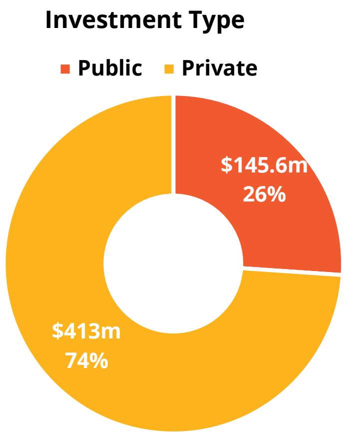


Table 3: Development Element Investment Estimates[3]

Development Over 40 Year Period (2021-2061)	Public	Private	Total	% of Total
Lakeside Eco-Resort Precinct		$205m	$205m	37%
Eco 4-5-star 250-room Hotel		*$77.5m*	*$77.5m*	*14%*
120 Owner Occupied Apartments		*$36.0m*	*$36.0m*	*6.4%*
National Alpine Conference Centre (500-Seat)		*$45.0m*	*$45.0m*	*8.1%*
Hot Pools & Wellness Facility		*$8.5m*	*$8.5m*	*1.5%*
Fly Fishing School		*$2.0m*	*$2.0m*	*0.4%*
18-Hole Signature Golf Course		*$36.0m*	*$36.0m*	*6.4%*
Supporting infrastructure (lake boardwalk, pontoons, access roads, utilities into s	*$20.5m*		*$20.5m*	3.7%
250-room Athlete/Student Accommodation (as part of the Sports and Rec cc	$37.5m		$37.5m	7%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	*$3.8m*		*$3.8m*	*0.7%*
4-5 star Boutique Resort and Spa 60-90 rooms (Copper Tom)		$31.5m	$31.5m	6%
Supporting infrastructure (lake boardwalk, access roads, utilities into site)	*$3.2m*		*$3.2m*	*0.6%*
Outdoor Adventure Hub (Zip Lines & Mountain Coasters)		$28.0m	$28.0m	5.0%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)		*$2.8m*	*$2.8m*	*0.5%*
Airport/Airfield enhancements (TBA by Govt as longer term)			$0	0.0%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	*$0*		*$0*	*0.0%*
KNP Iconic Walk	$1.2m		$1.2m	0.2%
Snowy Mountains Heritage Centre	$35.0m		$35.0m	6.3%
E-Bike Cycleways	$5.0m		$5.0m	0.9%
Hallmark Winter Sporting Event	$1.0m		$1.0m	0.18%
Upgrade of Ngarigo, Thredbo Diggings and Island Bend Campgrounds	$11.5m		$11.5m	2.1%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	*$1.0m*		*$1.0m*	0.2%
New, Higher-Quality Destination Holiday Park		$22.0m	$22.0m	3.9%
Evening 2 Week Seasonal Sound & Light Show (1 x winter; 1 x summer)	$1.0m		$1.0m	0.18%
Iconic Overnight Horse Treks and expanded trails network		$750k	$750k	0.13%
Water taxi/ferry service		$2.0m	$2.0m	0.36%
Supporting infrastructure (lake boardwalk, pontoons, access roads, utilities into s	*$1.3m*		*$1.3m*	*0.23%*
Lake Jindabyne Water Activities & Experiences		$500k	$500k	0.09%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	*$250k*		*$250k*	*0.04%*
Mountain Biking Hub (Master Planned)	$8.0m		$8.0m	1.43%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	$2.0m		*$2.0m*	*0.36%*
Hallmark Summer Sporting Event		$250k	$250k	0.04%
Aviation Tourism Experiences		$500k	$500k	0.09%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	*$100k*		*$100k*	*0.02%*
Tubing Park (All Seasons)		$1.2m	$1.2m	0.21%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	*$100k*		*$100k*	*0.02%*
Mountain Luge Experience		$25.0m	$25.0m	4.48%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)		$1.0m	*$1.0m*	*0.18%*
Zorbing Attraction		$250k	$250k	0.04%
Indoor Fun Park	$1.0m	$1.0m	$2.0m	0.36%
Major Cantilevered Viewing Sky Deck at Porcupine Rocks	$1.1m		$1.1m	0.20%
Day Walk (Charlotte Pass to Mt Kosciuszko Summit)	$150k		$150k	0.03%
Perisher Branded 4-5-star Hotel (120 + rooms)		$36.0m	$36.0m	6.45%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)		*$500k*	*$500k*	*0.09%*
Thredbo Branded 4-5 star Hotel (120 + rooms)		$36.0m	$36.0m	*6.45%*
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)		*$500k*	*$500k*	*0.09%*
Ranger Station Fishing Lodge & Glamping		$18.0m	$18.0m	3.22%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	*$2.0m*		*$2.0m*	0.36%
Parking area and turning circle at Charlotte Pass	$8.0m		*$8.0m*	1.43%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	$1.0m		*$1.0m*	0.18%
Total	**$146m**	**$413m**	**$558m**	**100%**

1.8. Summary Remarks

The SAP offers a range of attractive areas and experiences as a visitor destination. This Tourism Development Study recognises:

- the uniqueness of the SAP and its potential to appeal to a larger range of visitor markets over time;
- the current highly seasonal nature of the SAP (as a visitor destination) and the challenges this generates for existing operators and business owners;
- the increasing challenges of climate change longer-term and the impact this may have on current tourism product and into the future, though it is noted that some operators consider the risks of climate change to be overstated and believe that technology solutions will protect snow sports well into the future;
- the, at times, divergent views of different end users of the SAP process on what changes and investment they consider should be undertaken and therefore the lack of a uniform and agreed way forward yet;
- the importance of the SAP area as a strategic destination centred on Jindabyne but to help support a far wider regional context and its economic sustainability, which extends across multiple economic sectors and not just the regional visitor economy;
- the need to address current challenges through enhancements to infrastructure and the introduction of new development elements rather than expecting a promotional campaign to deliver the uplift required though stronger marketing activity and promotional spend will be required; and
- the ability to encourage private sector investment where this can be shown to generate sufficiently attractive returns on investment and can leverage off supporting public infrastructure and via less complex planning and approval systems.

The research, analysis and stakeholder engagement undertaken offers an evidence-based approach for this Tourism Development Study and illustrates that there are medium to longer-term challenges along with exciting potential opportunities available. This requires a sustainable and substantial development and investment focus, as marketing alone will not achieve the transformation required to mitigate the challenges the SAP region is already faced with, nor will it deliver on the goals identified and the SAP vision.

Importantly, an ad-hoc approach to development in the SAP and/or a "quick-fix solution", which may aim to apply a far lower level of capital investment and far smaller development opportunities, is likely to struggle to deliver sufficient benefit (economic, environmental, social and cultural) and will not offer the sustainable solutions or regional community future-proofing which the SAP warrants.

This is why the Government, through the SAP process, is keen to encourage far stronger development and investment opportunities which in turn supports stronger employment for the local community and related benefits for the region along with longer-term sustainability.

We have estimated that the potential exists to grow annual visitation to the Snowy region from 740k in 2019 (pre-COVID) to 1.42m pa. post 2040, but if the level of new product development and associated supporting infrastructure doesn't eventuate, visitation may struggle to grow to 1.1m annual visitors as a peak annual figure over a 40-year period.

With an overall desire to support a sustainable visitor economy and protect employment and local investment into the SAP out to 2061, working to achieve a transformational stronger visitor growth scenario, is more likely to offer the strongest viability (environmental, social, cultural and economic) and offer sustainable outcomes for the region over this period.

Image Credit: Murray Vanderveer

Image Credit: Perisher

PART 2: THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Setting the scene about tourism in the Snowies including visitation, visitor spend and the type of tourism product (accommodation and experiences) on offer.

2.1. About the Project

2.1.1. Overview

Stafford Strategy (Stafford) was commissioned by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) to complete a Tourism Development Study for the Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct (SAP) as part of a range of technical studies commissioned.

This report is the updated version of the Tourism Study, based on extensive desktop research and analysis, and having been truth tested through in regional visits and further, more detailed stakeholder consultation.

The objectives of the Study are outlined in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Tourism Development Study Objectives

1. Determine tourism development opportunities for the SAP
2. Assess current tourism product and amenities, along with product gaps
3. Identify future tourism market demand
4. Identify locations for tourism development clusters
5. Integrate with other planning and economic assessments for the SAP area

2.1.2. Structure

This Tourism Development Study is segmented into five parts. These comprise:

- **Part 1:** Executive Summary
- **Part 2:** The Strategic Context
- **Part 3:** Comparative Benchmarking
- **Part 4:** Barriers to Tourism Growth & Investment
- **Part 5:** Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism Growth
- **Part 6:** Appendices

2.2. Special Activation Precincts

2.2.1. All NSW SAP Areas

A SAP – as defined by the NSW Government – "is a dedicated area in a regional location identified by the NSW Government to become a thriving business hub."[4] There are currently five designated SAPs (see Figure 9).

The benefits offered by a SAP include streamlined planning, government-led developments and a business concierge service which combine to make it easier for new businesses to set up and for existing organisations to thrive in the region. The Snowy Mountains SAP is unique among SAPs, as it is heavily focussed on the major economic driver being tourism. As a region with the highest level of seasonality in Australia, addressing this issue and delivering far stronger year-round visitation is a key desired outcome, rather than focussing efforts on growing the peak 3-month winter period (July to September). But there is a variety of winter peak period access and related challenges which the SAP is trying to also address.

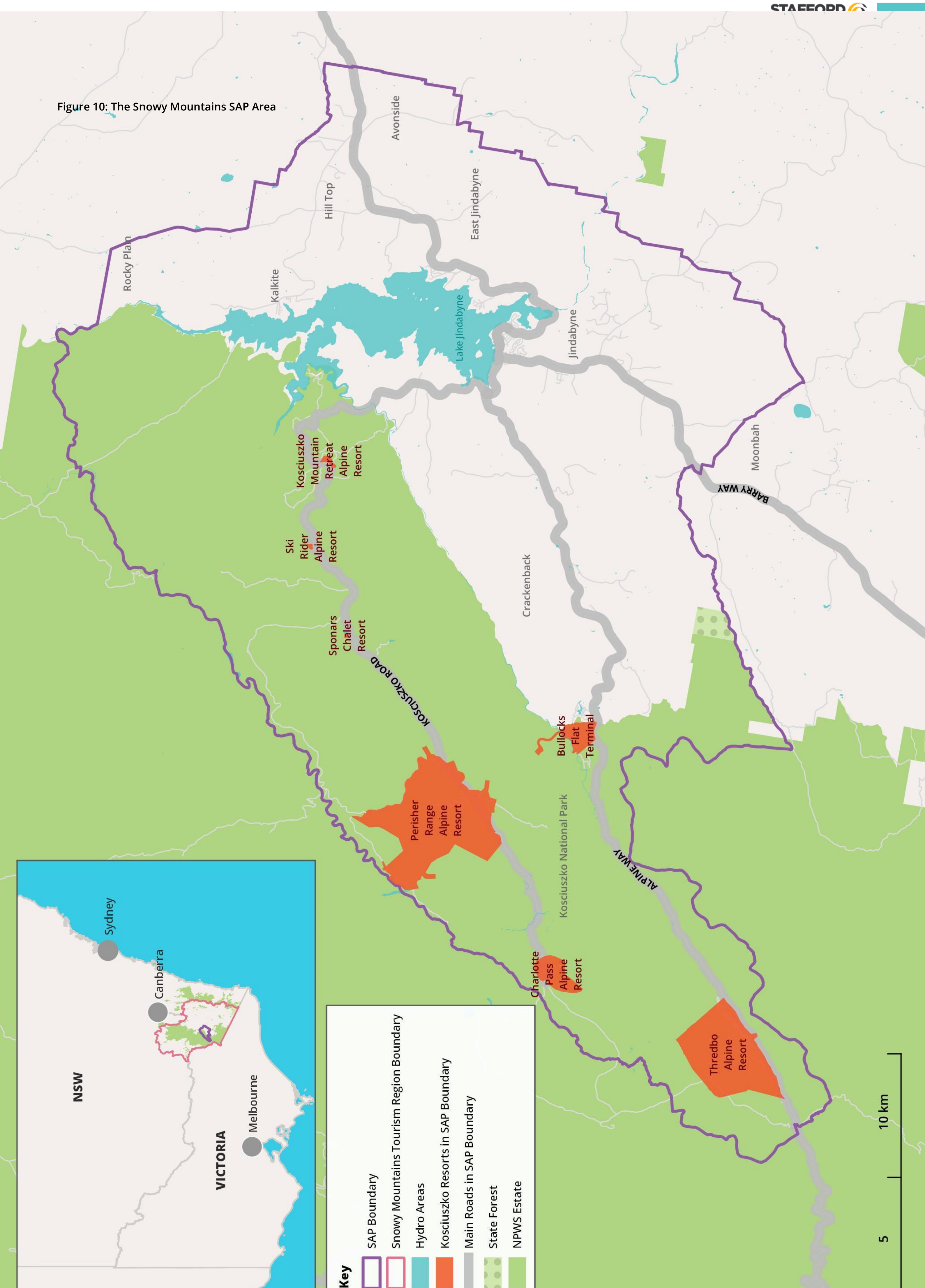
Figure 9: Designated SAP Areas

Snowy Mountains **Parkes** **Wagga Wagga**

Moree **Williamtown**

[4] https://www.nsw.gov.au/snowy-hydro-legacy-fund/special-activation-precincts#:~:text=Special%20Activation%20Precincts-,Special%20Activation%20Precincts,industries%20and%20fuel%20economic%20development.

Figure 10: The Snowy Mountains SAP Area



2.2.2. The Snowy Mountains SAP Area

The Snowy Mountains SAP is focused on identifying mechanisms to "increase year-round tourism and ensure this beautiful alpine location attracts visitors from Australia and around the world."[5] The SAP area is illustrated in Figure 10 on the previous page.

The Snowy Mountains SAP is focused on Jindabyne's town centre, the ski resorts and surrounding sections of Kosciuszko National Park, with the potential to:

- grow year-round tourism to reduce seasonality impacts;
- grow Jindabyne into Australia's Alpine Capital at the heart of the Snowy Mountains; and
- increase year-round adventure and eco-tourism in the region.

Tourism is recognised as a primary growth engine for the Snowy Mountains. However, it is highly seasonal, with the vast majority of visitors arriving in winter. The overall SAP Masterplan aims to build on the work already undertaken as part of the Go Jindabyne Masterplan to identify opportunities to:

- promote the development of year-round attractions and improve amenities of the area;
- improve regional access to enable more visitors to reach the area;
- remove capacity constraints to enable growth in winter tourism; and
- grow the region into the national training base for Australian winter Olympic and Paralympic athletes, building on the NSW Government's $5 million commitment to a new National Snowsports Training Centre in Jindabyne.

2.2.3. Transformational Change

There is no single prescription for catalysing transformational change. According to The World Bank[6], mechanisms for positive transformational change include the following.

- Identifying and addressing **binding constraints** and doing so in a sequenced way. More successful transformers tackled the most binding constraints first and then moved on to address other constraints and adopting approaches that **address multiple constraints.**
- **Scaling up and replicating effective approaches** and innovations and of novel financing instruments. When designed properly, innovative approaches were scaled up successfully to help extend services.
- **Behavioural change.** Changing behaviours by modifying incentives of beneficiaries, introducing market forces, or increasing the flow of information.
- **Focused on commercially viable development,** taking advantage of market mechanisms and private enterprises as vehicles to reach scale and extend services.

The definition of transformational change, which reflects tourism specifically, and has been applied in this Tourism Development Study, includes the following (defined by Stafford Strategy).

- A move to **destination management** to take account of financial, economic, social, cultural and environmental principles holistically.
- **Agreeing the major constraints** (e.g. climate change impacts) which require a change of thinking-behavioural change.
- Understanding the **need for critical mass** in products and experiences, to support commercial viability.
- Solving **seasonality issues** (significant for the SAP region).
- Introducing new and improved amenities and facilities to **grow new visitor markets and improve the average visitor spend**.
- Developing product which supports greater **local employment, improved public amenities** and facilities, supports additional public services to communities.
- Improves visitor **understanding of environmental issues and constraints** and avoids introducing conflicting land uses.
- Utilise the uniqueness of the alpine and sub-alpine environment to attract visitors whilst **avoiding the risk of "overtourism"** compromising the environmental quality.

[5] Ibid

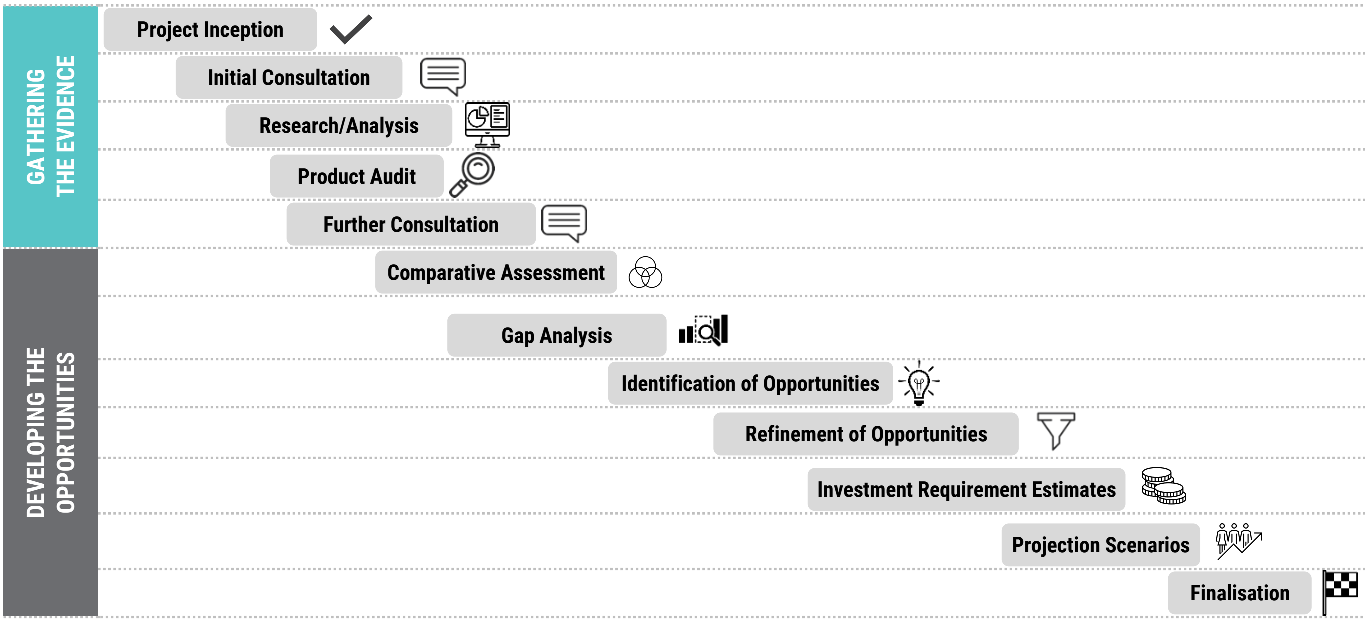
[6] https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/blog/transformational-development-projects-what-makes-them-different

2.3. Methodology

This project was developed via a 12-stage process, which is outlined in Figure 11. The ability to undertake onsite visits and in-person consultation was severely hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic which occurred while this project was being completed. Despite this, however, the project team engaged with many stakeholders via extensive teleconference sessions.

Stafford would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the development of this project. The contributions from stakeholders were invaluable to the development of this robust and pragmatic report.

Figure 11: Methodology



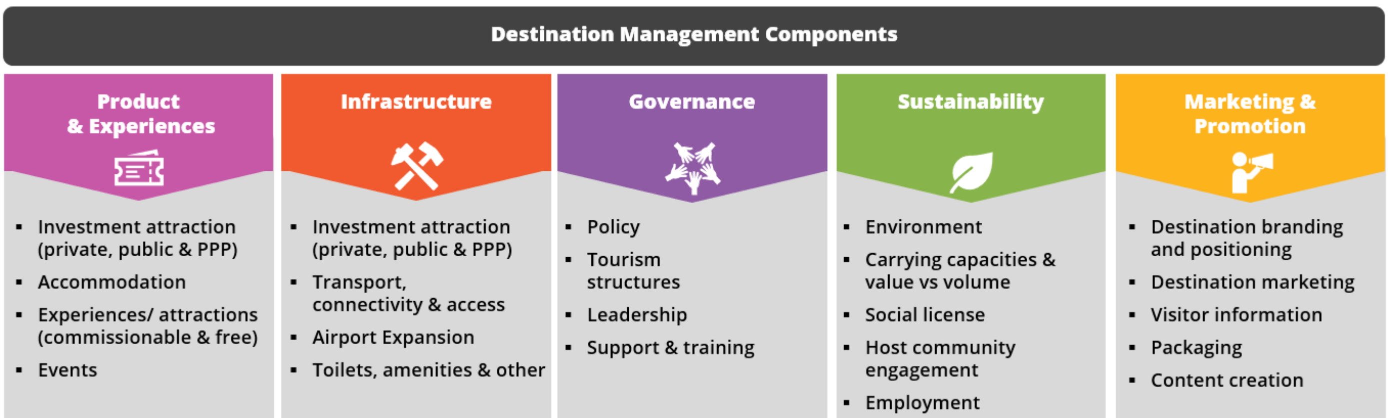
2.4. Tourism Development Components

This Tourism Development Study adopts a destination management focus, that is, the coordinated management of all elements that make up a destination. These include placing a priority on social license, sustainability and carbon impacts, the provision of visitor infrastructure, attracting and managing investment into attractions, amenities, access, marketing and pricing.

Quite simply, at its core, destination management is no more than people working together in a defined area to develop a plan, which **satisfies visitor desires** and delivers **sustainable benefits** for the **community**. It is as much about considering **residents' desires** and the destination's long-term sustainability, as it is about visitor demands.

Figure 12 illustrates the five destination management components.

Figure 12: Destination management components



2.5. Tourism Development Study Goals

To guide the sustainable development of the visitor economy in the SAP, a number of goals have been identified and are outlined in Figure 13 (note these are not in any priority order). These goals deliberately link to:

- the five destination management components identified in Figure 12; and
- the broader goals and objectives identified for the SAP Master Plan.

Importantly, to achieve these goals will require a paradigm shift across the sector going forward. A status quo approach ("do nothing" scenario) will not address the challenges being faced nor will it allow the SAP to capitalise and leverage off the many opportunities that exist. Sustainable and strategic change, therefore, needs to be embraced or delivery of workable and valuable SAP outcomes are likely to be compromised.

Figure 13: Tourism Development Study Goals

2.6. Tourism Product Audit

2.6.1. Methodology

The following section provides a tourism product audit for the SAP, along with the broader Snowy Mountains Tourism Region (which includes Snowy Monaro LGA and Snowy Valleys LGA).

The rationale for the broader Snowies tourism region being assessed as part of the audit is because the SAP does not operate independently of these two areas: it leverages off the infrastructure, assets and experiences available within these areas. Visitors do not recognise administrative boundaries, they recognise destinations.

Additionally, while a product gap may be evident for the SAP, there is potential that it is being fulfilled nearby and, therefore, a more holistic assessment of tourism product needs to be undertaken.

The purpose of the audit is to ascertain where tourism product is spatially clustered and to identify where product gaps may exist in the tourism product mix.

The audit is primarily based on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse's (ATDW) product database and supplemented with an extensive desktop research exercise as well as a review of tourism review websites and OTAs such as TripAdvisor, Booking.com and Google Travel.[7] This has been further refined through industry and stakeholder consultation over the last 4 months (.

2.6.2. Accommodation Audit

The accommodation audit focused on commercial forms of accommodation. Table 4 provides a summary of the categories utilised.

It is important to note that "Apartments" and "Holiday Houses" are generally those that are privately owned and leased out through real estate agents and via websites such as Airbnbs. "Aparthotels" are those which are typically categories as serviced apartments.

Table 4: Accommodation type categories

Aparthotel	Holiday Houses
Apartments	Hostels
B&Bs / Inns	Hotel
Caravan, Camping and Holiday Parks	Motel
Chalets/Villas	Retreats, Lodges and Resorts
Farm Stay	School & Church Accommodation

Some properties are listed online across multiple categories. In these cases, Stafford has selected the most applicable category based on online information available.

For each property, the number of rooms was also included (where this information was provided).

The full listing of the accommodation audit findings is provided in Appendix 2.

2.6.2.1. Number of Accommodation Properties across the Snowies region

Figure 14 provides a summary of the number of accommodation properties throughout the Snowies region and the number of estimated rooms. It is important to note that precise room numbers were only able to be sourced for 689 (out of 826) properties.

It demonstrates the following:

- in total, the two LGAs have 826 accommodation properties and approximately 4,414 accommodation rooms[8];
- apartments are the main type of property, comprising 39% (321) of all properties in the region;
- hotels, however, offer the most room stock, providing an estimated 1,467 rooms (33% of total room stock) in the region;
- most accommodation stock is clustered at Jindabyne, the various ski resorts, Cooma Tumut and Tumbarumba.

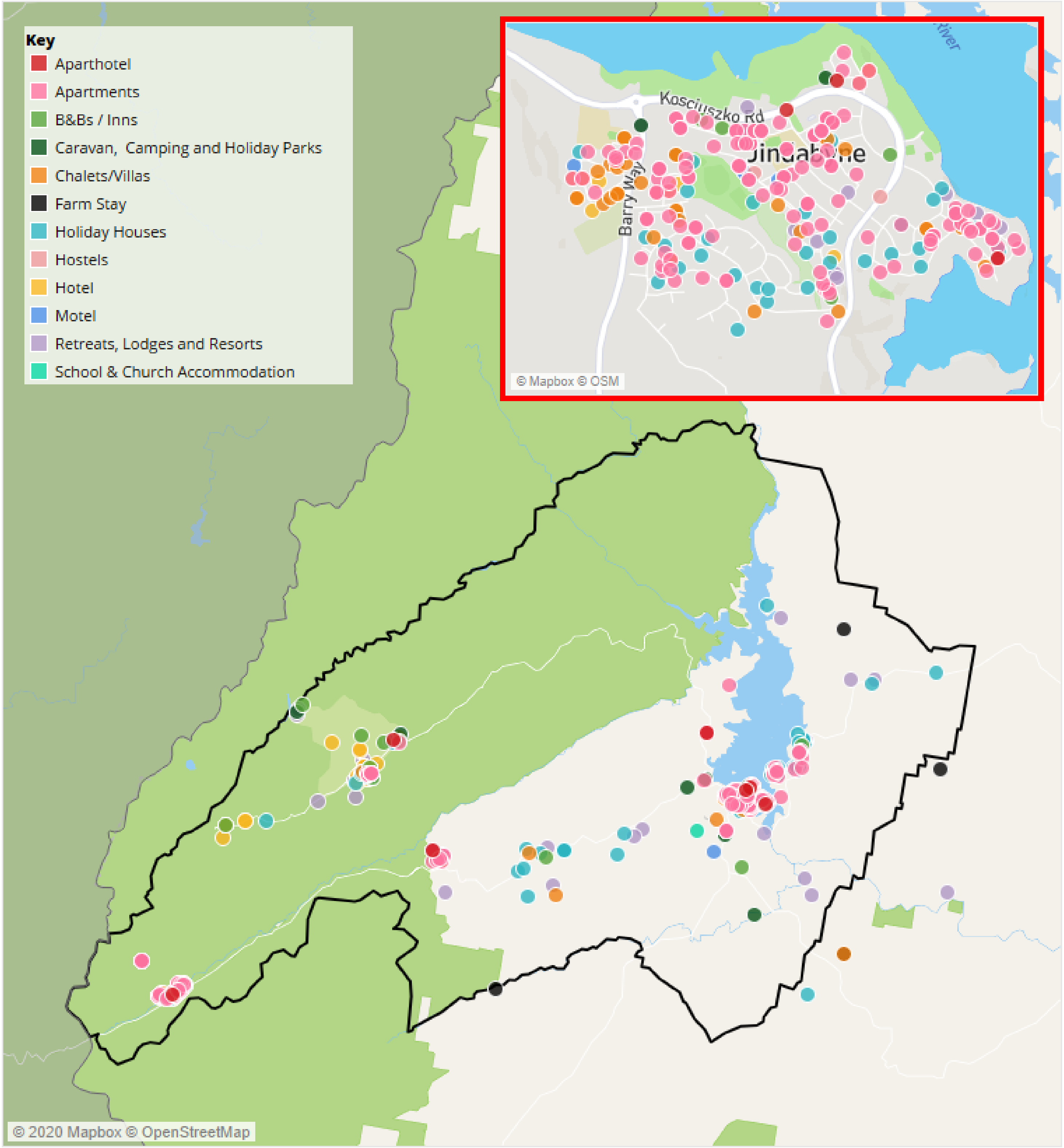
Key Take Out: Most accommodation properties across the Snowies region are holiday apartments (39%), while most room stock is provided through hotels (33%). The vast majority of room stock and properties are situated within Snowy Monaro LGA.

2.6.2.2. Number of accommodation properties and rooms in the SAP

As a town centre, Jindabyne is understandably an accommodation hub not only within the SAP but within the Snowy Monaro and Snowy Valley regions. Figure 15 illustrates accommodation which falls within the SAP boundary and demonstrates the following.

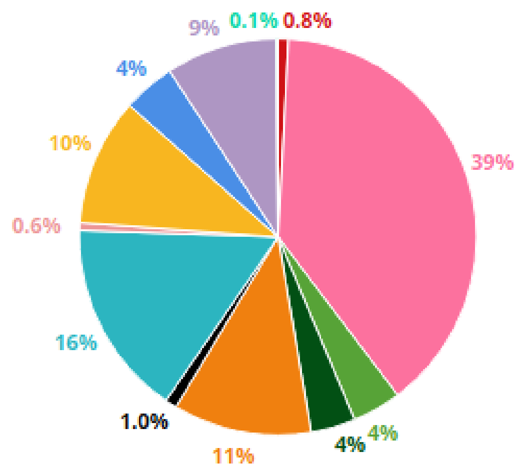
- Of the 826 properties identified in the wider regional audit, 82% (678) of these are within the SAP and of the 4,414 rooms identified, 68% (2,992) fall within the SAP.
- Similar to the wider regional audit, the predominant form of accommodation in the SAP are apartments (making up 46% of properties identified) and hotels make up the largest form of room stock (comprising 46% of all rooms).

[7] It is important to note, therefore, that the audit may not be fully comprehensive, particularly for those operators who are not listed online.
[8] Note, rooms are considered individual rooms which can be rented out to different parties. If a property has multiple rooms but these cannot be rented to individual parties then this is counted as one room. For example, an Airbnb house which has three rooms within the house is counted as one room unit. The same can be said for a serviced apartment which has 10 units, with three rooms in each – only 10 rooms have been included in the assessment.



Property Type	Count of Property..	Rooms
Hotel	86	1,467
Motel	35	716
B&Bs / Inns	33	648
Retreats, Lodges and Resorts	75	422
Caravan, Camping and Holid..	30	339
Apartments	321	321
Chalets/Villas	93	147
Holiday Houses	132	132
Aparthotel	7	121
Hostels	5	38
Farm Stay	8	35
School & Church Accommod..	1	28
Total	**826**	**4,414**

% Share of Properties (by Property Type)



% Share of Rooms (by Property Type)

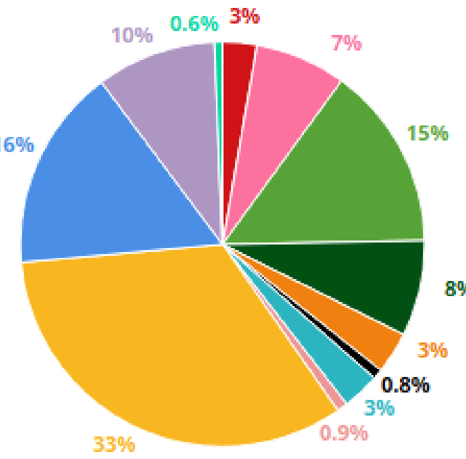


Figure 14: Accommodation offering in the Snowy Mountains region

- Based on a desktop research exercise, the majority of commercial accommodation properties are more likely rated 2-3 stars (when global standard comparisons are applied though they self-rate as 3-5 star). Some, however, appear to be marketing and pricing themselves well-above this rating category. This is not unique to the SAP region but gives a false indication of accommodation quality within the region.
- There are also a number of rooms for rent in private dwellings for short term holiday accommodation such as Airbnb, Stayz which are very prevalent over the winter period especially when yields are much higher along with stronger visitor demand.

There exists the opportunity for increasing the quality of accommodation and attractions on offer within the SAP, to help encourage and support the positioning of Jindabyne as a boutique alpine village hub within its rural surroundings and to support improvements and expansion for some of the alpine ski resorts.

Key Take Out: **The SAP is a key accommodation node for the broader Snowies region. Most room stock is provided by hotels (46%). In some cases, there appears to be a mismatch in the price charged versus quality offered but markets appear accepting of this due to the lack of supply, especially during the winter season when prices are significantly higher. Overall, stakeholder feedback confirms the region has variable accommodation quality and a higher ratio of 2-3 star room stock.**

2.6.2.3. Branded accommodation properties across the Snowies region

Branded accommodation product is defined as those properties which are managed, marketed, and/or owned by a national or international accommodation property brand. Such brands include, but are not limited to:

- larger, higher-quality international brands such as Accor properties (Ibis, Novotel, Sofitel etc), International Hotel Group properties (Regent, Intercontinental, Crowne Plaza etc.);
- international mid-range brands such as Best Western, Quality Inn, Comfort Inn etc;
- destination holiday park brands including BIG4, Ingenia, NRMA and Discovery Parks; and
- backpacker hostel brands including YHA.

Although for some markets the brand of a property is not as important as the quality, there are some markets which desire to only stay at well-known and reputable branded properties. This is primarily because of the consistency of quality and standards they can offer and the ability to secure member benefits as part of brand loyalty programs. These properties also often have greater appeal particularly to higher value domestic and international travel markets which often gravitate to 4-5 star internationally recognised brands.

The challenge for most regions around Australia, particularly those outside major cities, is often the lack of higher quality branded properties. When one applies an international standard (rather than a self-assessment approach), it is found that the offering in the Snowy Mountains is heavily weighted to a lower to mid-range of accommodation options.

With changes in the type of visitor markets likely to have the propensity and income to travel in the medium to longer-term from a mixture of intrastate, interstate and inbound visitor markets, having an accommodation mix to appeal to a more discerning market which offers higher value and spend patterns, is seen as particularly important.

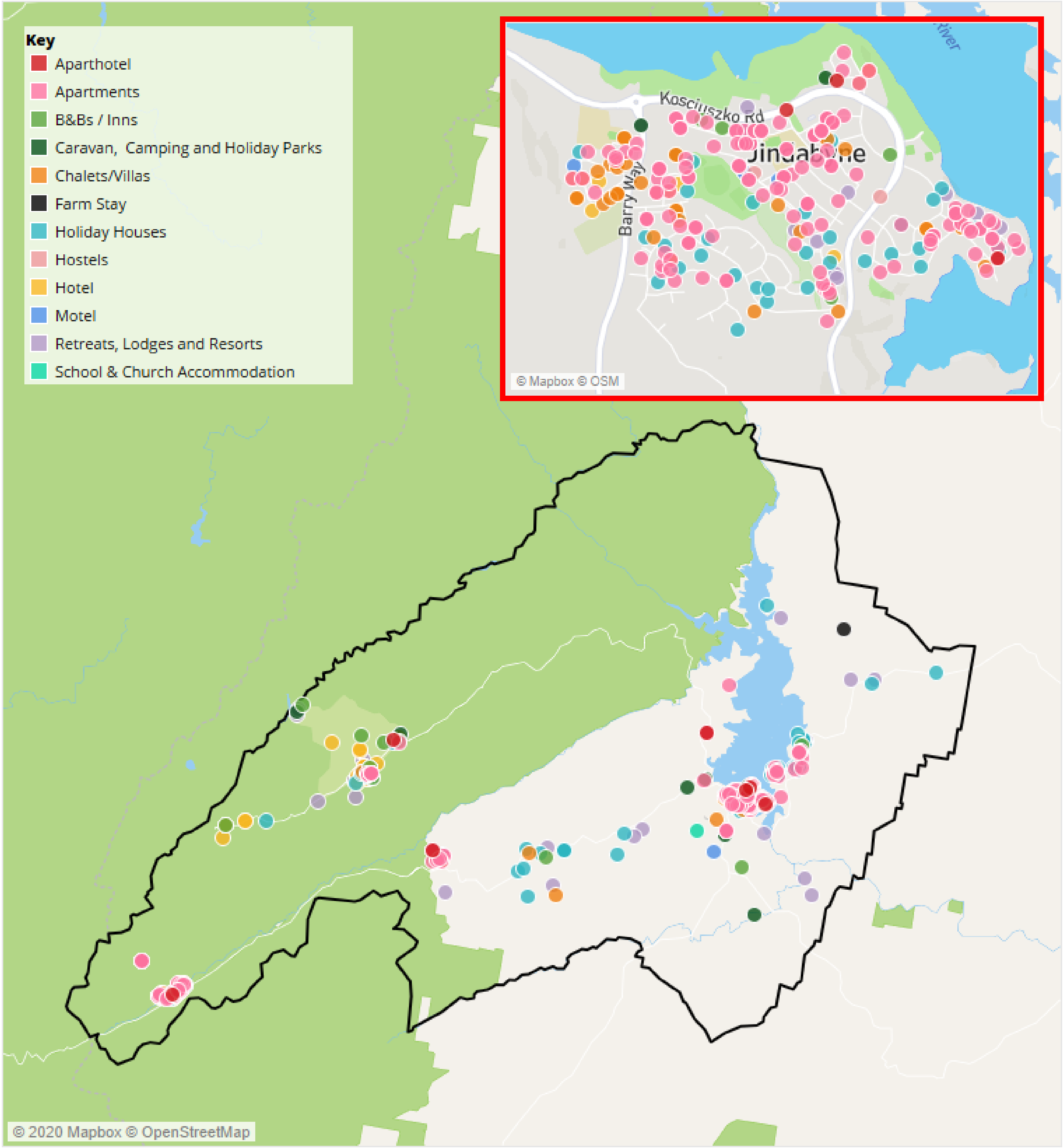
While having a sufficient level of branded accommodation product is, therefore, valuable from a demand perspective, from a marketing perspective they are also important for destination marketing because of the profile they bring with them to support a region and the extensive marketing budgets they have, which ultimately end up promoting a destination, rather than just the accommodation facility on its own.

The analysis of branded properties in the Snowies region demonstrates the following:

- the region has only 5 properties which fall within this category and which offer 285 rooms;
- 4 out of the 5 properties identified are clustered in the SAP, most notably around Jindabyne; and
- there is only one branded destination holiday park in the regions.

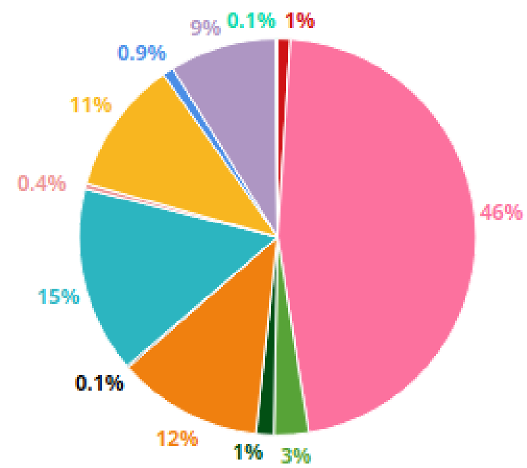
It is important to note that the bulk of visitation to the region is heavily skewed to leisure-related travel, often associated with the ski season. With few branded properties, the potential exists to strengthen the appeal of the region to an interstate domestic holiday visitor market by increasing the quality of accommodation offered to better match the standards of the natural environment as well as offering a wider range of tours and attractions to create greater year-round destination appeal.

Key Take Out: **There are very few branded properties available not only in the SAP, but in the Snowies region more broadly. What is offered is mostly of a mid-range quality, though self-rating by properties allows them to position higher than this.**



Property Type	Count of Property..	Rooms
Hotel	74	1,382
B&Bs / Inns	19	452
Apartments	315	315
Retreats, Lodges and Resorts	59	259
Aparthotel	7	121
Caravan, Camping and Holid..	10	111
Holiday Houses	103	103
Motel	6	100
Chalets/Villas	80	100
School & Church Accommod..	1	28
Hostels	3	15
Farm Stay	1	6
Total	**678**	**2,992**

% Share of Properties (by Property Type)



% Share of Rooms (by Property Type)

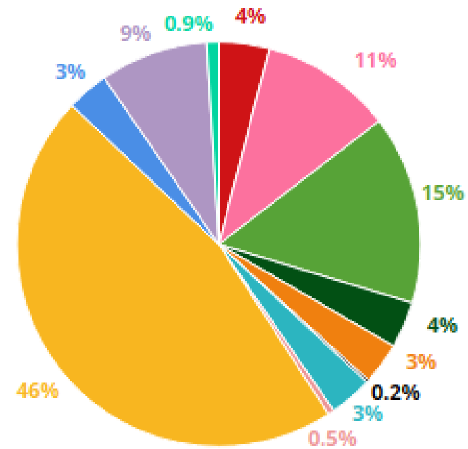


Figure 15: Accommodation offering in the SAP

2.6.2.4. Accommodation consumer quality sentiment

One technique in which consumer sentiment can be measured is through a Net Promoter Score (NPS). The NPS is a metric used to measure consumer loyalty. *In an accommodation context, this translates to a visitors' willingness to not only return for another stay but also make a recommendation to their family, friends, and colleagues*. NPS scores are reported with a number from -100 to +100, with a score above 0 considered adequate, a score above 20 considered favourable, a score above 50 considered excellent and a score above 80 considered to be of extremely positive.

The NPS is calculated using a scale of 1-10 (see the below figure), with:

- a score between 0-6 being dissatisfied customers who are unlikely to return, and may even discourage others from staying with the provider;
- a score between 7-8 being passives, meaning they are satisfied with the provider but not happy enough to be promoters; and
- a score between 9-10 are considered promoters who are typically loyal and enthusiastic customers and who are likely to return and strongly promote the provider.

TripAdvisor uses a scale of 1-5 for consumer ratings on accommodation product. Converting this to the NPS scale means that a rating of 1-3 are considered "detractors" for the product, a score of 4 are the product's "passives" and a score of 5 are the products "promoters".[9] Those LGAs with less than 5 properties have been excluded from the assessment because the sample size is too small. **It is important to note that the NPS scores are calculated only on properties listed on TripAdvisor.**

Figure 16: NPS Score Scale

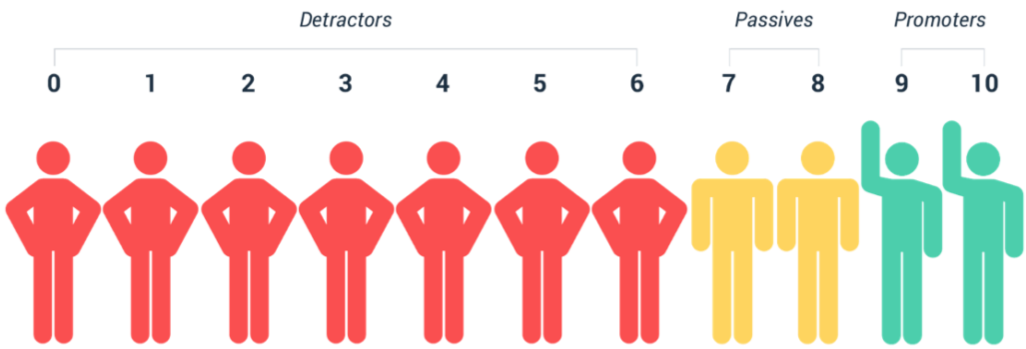


Table 5 provides a summary of the NPS results by property category in the SAP and the two LGAs in the Snowies region. It demonstrates the following.

- The overall accommodation NPS' achieved are:
  - +39 for the SAP;
  - +32 for the Snowy Monaro LGA; and
  - +41 for the Snowy Valley LGA.
- Each of these are favourable/positive scores because they are above 20. Each score, however, does indicate the opportunity for improvement.
- In the SAP, the highest NPS score was generated for "Farm Stays" (+68), followed by "Chalets/Villas" (+53) and "Aparthotels" (+52).
- Property categories which achieved lower NPS scores in the SAP include: "Caravan, Camping and Holiday Parks" (+2), "Motels" (+7) and "Apartments" (+13). These scores reflect consumer dissatisfaction regarding quality and/or pricing.
- In the Snowy Monaro region, the property categories which have higher NPS' are "Farm Stays" and "Holiday Houses", both achieving scores exceeding +55.
- In the Snowy Valley region, higher NPS' are found in the property categories of "Retreats, Lodges and Resorts" and "Holiday Houses" achieving average scores above +70.
- Looking specifically at branded properties within the SAP region only, a low NPS is achieved of +10, with a score of +13 for "Hotels" and +3 for "Caravan, Camping and Holiday Parks". Visitors tend to be attracted to branded properties because they tend to deliver a more consistent level of quality and services. The NPS scores achieved for the branded properties in the SAP indicate there is a level of consumer concern regarding the branded accommodation product on offer, whether it be because of the price point, the quality of product or both.

Key Takeout: the net promoter scores for the SAP indicate positive responses for many accommodation typologies except for caravan and camping facilities, apartments and motels. Smaller property types (farm stays, holiday houses and chalets) rated more highly along with fully serviced apartments (Aparthotels).

[9] https://birdeye.com/blog/net-promoter-score-explained/

Table 5: NPS by Property Type

	Snowy Monaro LGA				Snowy Valleys LGA				SAP			
Property Type	**Number of Reviews**	**Promoter Total**	**Promoters Less Detractors**	**NPS Score**	**Number of Reviews**	**Promoter Total**	**Promoters Less Detractors**	**NPS Score**	**Number of Reviews**	**Promoter Total**	**Promoters Less Detractors**	**NPS Score**
Farm Stay	129	444	401	+67					31	71	68	+68
Holiday Houses	645	259	238	+59	92	158	147	+73	388	50	50	+50
Aparthotel	515	436	366	+52					515	436	366	+52
Chalets/Villas	229	170	132	+44	159	148	137	+68	214	137	106	+53
Hotel	5,716	3,828	2,621	+39	21	121	28	+9	5,598	3,697	2,596	+41
B&Bs / Inns	1,935	1,103	665	+33	327	202	120	+30	1,817	682	405	+31
Retreats, Lodges and Resorts	2,124	1,110	689	+33	152	92	90	+90	1,268	965	710	+47
Caravan, Camping and..	1,281	625	243	+17	291	302	135	+23	489	182	12	+2
Apartments	1,211	31	13	+13					1,211	31	13	+13
Motel	2,237	485	-177	-10	1,348	693	572	+48	1,184	100	22	+7
Grand Total	**16,022**	**8,492**	**5,191**	**+32**	**2,390**	**1,716**	**1,229**	**+41**	**12,715**	**6,351**	**4,348**	**+39**

Image Credit: L'Etape Australia

2.6.3. Attractions & Experiences Audit

Because the tourism sector is so far-reaching, there are many products, experiences and assets which can be considered tourism based. This audit, has, however, focused in on those which are considered primary tourism experiences, that is, those which are marketed and positioned as "things to do" when visitors travel to the region. Those products which are primarily utilised by the local community have been excluded.

To be able to derive qualitative and meaningful findings from the product audit, product has had to be listed within product categories. Product was originally sorted into detailed sub-categories and then summarised into major categories (the audit has used major categories to demonstrate findings). Table 6 summarises the major and subcategories used.

Table 6: Attraction Type Categories

Cultural and Heritage	Points of Interest, Landmarks & Historic Sites
Food and Beverage	Recreation
Guided Tours	Retail
Health and Wellness	Sports Camps and Clinics
Nature-Based	

When reading the product findings, it is important to note:

- non-major lookouts are excluded from the audit because of the number of these throughout the region which would skew the findings;
- general food and beverage (cafes, restaurants, bars) are excluded from the audit, rather, the audit only focuses on unique food experiences such as distilleries, food tours, cooking classes etc; and
- the audit does not provide an assessment on the quality of the product as this would require visiting each product which was not possible within the scope of this Study.

2.6.3.1. Attractions & Experiences

Figure 17 provides a summary of the tourism attractions and experiences within the region, segmented according to the type of attraction. It demonstrates the following.

- In total, the audit identified 126 tourism attraction and experiences across the region. The full listing is provided in Appendix 2.
- Snowy Monaro LGA has, by far, the largest number of attractions and experiences (99 in Snowy Monaro compared with 27 in Snowy Valleys).
- Most experiences (paid and free) are 'Nature-Based' which make up just over 48% of all attractions identified. Many of these are managed/owned by their respective council or NPWS. This is followed by 'Cultural and Heritage' sites, representing just under 17% of the product identified.
- As demonstrated, the bulk of the product is clustered in and around Jindabyne (i.e., within the SAP).

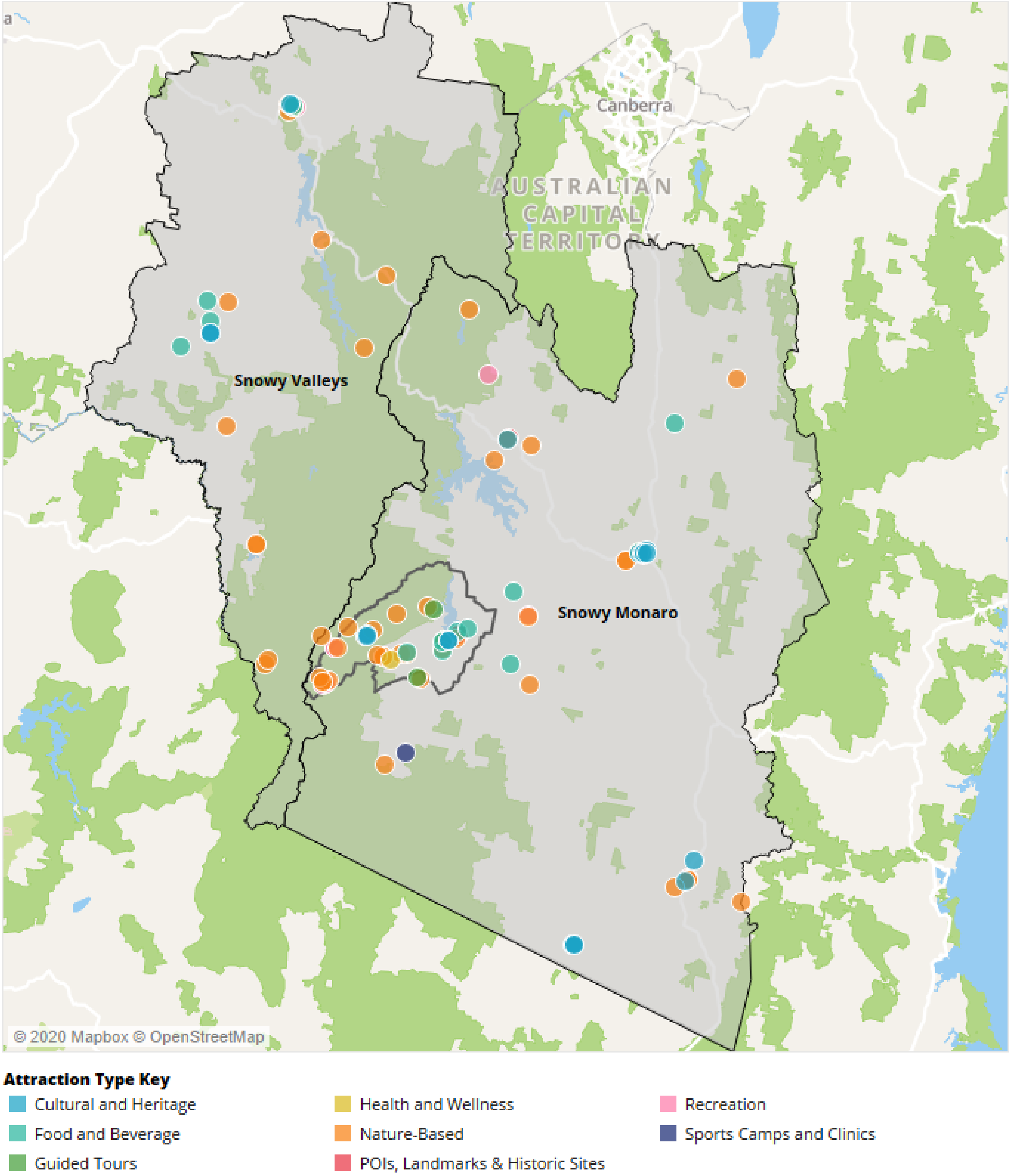
Determining attractions and experiences which are unique to the region is important as that can help drive stronger market interest.

<u>Key Takeout:</u> The SAP's (and broader Snowies region's) attraction base leverages off the environment and are heavily focused on nature-based and outdoor recreational experiences. There are limited things to do during the evening and in times of inclement weather. There have been some larger all-weather and indoor experiences suggested for the SAP but at the request of the government, some have been removed.

2.6.3.2. Free versus paid attractions in the Snowies Region

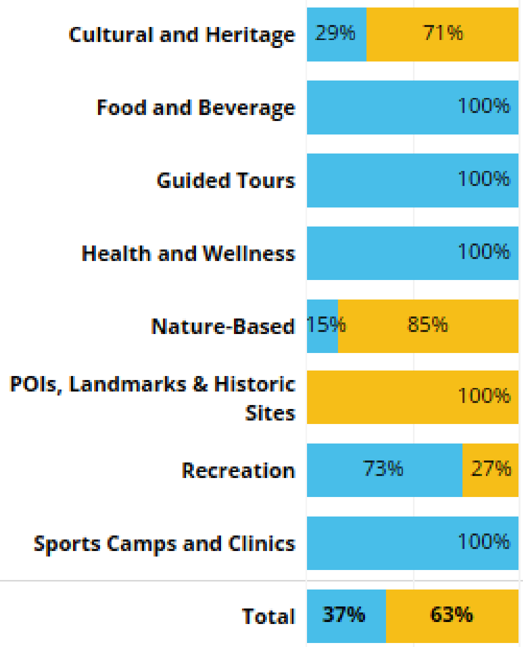
Further top-line analysis of paid and free attractions and experiences has revealed the following.

- Well over half (63%) of all product identified are classified as free product, which makes it a challenge to derive higher visitor yield (one of the goals of this Tourism Development Study). This is important to note as there has been significant time and money invested by various stakeholders into creating high-quality trails and recreational experiences, however, without the corresponding commissionable product (pop-up or permanent cafés and retail, guided experiences and other tour operator product), the SAP and the Snowies more broadly will continue to find it hard to generate stronger visitor yield and improved economic outcomes.
- There are many (currently) free experiences which could, with the right operator and a less seasonal visitor market, potentially be transformed into tour-based commissionable product. This might be able to include walking tours, wildlife viewing in a privately operated wildlife park noting that feedback has highlighted the limited opportunities for wildlife viewing overall in the SAP region in the national park and reserve areas.



Nature-Based	60
Cultural and Heritage	21
Recreation	15
Food and Beverage	13
POIs, Landmarks & Historic Sites	9
Guided Tours	6
Sports Camps and Clinics	1
Health and Wellness	1
Total	126

Free Versus Paid Product



% Share of Attractions (by Attraction Type)

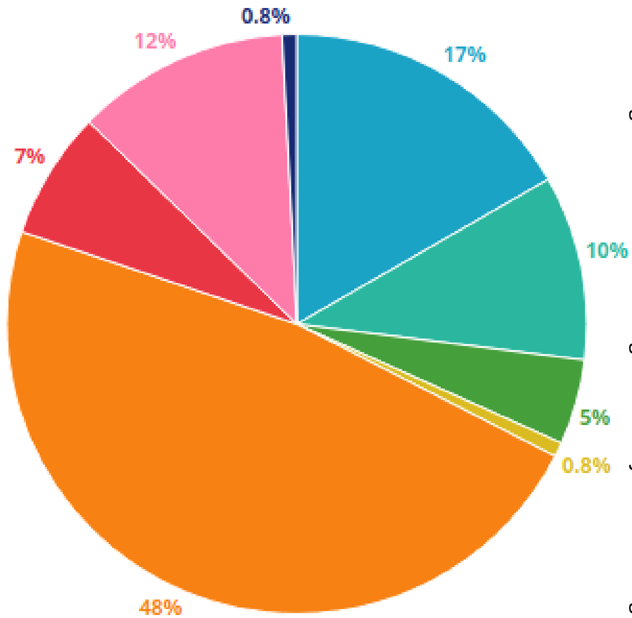


Figure 17: Attraction offering in the Snowy Mountains Region

2.6.3.3. Attractions & Experiences in the SAP

Figure 18 illustrates the product and experiences in the SAP only. Points to note include the following.

- Despite only making up 3% of the combined geographic area of the Snowy Monaro and Snowy Valley LGAs, 41% (52) of all attractions and experiences identified fall within the SAP boundary.
- Out of the 52 attractions and experiences identified in the SAP, only 11 are located in and around the Jindabyne town centre. This is an interesting point to note and confirms stakeholder feedback which indicates that there is a lack of "things to do" in Jindabyne.
- The attractions and experiences identified are mostly nature-based and recreation experiences. The audit confirms that there are limited attractions and experiences which visitors and locals can undertake during periods of inclement weather or during the evening.
- As per the map, there are several clusters of products, most notably around Jindabyne Lake and the ski-focused villages of Thredbo, Perisher, Charlotte Pass and Guthega.

Key Takeout: The SAP is a major activity hub for the broader region. The majority of attractions and experiences available are free, impacting on the ability to grow visitor yield (one of the Tourism Development Study's goals). There are also limited things to do during the evening and times of inclement weather. Current population forecasts and existing visitation levels make it challenging to offer all-weather indoor and evening based attractions/experiences as the highly seasonal nature of the visitor markets and small population base limits the viability of creating indoor built attractions and experiences unless the government was prepared to underwrite these to help manage investment risk.

2.6.3.4. Consumer Quality Sentiment of Attractions and Experiences

Consumer quality sentiment for attractions was determined using TripAdvisor ratings for the attractions listed. TripAdvisor uses a scale of 1-5 for consumer ratings on attraction product and this tends to be less detailed than the ratings obtained for accommodation product. Of the 126 attractions and experiences identified, ratings were obtained for 64% (81).

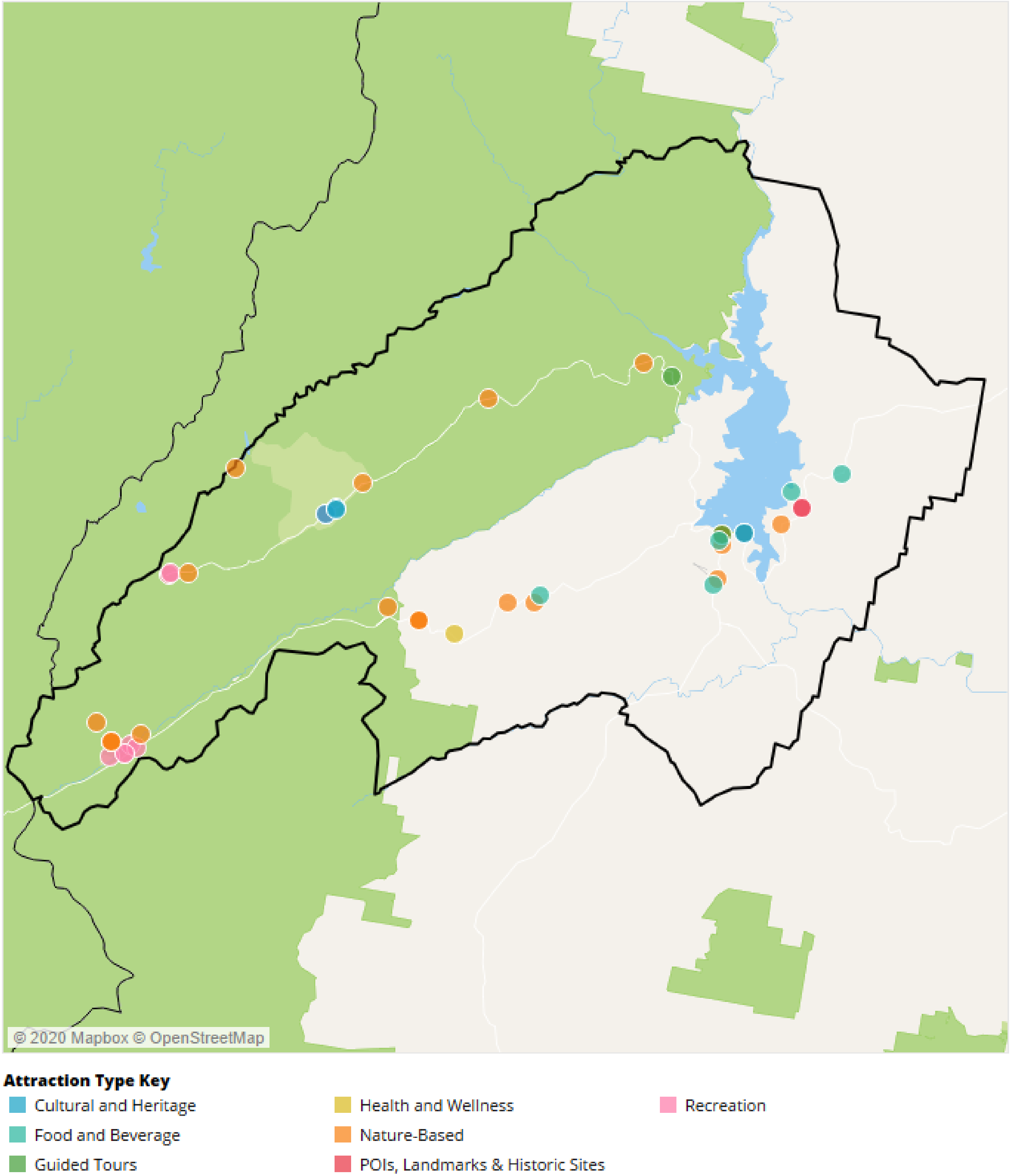
Table 7 provides a summary of the TripAdvisor rating results by attraction category. It demonstrates the following.

- The average rating for attractions in the Snowies region is 4.4/5. The SAP also achieves the same score (4.4). This relatively high rating indicates a high overall consumer satisfaction with the attraction product being delivered across the region and confirms stakeholder feedback which indicates that whilst there is satisfaction with the quality of attraction product/experiences there isn't the same level of satisfaction with the quality and price point of accommodation.
- Guided tours received the highest overall ranking of 5/5. This indicates a high level of satisfaction and the potential opportunity to build on this product category through the introduction of new and more diverse tours.
- Across all categories assessed, recreation product received the lowest rating at 4.1/5.

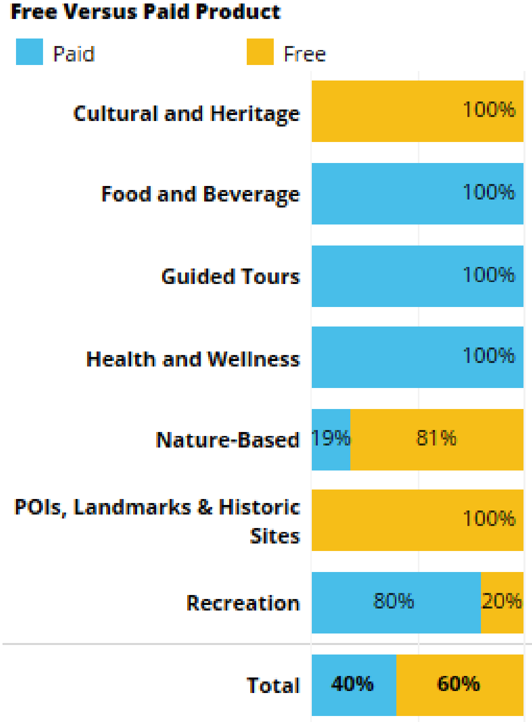
Table 7: Attraction Ratings

Attraction Category	Rating Average
Guided Tours	5.0
F&B Product	4.6
Nature-Based Product	4.5
Health & Wellness Product	4.5
Cultural & Heritage Product	4.4
Points of Interest & Landmarks, Historic Sites	4.2
Recreation Product	4.1
Total	**4.4**

Key Takeout: Generally, the experiences and attractions on offer rate well. While the natural environment and the experiences which leverage off this rate well, consumer sentiment regarding built accommodation does not necessarily match this.



Nature-Based	27
Recreation	10
Food and Beverage	5
Cultural and Heritage	5
POIs, Landmarks & Historic Sites	2
Guided Tours	2
Health and Wellness	1
Total	52



% Share of Attractions (by Attraction Type)

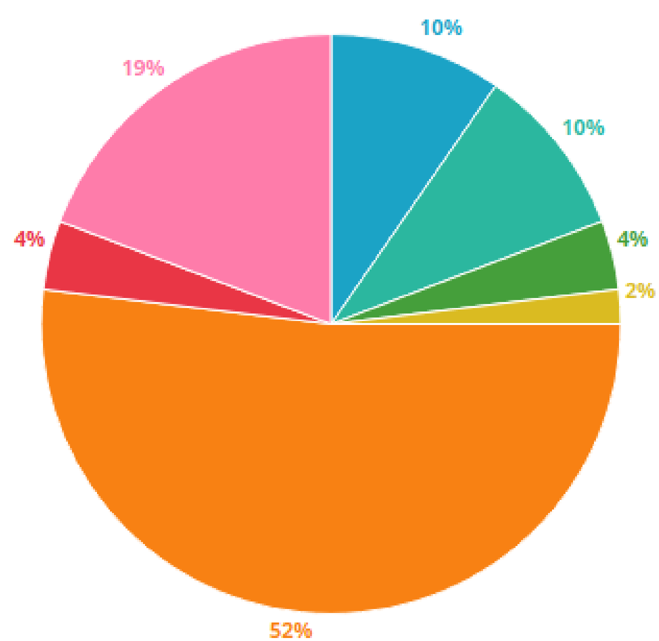


Figure 18: Attraction offering in the SAP

2.7. Tourism Product Gap Analysis

The following gap analysis is based on:

- online data analysis of the SAP and broader regional product offering and - where possible - the quality of this;
- discussions with industry and other stakeholders;
- site visits within the region; and
- previous strategies/research that has been undertaken for the Snowies region.

It is an important component of this project as it provides an opportunity to step back and assess what, if anything, is missing to support growth in the region's visitor economy and potentially why some of these product gaps may have struggled to be filled to date.

2.7.1. Accommodation Gaps

The audit undertaken, along with the consultation and background research, indicates that whilst the Snowies region and the SAP offer more accommodation options within the basic 2-star – mid-range 3-star categories, there is a limited number of higher-quality properties, particularly those of a larger scale and/or branded properties. Figure 19 further demonstrates the gaps identified in the accommodation mix. This issue was also identified in the Waste Point Masterplan along with the need for more quality caravan park style forms of accommodation. The challenge is therefore not new.

Key Take Outs: To fill the identified accommodation gaps requires "transformational" projects. "Nibbling at the fringe" with minimal change and investment will not achieve the SAP goals or vision identified. Opportunities exist to consider encouraging:

- **a larger-scale hotel with associated conference facility and serviced apartments as part of a mixed-use development precinct and ideally on a lakeside location, potentially western side of Lake Jindabyne where more sites and disturbed (rather than environmentally sensitive) land may be accessible;**
- **a higher quality day spa/wellness hotel in Jindabyne;**
- **a larger-scale hostel facility in the sports and recreation precinct to support the further development of the precinct as a high-performance elite sports training hub and to support more events, training etc;**
- **a higher-quality branded destination holiday park focused on the family market and with a broader range of quality amenities; and**
- **new and expanded camping grounds within KNP with basic but good quality facilities such as toilets, showers and camp kitchens.**

2.7.2. Attractions & Experiences Gaps

As identified in the product audit, the SAP and broader Snowies region currently has a plethora of free product including (but not limited to) walking trails, mountain biking trails and natural sites, while there is limited:

- commissionable (paid) product;
- all-weather tourism product and experiences particularly for those times of inclement weather;
- attractions which are focused primarily on families with children other than ski-based experiences;
- evening-based experiences to encourage a longer length of visitor stay and to provide experiences which locals can enjoy;
- higher quality food and beverage offering, particularly in those destinations which are not currently major hubs; and
- agri- and farm-based tourism product noting the extensive surrounding agricultural and aquaculture product on offer.

Nonetheless, Figure 20 demonstrates there are a plethora of attractions and experiences which could be developed to enhance the visitor experience, appeal to a broader visitor market, reduce seasonality and to increase visitor yield.

It is important to note that while some free product has been included in the gap analysis, there is the potential/need to introduce commissionable experiences (such as guided tours and pop-ups) as part of these experiences.

Key Take Outs: The region has a good range of free experiences but is underrepresented in paid visitor experiences. There are insufficient all-weather visitor attractions or experiences to offer year-round appeal, there are limited agri-tourism and farm-based product and minimal evening-based experiences. In simple terms, if you come to ski, to mountain bike or trek-bush walk, the region offers much. But otherwise has limited on offer, especially when compared to other alpine destinations in Victoria, NZ and further afield.

Figure 19: Accommodation Gap Assessment

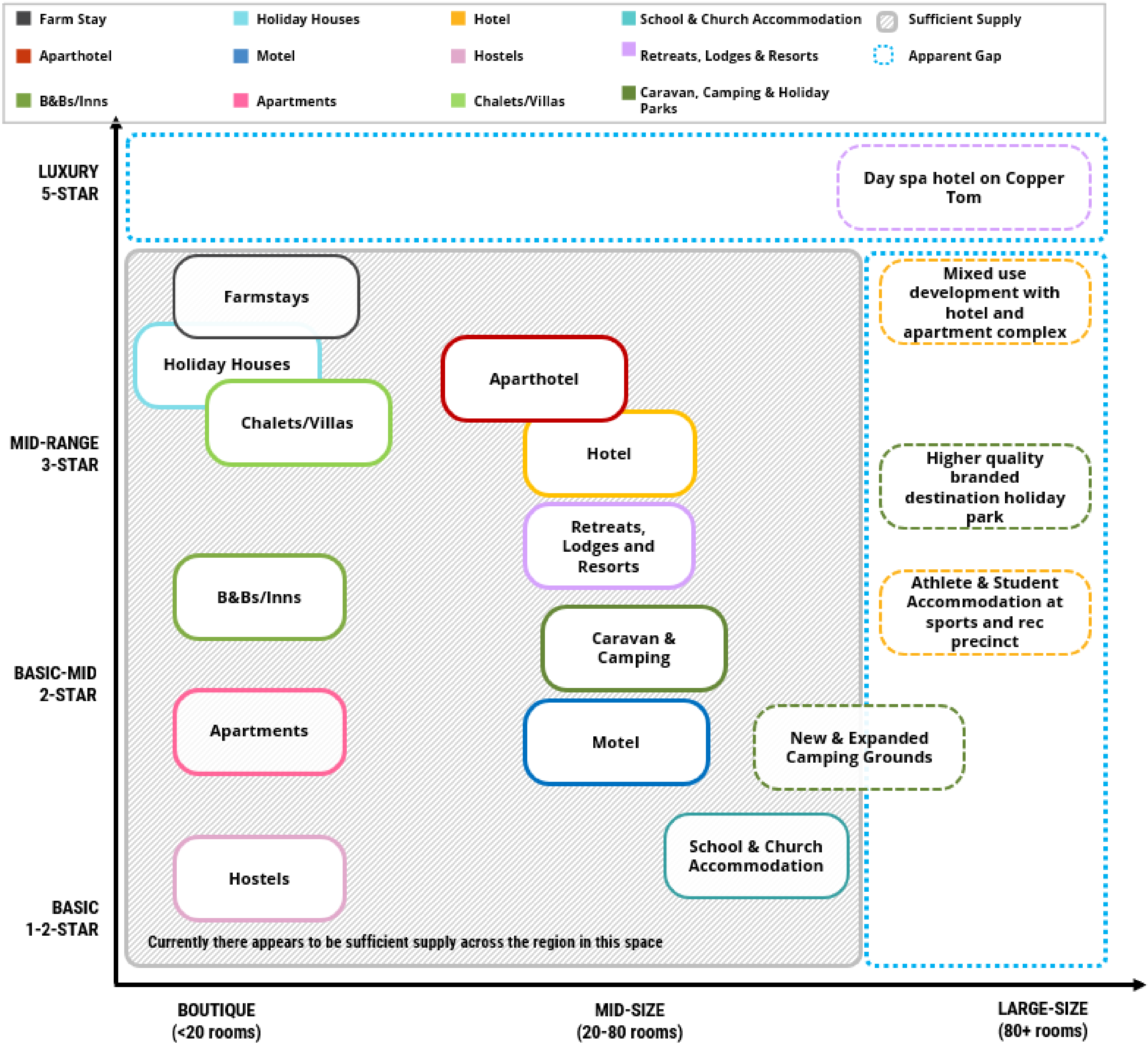


Figure 20: Attractions & Experiences Gap Assessment

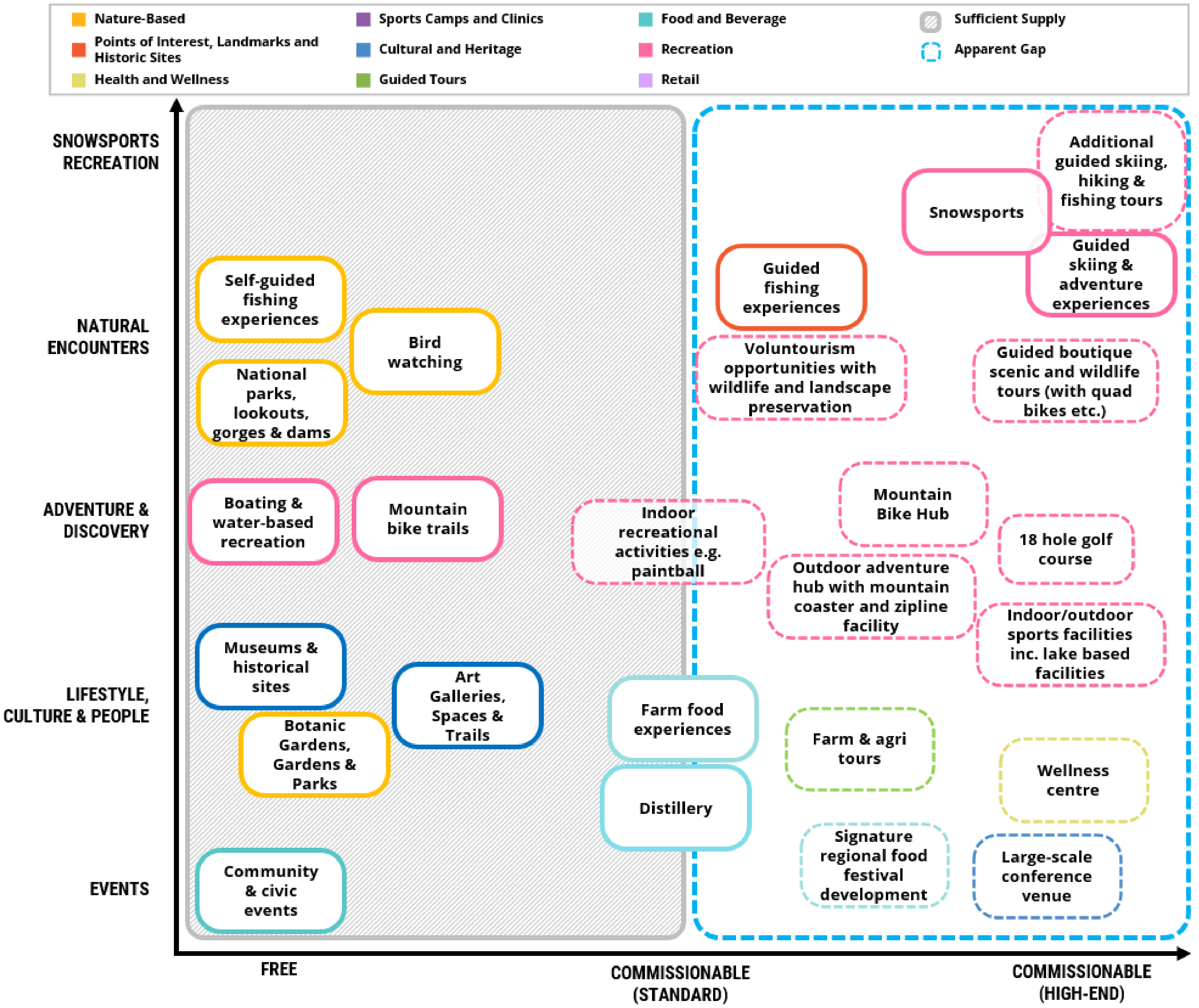


Image Credit: Time Out

2.8. The Importance of the Visitor Economy

2.8.1. Methodology

Tourism is a major economic sector for the SAP region and the broader Snowies region. Although tourism economic data is not available for the SAP region specifically, the data is available at a Snowy Monaro LGA level. Because a large percentage of tourism activity for the Snowy Monaro LGA takes place within the SAP region, this data is considered relevant and has been subsequently applied in the absence of SAP specific data.

The size of the tourism sector is more difficult to calculate compared to other economic sectors, primarily because tourism is not one specific sector in its own right, but rather, is an amalgam (of varying proportions) of many different economic sectors (such as 'Accommodation and Food Services', 'Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services' and 'Retail Trade'). As a result of this, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) does not have an Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) code specifically for the tourism sector.

Due to the need to understand the size of the tourism sector and its impact, a methodology has been derived (is used in the ABS-produced Tourism Satellite Accounts) which applies a tourism intensity ratio to each major ANZSIC economic sector. This tourism intensity ratio essentially extracts the tourism portion of each ANZSIC sector. For some sectors, such as 'Accommodation and Food Services' the tourism intensity ratio is high, for others, such as 'Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services' the tourism intensity ratio applied is much lower. This means that the tourism sector cuts across many other economic sectors where it is a component (a part of) rather than the entire economic sector and its value.

2.8.2. Output & Jobs Generated

Based on this formula, in 2019, the tourism sector is estimated to have generated $460m in direct output (see Figure 21), making it the largest economic sector in the LGA and demonstrating its importance, followed by 'Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing' ($359m).

The sector also supports the most jobs of any in the LGA, accounting for 2,634 direct positions (see Figure 22) and 4,315 indirect positions (generated through the supply of goods and services to support front line tourism positions).

Figure 21: Snowy Monaro Direct Output by Industry (2019)[10]

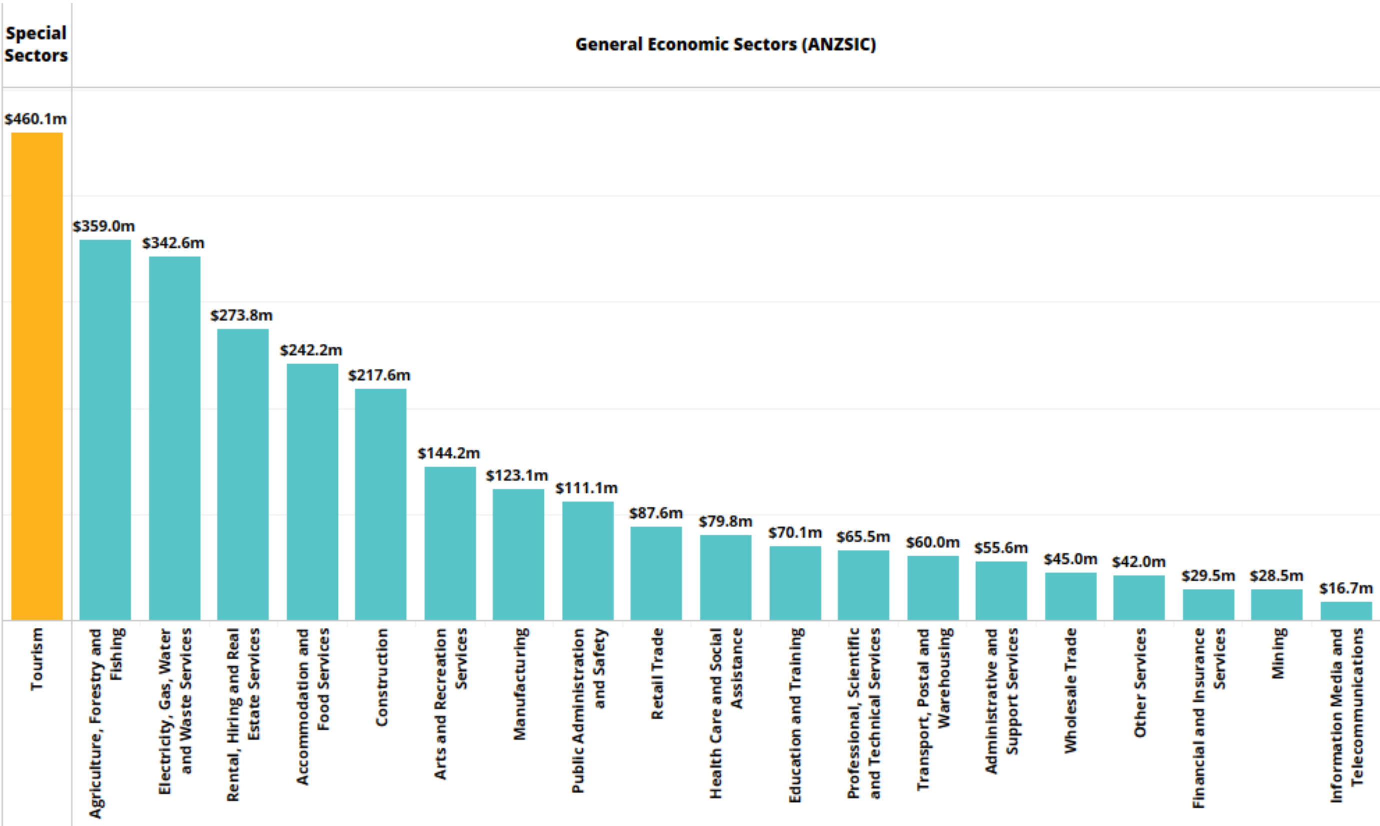
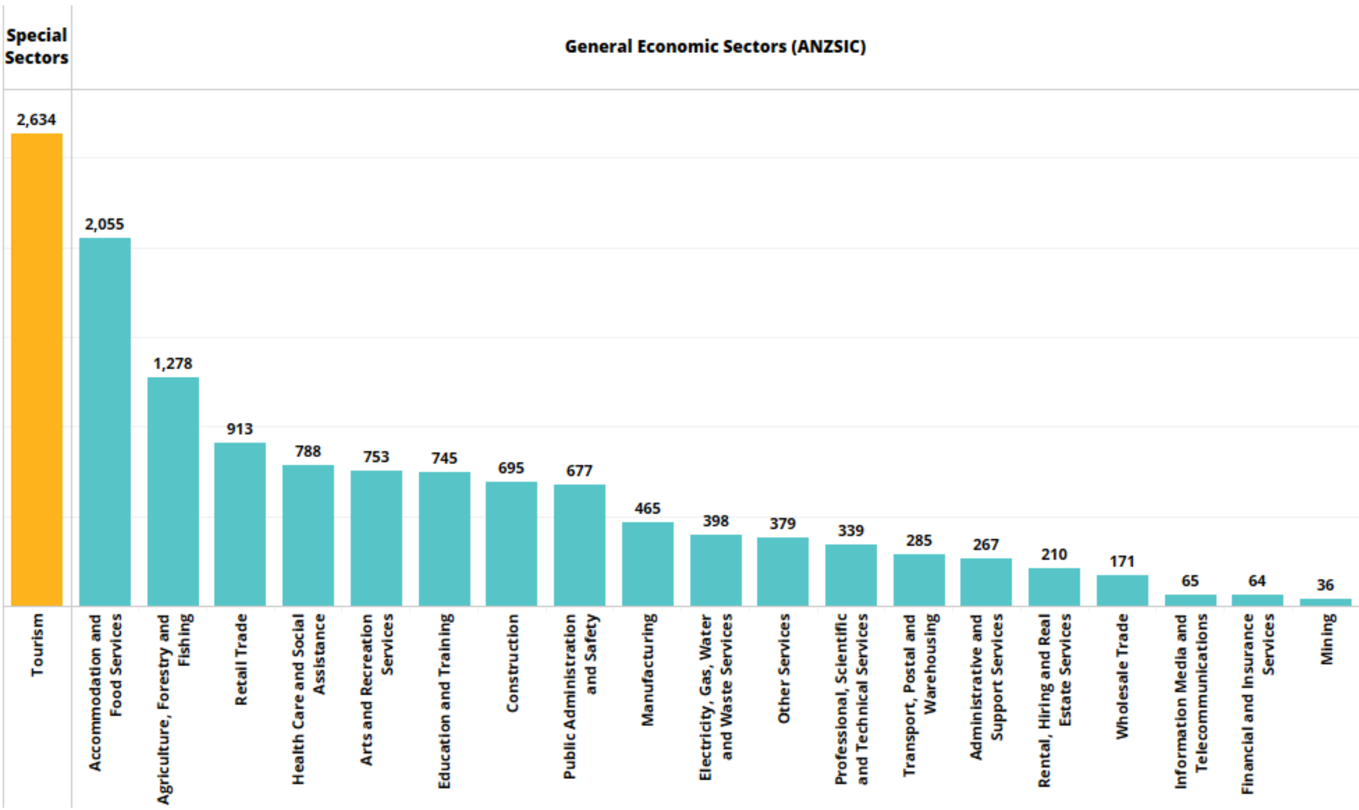


Figure 22: Snowy Monaro Direct Employment by Industry (2019)[11]



[10] https://economy.id.com.au/snowy-monaro/output-by-industry
[11] https://economy.id.com.au/snowy-monaro/employment-by-industry

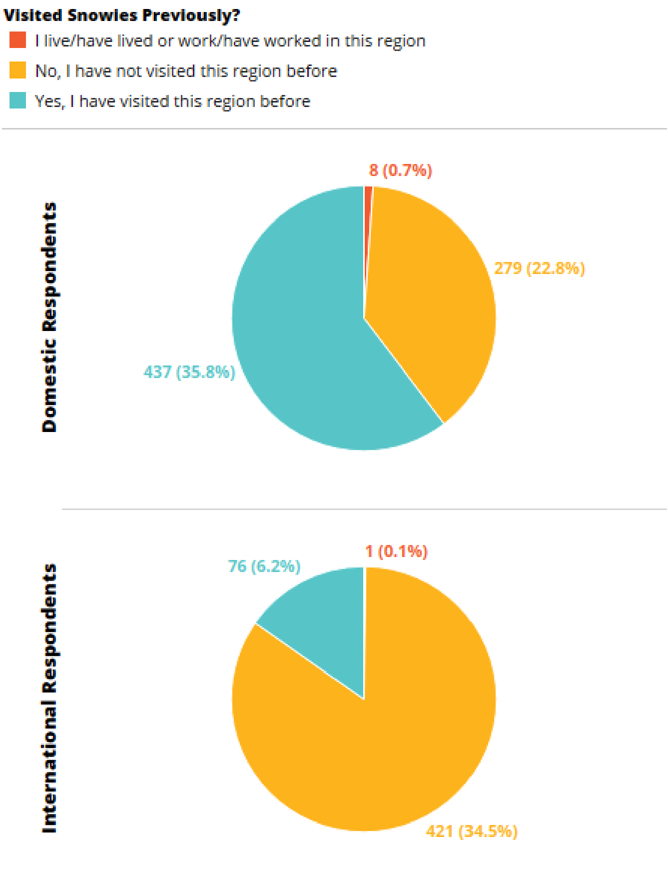
2.9. Visitor Survey

2.9.1. About the Survey

As part of the wider SAP project, a research survey was undertaken by UTS' Centre for Business Intelligence & Data (BIDA). The survey was focused on promoting tourism into the Jindabyne precinct and was distributed to both domestic and international respondents. The total sample size was 1,222, with just under 60% (724) being domestic respondents and the remaining (498) being international citizens. The survey explored what amenities would more likely induce them to travel to the SAP precinct during summer and winter.

Of the 724 domestic respondents, just under two-thirds (61%) had travelled to the Snowies region previously, while only 15% (76) of international respondents had.

Figure 23: Have you ever visited the Snowy Mountains region?



The full results of the survey can be found in the report produced by BIDA: Snowy Mountains Special Precinct Program: Promoting Tourism into the Jindabyne Precinct.

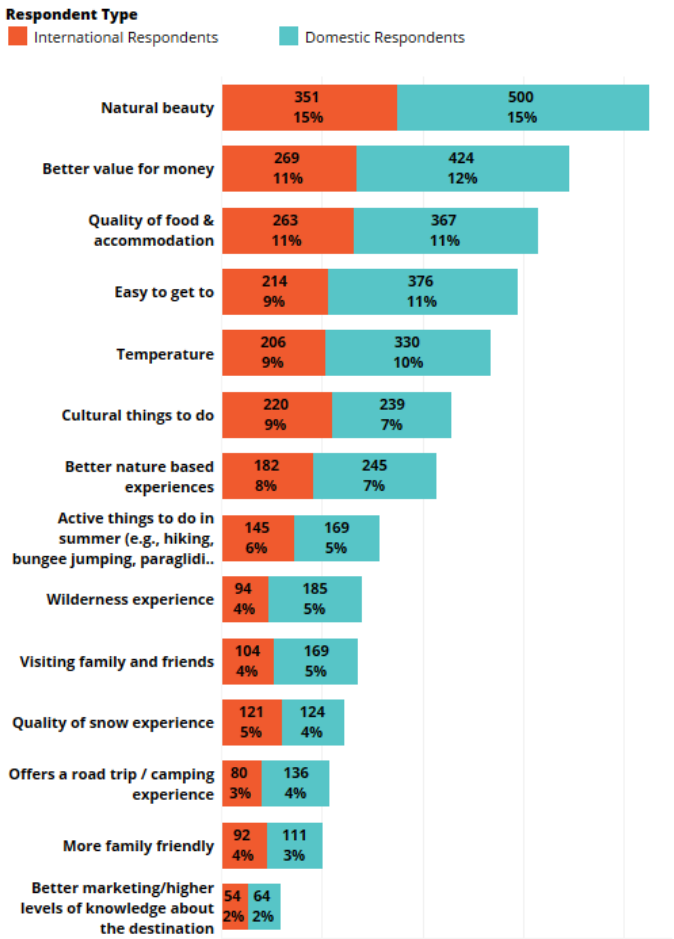
The findings outlined below provide further extrapolation of the results based on various criteria which have relevance to this Tourism Development Strategy.

2.9.2. Main Considerations for Choosing a Holiday Destination

Figure 24 provides a summary of responses to the question: *What are your main considerations when choosing a holiday destination?* Respondents were able to select as many considerations as they liked. The top considerations are fairly similar for both domestic and international respondents. Applying these findings to the SAP as a potential holiday destination demonstrates the following.

- The SAP does offer "natural beauty" (the top consideration for travel across both domestic and international respondents), however, it is important to recognise that most destinations throughout NSW and Australia offer "natural beauty". The SAP needs further differentiation to leverage off this.
- The next top three considerations are potentially where the SAP is currently failing to deliver: offering better value for money (holidaying in the SAP, particularly in peak periods, is considered expensive); quality of food & accommodation (except for a few operators, the food and accommodation offering needs to be raised); and easy to get to (the region's distance from major hubs and lack of train and/or air connectivity make it challenging to access compared with other destinations around NSW and Australia more generally).

Figure 24: What are your main considerations when choosing a holiday destination?



2.9.3. Likelihood to Visit the Snowies

The following figure summarises the responses from the question: *how likely are you to visit the Snowy Mountains in the next two years in the summer and winter season?* While respondents were able to select from the following seven responses: Almost certain (>85%); Highly likely (70%-84%); Likely (55%-69%); Neither likely nor unlikely (45%-54%); Unlikely (30%-44%); Highly unlikely (15%-29%); and Remote (<15%), the data in Figure 25 further summarises the findings into three categories: Likely; Neither Likely or Unlikely; and Unlikely.

The results demonstrate that regardless of respondent type (domestic or international), or season of visitation (summer or winter), most respondents indicated they were unlikely to visit the Snowies in the next two years. Other points to note include the following.

- Slicing the data by season demonstrates that 42% of all respondents indicated they would be unlikely to visit in summer, however, an even larger percentage (52%) indicated they would be unlikely to visit in winter. This indicates there is a greater propensity to consider travelling to the region in summer than winter. This could, however, be influenced by the sample of respondent who participate in winter sports.
- Slicing the data by respondent type illustrates that international respondents are more likely to visit the Snowy region (irrespective of the season) than domestic respondents (35% compared with 27%). These results could, potentially, be influenced by the domestic respondents having a stronger understanding of what is available in the Snowies, compared with international respondents.

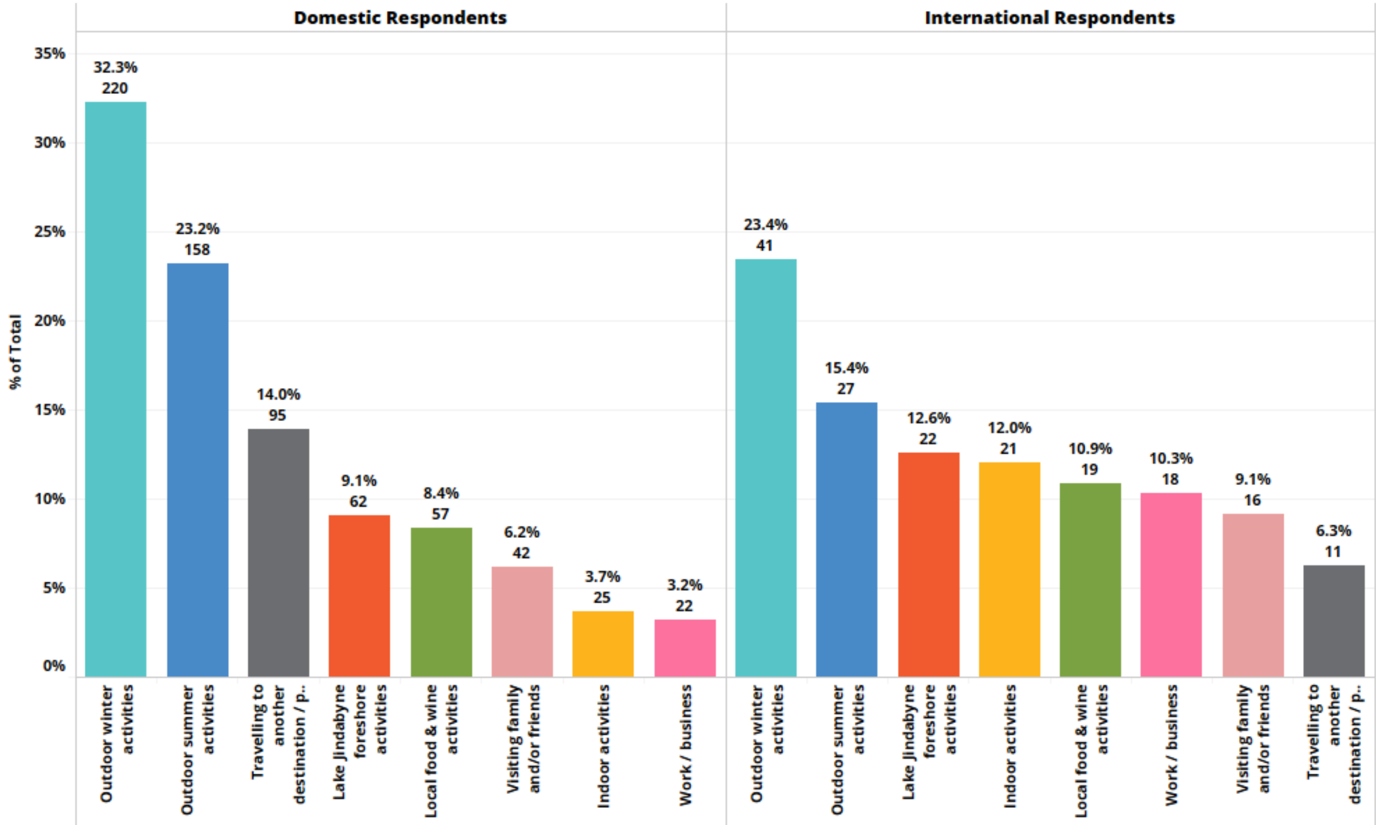
Figure 25: Likelihood to Visit the Snowy Mountains in the next 2 years (Summer & Winter Seasons)

2.9.4. Main Reason for the Last Visit to the Snowies

Figure 26 provides a summary of responses to the question: *Which were the main reasons for your last visit to the Snowy Mountains region?* Only those who had indicated they had visited the region previously were shown this question. Respondents were able to select as many reasons as they liked. The open-ended "other" category has been excluded from the results below.

The most common reason for travel for both domestic and international respondents was for "outdoor winter activities", followed by "outdoor summer activities", demonstrating the positioning of the region as an outdoor leisure destination. This is supported by TRA visitation data which demonstrates that the primary motivation for visitation to the SAP is for holiday (compared with those travelling for business or to visit friends and relatives).

Figure 26: Main reason for last trip to the Snowies Region

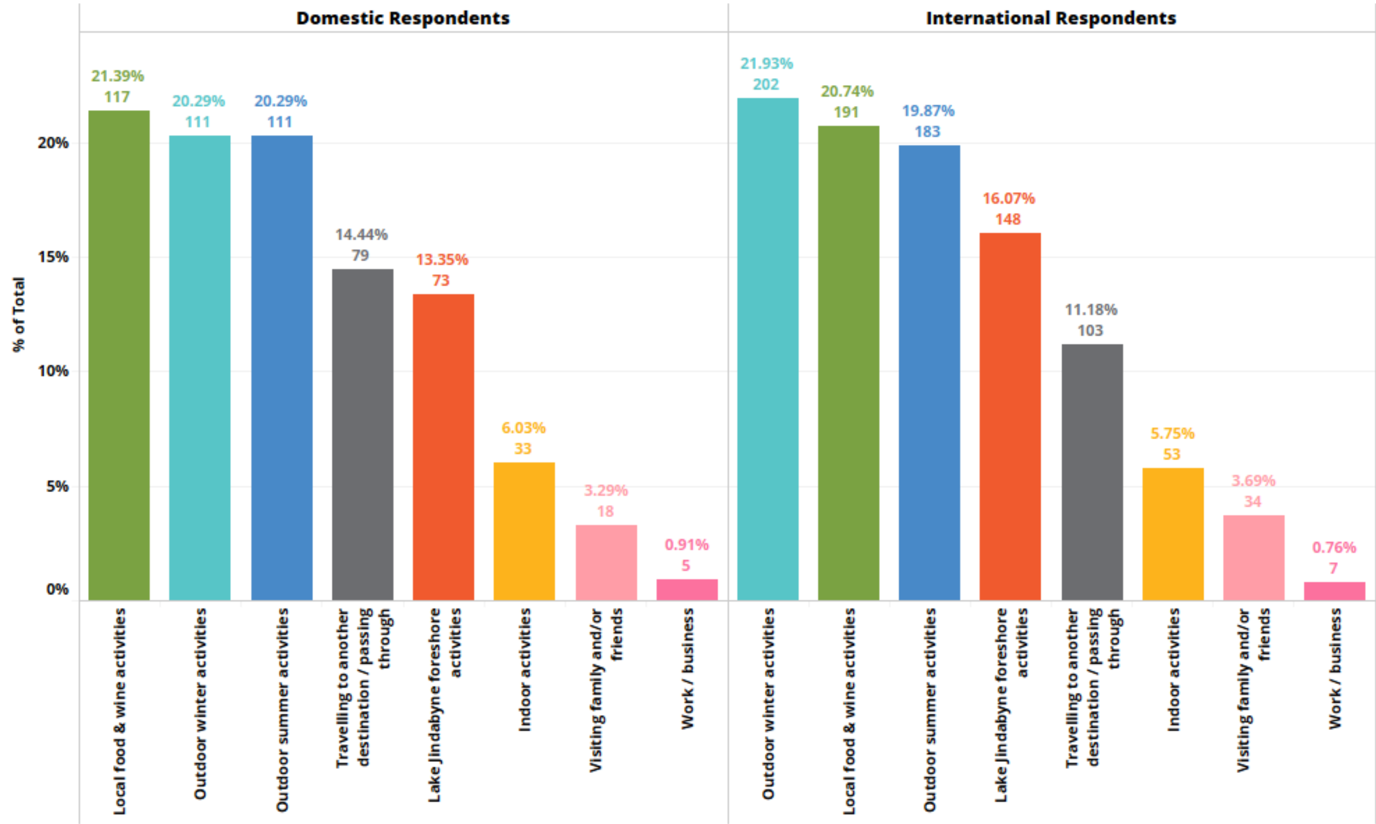


2.9.5. Main Reasons for Future Trip to the Snowies

Figure 27 provides a summary of responses to the question: *Which would be your main reasons for visiting the Snowy Mountains region?* **Only those who had indicated they had not visited the region previously were shown this question.** Respondents were able to select as many reasons as they liked. The open-ended "other" category has been excluded from the results below.

The Snowies is noted by respondents as having local food and wine as a destination strength. We, therefore, consider the survey response to reflect a lack of understanding of what the Snowies region has on offer by way of product as local food and wine is not yet considered a strength by most stakeholders. But they may be motivated to visit the region in the future if it did have a strong local food and wine product base to experience. We consider this highlights that those who have not visited the region previously, do not have sufficient understanding of what it offers.

Figure 27: Main Reason for Future Visit to the Snowies region



2.9.6. Summer & Winter Destinations for Similar Activities

Respondents were asked: *If you were travelling in summer, which destinations would you be most likely to visit for similar activities that you could do in the Snowy Mountains?* They were also asked: *If you were travelling in winter, which destinations would you be most likely to visit for similar activities that you could do in the Snowy Mountains?* The results reflected in Figure 28 (**summer**) and Figure 29 (**winter**) includes only those who have visited the Snowies region previously. This filter has been applied because it is considered that those respondents who have visited the Snowies previously are far more familiar with the types of activities available in the Snowies and are, therefore, better placed to respond to these questions with a meaningful answer.

The results demonstrate the following for **summer** travel destinations.

- The strength of the Blue Mountains as a hub for walking trails, mountain biking and with good public transport links
- The positioning and awareness of Tasmania as offering attractive bushwalking and related experiences
- The competitive threat recognised from Queenstown/Wanaka in NZ and the Victorian Alp villages.

The results demonstrate the following for **winter** travel destinations.

- The strength and market appeal of New Zealand alpine areas which have direct flight access ex Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane and so are faster to access than the Snowies
- The strong appeal of the areas in the Victorian Alps for not only snow-based winter experiences
- The appeal of the Blue Mountains which are 1.5 hours from Sydney and though they do not offer snow-based experiences, they do offer attractive winter escapes
- The competition from ski resort areas in Canada and Japan though interestingly these would be in different seasons to the traditional Australian ski season.

Figure 28: Summer travel to destinations with similar activities to the Snowies

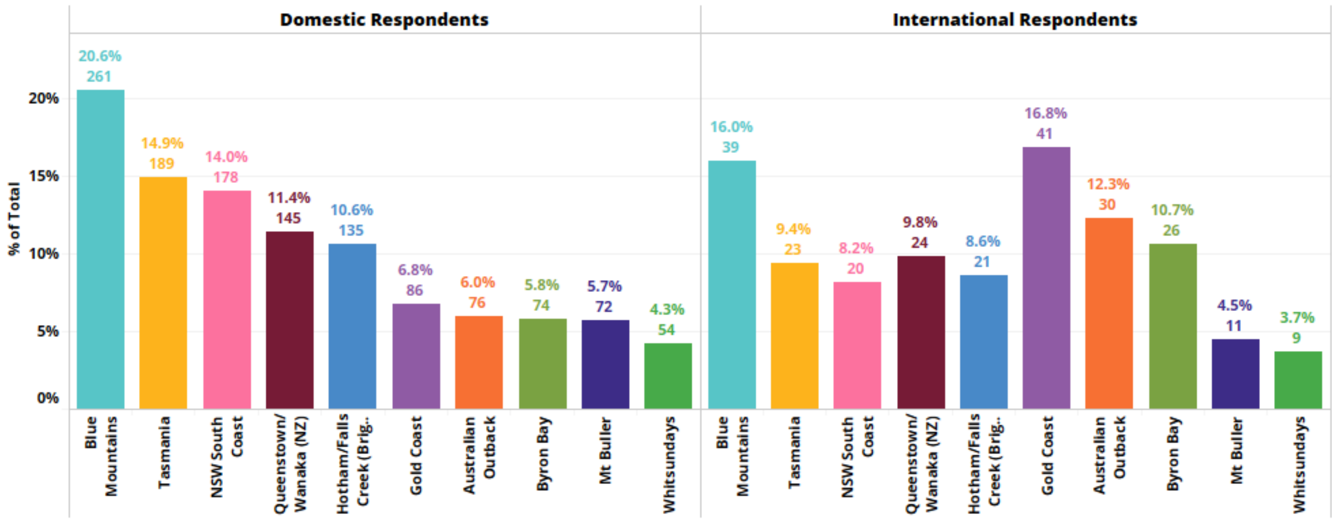


Figure 29: Winter travel to destinations with similar activities to the Snowies

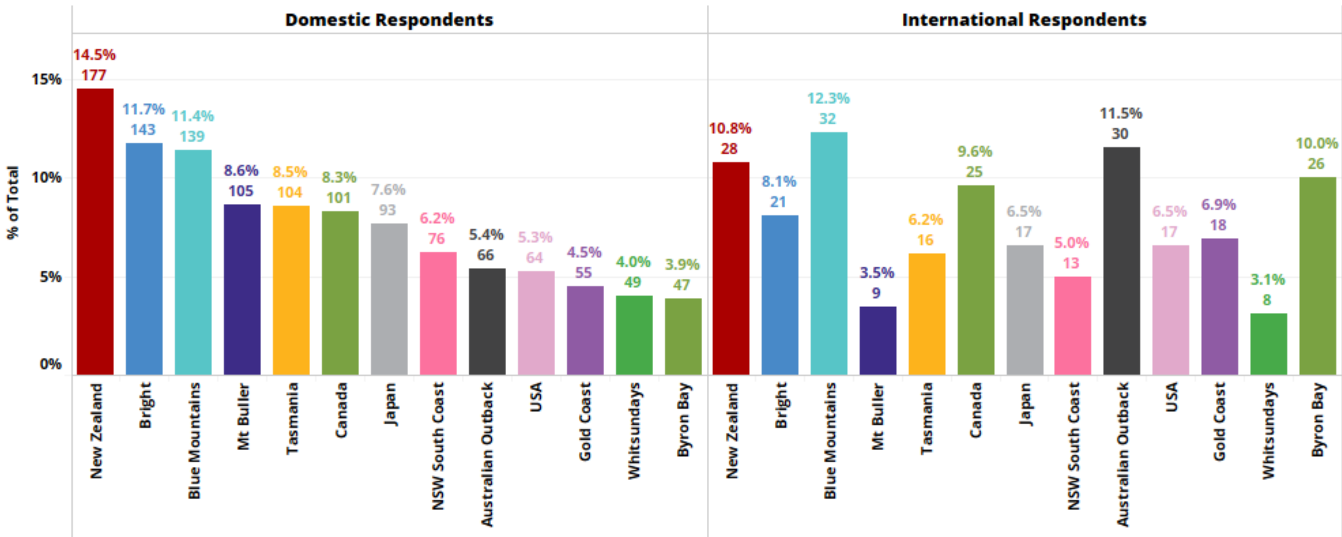


Image Credit: Ben Coope, Kosciuszko National Park

PART 3: COMPARATIVE BENCHMARKING

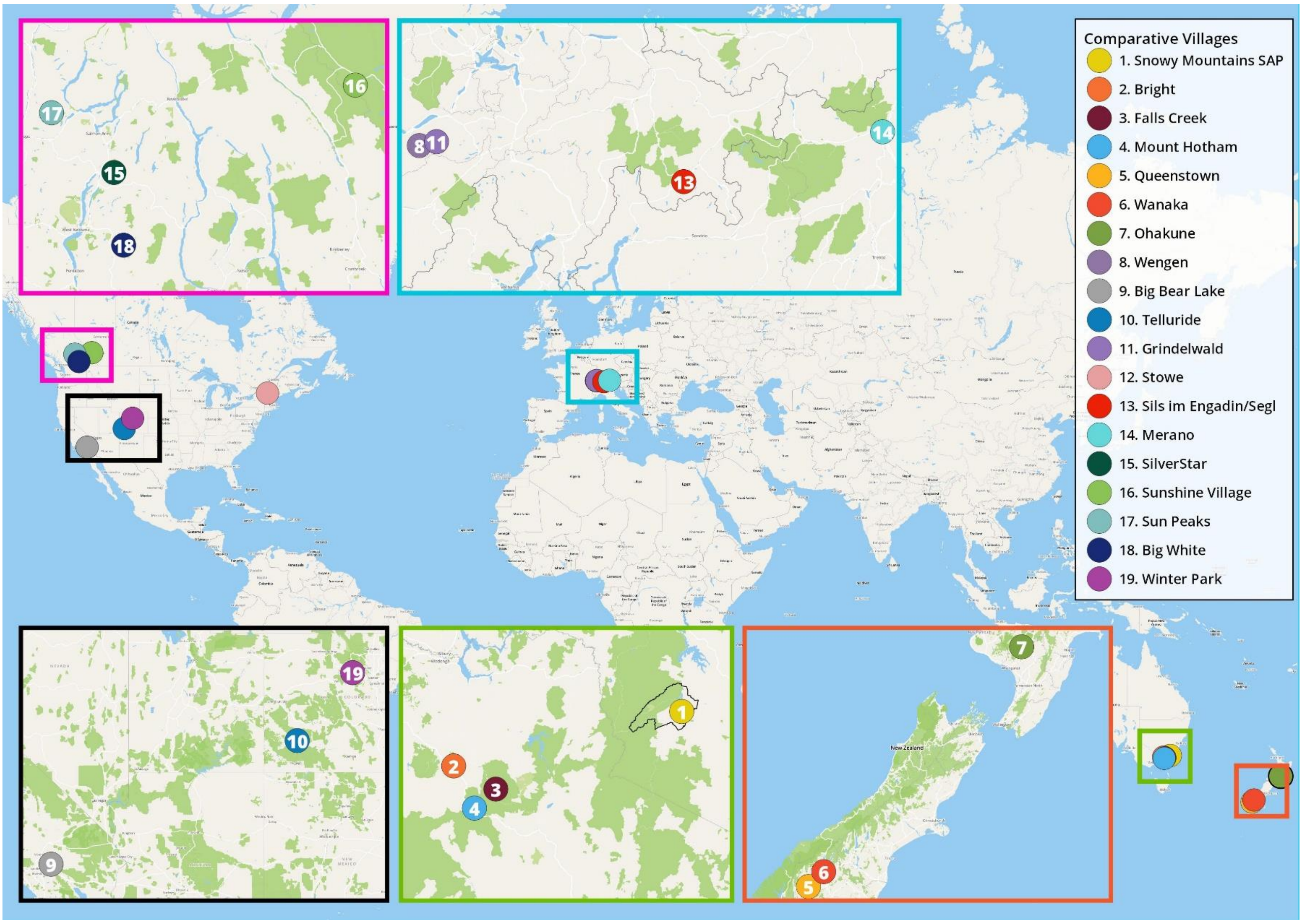
A global comparative analysis of alpine destinations to demonstrate common or unique factors of success.

3.1. Destinations Assessed

Looking at other destinations with similar attributes or features provides the ability to identify factors of success (or otherwise). As part of this Study, 19 towns/villages have been evaluated, including the Snowies. These are illustrated in Figure 30.

It is important to note that there are differences between the SAP area and some of the villages assessed in this comparative assessment. This is because the SAP is quite unique as a destination, with most accommodation being provided within Jindabyne, and alpine-based and many non-alpine based experiences (such as walking and biking experiences) being situated outside of Jindabyne within KNP. We note that there are some exceptions being the Lake Jindabyne Shared Trail network which has been completed and should be attractive to beginner mountain bikers, e -bikers, hikers and trail runners[12]. For many of the destinations assessed, these comprise alpine/four-season destinations which have villages based at (or within proximity to) ski fields and/or ski field infrastructure (such as gondolas etc.).

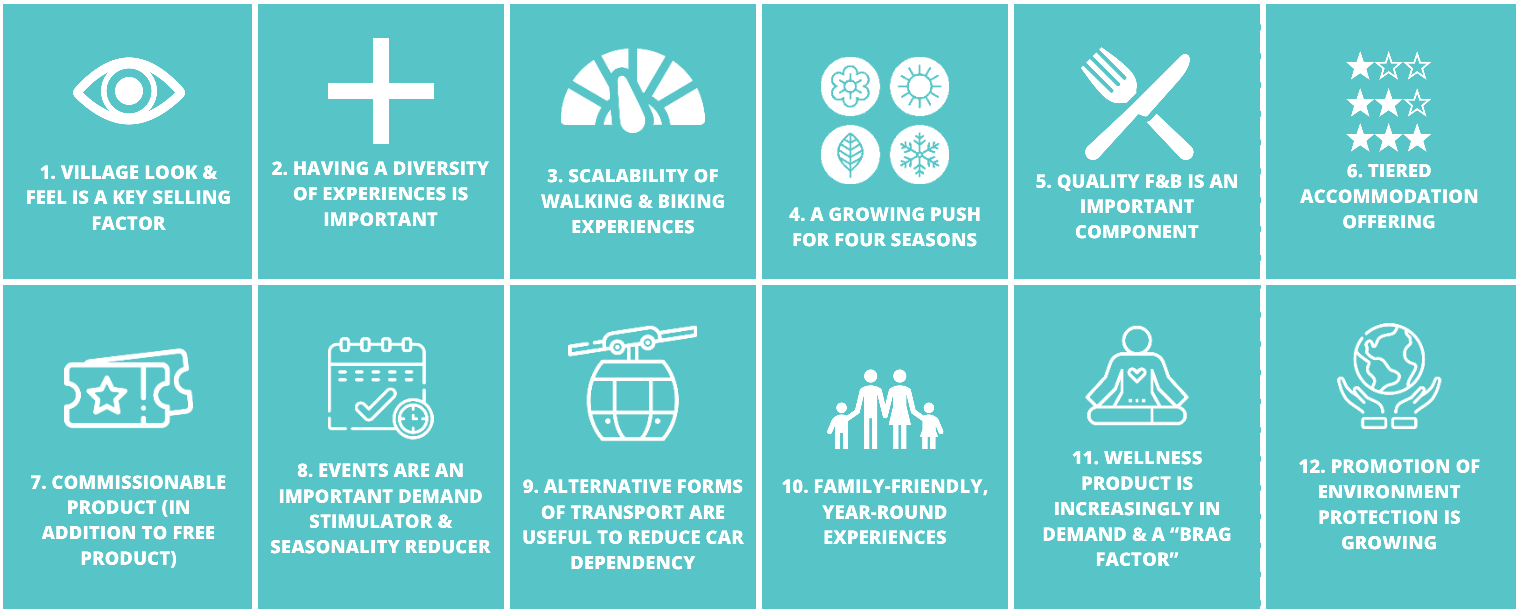
Figure 30: Towns/Villages Assessed as part of the Comparative Benchmarking



[12] We note that Council completed a business case to support the development of this lake based shared trail network more recently.

3.2. Key Findings Applied to the SAP

Figure 31: Comparative Benchmarking Key Findings



Some of the key findings identified through the comparative analysis undertaken include the following. They are also further summarised in Figure 31 above.

1. VILLAGE LOOK & FEEL IS A KEY SELLING FACTOR

The look and feel of the village is an important factor in positioning the destination. Those which feature/rate highly via travel review websites etc. tend to have a unique and appealing look/feel. They feel like mountain/alpine villages and often have uniformity of style and design.

While the natural scenery in the SAP is stunning and looks like an alpine environment, the built environment aesthetics do not resemble this. The natural environment is 5-star, but the built environment is generally 3-star at best.

2. HAVING A DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCES IS IMPORTANT

Each of the other destinations assessed offer a diverse range of experiences/attractions. While they do offer alpine experiences, a multitude of other experiences ranging from nature-based adventure experiences to cultural experiences are on offer. These include trekking, zip lines, mountain biking, art galleries and museums, food-based experiences etc. As a result, have a broader visitor market appeal and less seasonal visitation.

The SAP is currently, for most, primarily positioned as an alpine destination. The challenge is that it is situated within relatively close proximity to other alpine destinations and that this alpine focus results in highly seasonal visitation. To sustainably grow the visitor economy, the SAP needs to diversify its offer, find unique points of difference to differentiate itself from other alpine and nature-based destinations.

3. SCALABILITY OF WALKING & BIKING EXPERIENCES

Most of the villages assessed offer a wide range of walking and biking tracks of varying lengths and difficulties. Trails which are circuit-based, rather than linear, appear to have greater appeal.

Although the SAP does offer a range of walking experiences, many other alpine destinations offer highly attractive bushwalking, alpine trekking and mountain biking trails and supporting facilities. Competition is therefore intense throughout NSW and into the Victorian Alps region.

To generate stronger economic benefit from the visitor economy, the opportunity exists to develop more circuit-based (which tend to be more popular than lineal walks) day walk opportunities to help convert day visitors into overnight visitors.

The potential may also exist to upgrade the signposting of trails with a consistent wayfinding-signage style, potentially akin to ski signage (green for easiest, blue for intermediate and black for hardest) and with more information on travel distances.

To become nationally recognised as a top mountain biking destination, new trails and amenities to be developed within the SAP need to be as good as if not better than existing nationally significant mountain biking hubs such as Derby and Maydena in Tasmania, and international circuits in Rotorua, Otago and Queenstown in New Zealand, by way of example,

4. A GROWING PUSH FOR FOUR SEASON DESTINATIONS

Nearly all of the destinations assessed operate as ski/snow sports hubs in winter and diverse recreation hubs in summer. As a result, they are not as impacted by seasonality as the SAP. Increasingly, ski resorts around the world are looking to further develop their summer product offering to reduce seasonality, appeal to a broader visitor market and because of climate change impacting the length of ski seasons.[13]

Currently, the peak period for visitation in the SAP tends to run from June - August which coincides with snowfall. During this period, accommodation often tends to be full. Outside these months, however, operators struggle to fill rooms and generate low average achieved annual room rates. The lack of sufficient specific summer-based and all-weather experiences make it challenging to encourage stronger visitation outside of the winter period.

5. QUALITY F&B IS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT

Food tourism is one of the world's fastest-growing segments.[14] Rather than being a "nice to have" visitors expect that destinations will offer a high-quality and diverse food offering as part of its product mix. Many of the villages assessed have a broad food and beverage offering through cafes, restaurants and bars, as well as some offering food tours and food and wine-based events. Villages in the USA, Canada and Europe, in particular, often offer fine dining experiences which have strong appeal.

At present, the F&B offering in the SAP is limited. This sentiment has been noted strongly in visitor feedback. If the profile of the SAP is to be raised and a stronger destination hub created, there is a need to expand and enhance the F&B offering.

6. TIERED ACCOMMODATION OFFERING

Each of the destinations assessed offer tiered accommodation product ranging from backpackers to high-quality 5-star properties. There is also a selection of branded properties within many of the destinations.

The quality and range of accommodation on offer in the SAP is noted by many stakeholders as a barrier for growth. There is potential to enhance the accommodation offering so that it can appeal to a far broader market. Currently, the bulk of accommodation within the SAP rates as 3-star or less (using an international comparative star rating system).

But with average annual occupancy levels below 40% for many accommodation operators, there is little to support a market-led approach, without significant support from the government to help de-risk new development projects.

7. COMMISSIONABLE PRODUCT (IN ADDITION TO FREE PRODUCT)

Because each of the villages assessed (aside from the SAP) has a broader product base, there is far more commissionable product available. This includes paid guided walking and mountain biking tours, along with experiences such as zip lines and treetop parks.

As discussed earlier in this report, the SAP lacks commissionable product, particularly summer based. While having free things to do is important, there needs to be a balance to ensure the visitor economy is generating sufficient economic benefit and uplift and offering greater support for local business viability.

This is seen as a major reason why a number of accommodation operators in the SAP who are ski focussed effectively close down once the ski season ends rather than operating through the summer period.

8. EVENTS ARE AN IMPORTANT DEMAND STIMULATOR & SEASONALITY REDUCER

Events are an important mechanism for generating visitation, particularly during non-peak periods. Endurance-style events are common such as ultramarathons and mountain biking events as are cultural and food-themed events. These events are primarily considered major destination events, rather than community events. Destination events are those which attract a large proportion of visitors rather than primarily generating local visitation.

While the SAP has some events, it is not currently recognised as a major event destination hub. Given its strong recreation focus (alpine and non-alpine), the potential exists to build on this and strongly profile it as a major recreation destination events hub in NSW. This also needs to include a mix of events (not just traditional outdoor mountain biking events) and with a far stronger focus on periods outside of the winter peak visitor season.

9. ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF TRANSPORT ARE USEFUL TO REDUCE CAR DEPENDENCY

Many of the destinations assessed have cable car infrastructure and other modes of transport which enhances recreation experiences and enables visitors access to additional terrain during summer months.

Aside from the lift-based infrastructure within the resorts and the ski tube, all other recreation product throughout the SAP needs to be accessed by vehicle. The SAP is a very car-dominated destination and challenges exist to change from this. Traffic congestion, especially in peak periods and during the mornings primarily, is noted by many stakeholders with some advocating for more on snow accommodation to reduce travel dependency, whilst others are wanting to see public transport alternatives introduced to reduce private car usage.

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[13] https://www.outsideonline.com/2038706/summer-new-winter-ski-resorts

[14] https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2019-09/food_tourism_ok.pdf

10. FAMILY-FRIENDLY, YEAR-ROUND EXPERIENCES

Resorts in the USA and Canada, in particular, have a strong focus on offering product which appeals to families. These include experiences such as zip lines, rock climbing, mountain biking training areas, mountain coasters, indoor activity centres, snow play areas and tubing etc.

Aside from its strong family-based alpine offering (the alpine resorts all have strong kids' programs), the SAP is not currently strongly positioned as a family destination. The ability to appeal to a broader market, particularly during the non-winter period, is contingent on developing new and enhancing existing experiences to include more family-friendly options.

11. WELLNESS PRODUCT IS INCREASINGLY IN DEMAND & A "BRAG FACTOR"

Many of the resorts/villages assessed offer health and wellness tourism product. These include, but are not limited to, spas, yoga facilities, hot pools and hot springs, respite facilities etc. Global wellness tourism is rapidly expanding "growing more than twice as fast as general tourism."[15]

There is currently very limited health and wellness product within the SAP. This is a gap noted in regional NSW more broadly as well. The potential exists for the SAP to leverage off this gap and develop product which appeals to this higher spending niche market. Importantly, it has strong synergies with recreation product already on offer in the SAP and its strong nature-based environmental focus.

12. PROMOTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IS GROWING

A trend noted amongst most of the destinations assessed is their promotion of environmental initiatives to protect, preserve and enhance the natural environment. By way of example:

- Vail strongly promotes its "Epic Promise"[16] which is a commitment to zero net emissions by 2030, zero waste to landfill by 2030 and zero operating impact on forests and habitat. Vail promote this on their main resort website homepage and also have a dedicated website centred on the Epic Promise. As Vail owns and manage Perisher it is assumed that the same applies to their Perisher ski resort.
- Aspen also has a strong focus on "The Environmental Foundation" which focuses on projects "that provide environmental educational opportunities, seek to reduce the impacts of climate change, foster responsible stewardship of natural resources, protect mountain ecosystems, or foster environmental advocacy and stewardship through responsible outdoor recreation opportunities".[17]

While the resorts within the SAP do have environmental pledges/promises, these are not always highly visible to consumers. With growing consumer and host community concerns regarding tourism and its environmental impact, the opportunity exists to more strongly promote a holistic SAP pledge to environmental protection and preservation as a positioning strength.

[15] Global Wellness Tourism Economy – November 2018, page iii.
[16] http://www.epicpromise.com/
[17] https://www.aspensnowmass.com/we-are-different/the-environment-foundation

3.3. The Full Findings

The full findings of the comparative benchmarking are included in Table 8.

Table 8: Comparative Benchmarking Full Findings

Village Name, State/Country, Population	Distance from Major Population Centres & Connectivity	Alpine? If so, Average snow depth & season length	Major activities/attractions/ experiences (other than alpine)	Accommodation Offering	Additional Info.
Snowy Mountains SAP, NSW 2,629 residents 	▪ Vehicle and bus services only. ▪ Ski tube runs up to ski resorts but is situated 20 min drive outside of town. ▪ Snowy Mountains Airport located 1-hour drive away from Thredbo	▪ 4 surrounding ski resorts (Perisher, Thredbo, Selwyn and Charlottes Pass). ▪ Average ski season: June – October (~5 months), though this is quite variable depending on conditions. ▪ Uphill lift capacity: Thredbo - 17,371 per hr, Perisher – 53,990 per hr. ▪ Resorts are situated approximately 30-50 min drive from Jindabyne village depending on traffic conditions.	▪ Fishing, hiking and mountain biking are popular activities during summer months. Most of this is self-guided, however. ▪ Thredbo Resort is pushing strongly to develop a summer market, through enhancing walking and mountain biking trails. Thredbo has a mountain-cross track and 25 km of mountain biking trails. ▪ Majority of trekking experiences are located outside of the village of Jindabyne and within KNP.	▪ Booking.com lists 243 accommodation properties in Jindabyne village – the majority of which are holiday units/houses – only 7 are hotels/resorts. ▪ 1 branded property (Rydges) which self-rates as 4 stars and Novotel (Lake Crackenback) which is situated 20 mins outside of Jindabyne.	▪ Extremely seasonal, supported primarily by the 4-month ski season and two main resorts which are situated within Kosciusko National Park. ▪ Jindabyne itself is haphazardly developed, there is no clear theme within the town (you do not get a sense that it is an alpine or ski village) and it lacks the ambience often associated with alpine towns and villages. ▪ Village overnight capacity: Perisher – 4,952 beds, Thredbo – 4, 820 beds
Bright, Victoria 2,406 	▪ 2 airfields in the region and a regional airport 1.5-hour drive away ▪ Train station 1-hour drive away with daily train services between two cities ▪ Daily bus services	▪ 2 surrounding ski resorts (Mount Hotham, Falls Creek)	▪ Fishing, hiking and mountain biking are popular activities during summer months. Most of this is self-guided, however. ▪ Ski resorts are located on the bus route from Bright, offering winter-based attractions ▪ Boutique shopping and dining ▪ Wineries and breweries	▪ Booking.com lists 258 properties in Bright, most of which are holiday homes and apartments. ▪ There are several branded destination holiday parks	▪ Considered a base village to access surrounding alpine areas as well as Mount Buffalo and Alpine National Parks

Village Name, State/Country, Population	Distance from Major Population Centres & Connectivity	Alpine? If so, Average snow depth & season length	Major activities/attractions/ experiences (other than alpine)	Accommodation Offering	Additional Info.
Falls Creek, Victoria 293 residents 	▪ Accessible by vehicle and bus services ▪ 4.5-hour drive from Melbourne	▪ Average ski season: June – October (~5 months), though this is quite variable depending on conditions. ▪ Uphill lift capacity: 20,000 per hr.	▪ Mountain biking, walking & hiking, cycling. ▪ Marketed as Australia's leading Alpine training destinations. ▪ Canopy Challenge Course ▪ 40km gravity mountain biking trails, 10km built for those new to riding.	▪ Booking.com lists 72 properties within the resort precinct, 79% of which are small-scale apartments. There are few larger-scale resorts/hotel properties. ▪ 1 branded property (QT/Rydges).	▪ Situated on Crown land surrounded by the Alpine National Park. ▪ The village is attractive and has an alpine look/feel. ▪ Parking capacity: 2,000 cars. ▪ Village overnight capacity: 5,000 beds.
Mount Hotham, Victoria 161 residents 	▪ Accessible by vehicle and bus services ▪ 4.5-hour drive from Melbourne	▪ Average natural snow depth: 1.50 m. ▪ Average natural snowfall: 3 m. ▪ Uphill lift capacity: 24,485 per hr. ▪ Average ski season: June – October (~5 months), though this is quite variable depending on conditions.	▪ Four-wheel driving. ▪ Alpine trail running ▪ Mountain biking, walking & hiking, cycling	▪ Booking.com lists 97 properties within the resort precinct. The vast majority (88%) are smaller-scale holiday homes and apartments. There are few larger-scale resorts/hotel properties. ▪ No branded properties within the resort precinct.	▪ Situated on Crown land surrounded by the Alpine National Park. ▪ The village is attractive and has an alpine look/feel. ▪ Village overnight capacity: 7,000 beds.
Queenstown, NZ 16k residents 	▪ Queenstown is accessible by car and air. ▪ Queenstown Airport is serviced by jets and has direct flights from Australia.	▪ 4 surrounding ski resorts. ▪ Average natural snowfall: Remarkables – 1.5 m, Coronet Peak – 1.5 m, Cardrona – 2.1 m, Treble Cone – 2.4 m ▪ Average ski season: June – October (~5 months). ▪ The closest ski resort is Coronet Peak (20 min drive).	▪ Major adventure and recreation hub. ▪ Extensive range of paid experiences as well as free. ▪ Paid experiences include (but are not limited to) jet boating, luging, bungee, high ropes and zip-lining. ▪ Nearby Arrowtown and Gibbston Valley provide high-quality F&B experiences and wineries.	▪ Booking.com lists 596 properties, including many branded properties with brands such as Hilton, Sofitel, Rydges etc.	▪ Generates stronger visitation during summer than winter and visitor yield is similar year-round. ▪ Approximately 4.3m visitors (overnight and day trips) to the region – 2.3m of which are overnight visitors. ▪ Large and diverse F&B offering. ▪ The village has an attractive and alpine look and feel. ▪ Constantly encourages new product innovation

Village Name, State/Country, Population	Distance from Major Population Centres & Connectivity	Alpine? If so, Average snow depth & season length	Major activities/attractions/ experiences (other than alpine)	Accommodation Offering	Additional Info.
Wanaka, NZ 8,900 residents 	▪ Wanaka is accessible by car and air (Queenstown Airport). ▪ Queenstown Airport is approximately 1-hour drive. ▪ A new airport is being planned 15 minutes from Wanaka at Tarras and 55 minutes from Queenstown (being developed by Christchurch International Airport on a 750 ha. site already purchased) and with Trans-Tasman capability	▪ Average natural snowfall: as listed for Queenstown. ▪ Average ski season: as listed for Queenstown. ▪ The closest ski resort is Cardrona (17 min drive).	▪ With proximity to Mount Aspiring National Park, Wanaka offers a variety of outdoor experiences such as horse trekking, fishing, guided walks, self-guided walking tracks and mountain biking ▪ Nearby farms and wineries also generate income through nature and food and beverage experiences ▪ The town is a popular destination for families due to the plethora of indoor and outdoor child-friendly experiences ▪ The town borders Lake Wanaka, encouraging boat and water sport activities ▪ There are unique cultural and museum-based experiences such as the Realm Virtual Reality Centre	▪ Booking.com lists 221 properties, many of which are holiday homes and apartments.	▪ Considered a secondary hub for travellers to Queenstown. ▪ Acts as the gateway to the Southern Alps' Mount Aspiring National Park
Ohakune, NZ 4.6k residents 	▪ Accessible by car and rail (the Northern Explorer train service passes through the town). ▪ 4.5-hour drive from Auckland	▪ Average snowfall: 2.7 m ▪ Ohakune is a popular base in winter for skiers using the ski fields of nearby Mount Ruapehu (25-minute drive) ▪ Average ski season: Late June to mid-October	▪ The village is popular in summer for trampers hiking the Tongariro Alpine Crossing. ▪ Tongariro Alpine Crossing (part of one of New Zealand's Great Walks) can be accessed from the town via daily shuttles (45 min ride). ▪ During the summer months, Ohakune is also an outdoor playground. Activities include walking, hiking/bushwalking, mountain biking, canoeing, fishing, horse trekking. ▪ There is also a suite of short walks, half-day full day and multi-day walks available in the area.	▪ Booking.com lists 107 properties for this town. Most are holiday baches. There are 13 properties rated 4 stars or higher. ▪ There is a Top 10 Holiday Park but no other branded properties.	▪ Set within Tongariro National Park ▪ The Ohakune Old Coach Road (which forms part of The Mountains to Sea cycle) is situated in the area. It is considered one of NZ's best walks to do in half a day.

Village Name, State/Country, Population	Distance from Major Population Centres & Connectivity	Alpine? If so, Average snow depth & season length	Major activities/attractions/ experiences (other than alpine)	Accommodation Offering	Additional Info.
Grindelwald, Switzerland 3,801 residents 	▪ Serviced by trains and cars ▪ There is also a mountain railway which climbs to the Jungfraujoch "Top of Europe" train station at an altitude of 3,454m.	▪ An average snowfall of 2.4 m ▪ Average season length: mid-November to mid-April	▪ Skiing in winter and hiking in summer. ▪ The village is a base for mountain-climbing ascents up the iconic north face of Eiger Mountain. Gletscherschlucht, a glacial gorge. ▪ An extensive network of walking and hiking trails in the Grindelwald area includes the gentle, high-altitude route from Männlichen to Kleine Scheidegg, celebrated for its vistas of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau peaks. ▪ The village is part of the famous Bear Trek, an 8-day trek. ▪ Hiking season is June - September	▪ Booking.com lists 304 accommodation properties, 43 of which are hotels. There are 3 branded properties in the village.	▪ Grindelwald is also known for its nightlife. ▪ Highly attractive alpine village. The Jungfrau Marathon is a tough mountain race which passes Grindelwald on the way up toward famous peaks. ▪ Grindelwald features paths with interpretive signage, waterfalls and striated limestone walls.
Wengen, Switzerland 1.3k residents 	▪ Can only be accessed by train, the village is car-free ▪ Bern Airport is just under a 1-hour drive	▪ 1-hour drive to the nearest ski resort of Grindelwald ▪ Average snowfall: same as Grindelwald	▪ A hiking hub in summer with a variety of trails accessed from the town and ski lift infrastructure. ▪ Known for its challenging rock-climbing experiences	▪ Booking.com lists 176 properties, 10 of which are 5-star rated. ▪ There is a diverse accommodation offering including hotels, apartments, resorts, chalets etc.	▪ Village design is consistent with buildings constructed out of timber which provides a postcard look ▪ Residential population grows to 5k in summer and 10k in winter ▪ Thriving F&B scene.
Big Bear Lake, California, USA 5k residents 	▪ Access is via bus or car ▪ The closest airport is LAX (2 hr and 15 min drive)	▪ An average snowfall of 2.01m ▪ Season: late November to mid-April	▪ Known as a hub for alpine-based recreation, including skiing in winter (at one of the 2 resorts), trekking, mountain biking and boating in summer. ▪ Zipline, Segway and tree climbing experience operates in summer ▪ Luge attraction: The Alpine Slide ▪ Big Bear Discovery Centre offers a one-stop-shop for organising tours, passes, getting permits etc. ▪ 95-plus kilometres of cross-country trails for trekking and biking accessed via the Scenic Sky Chair.	▪ Booking.com lists over 1,000 properties for this village. However, only 22 are noted as hotels/motels. The remainder are holiday homes/apartments.	▪ Many events operate throughout the year. ▪ Thriving F&B scene. ▪ Close to an urban centre (L.A.), so many trips are day trips rather than overnight stays

Village Name, State/Country, Population	Distance from Major Population Centres & Connectivity	Alpine? If so, Average snow depth & season length	Major activities/attractions/ experiences (other than alpine)	Accommodation Offering	Additional Info.
Telluride, Colorado, USA 2.4k residents 	▪ Telluride has its own regional airport, but this is often closed due to weather conditions. ▪ Access is via car and bus. ▪ Within the town itself, there is free public transport and access to the gondola is also free year-round. ▪ Denver airport is the closest airport (6.5-hours' drive)	▪ Average snowfall: 5.2 m ▪ Average season length: late November to mid-March	▪ The town is widely recognised as an all-season resort, offering skiing in winter and in summer is an outdoor recreation hot spot, with tourists visiting to enjoy mountain biking, guided and unguided hiking, river rafting, sightseeing and more. ▪ The town has an extensive festival schedule during the summer, including several endurance events. Telluride features over 30 hiking trails ranging in difficulty level. Some of the more popular routes include Ajax Peak, Bear Creek Falls, Hope Lake, and Bridal Veil Falls. ▪ Hiking season begins in May and lasts until early October, with waterfalls gushing in June and wildflowers at their peak in early July. The trails range from quick and easy runs to multi-day hiking trips that reach an elevation of 14,000 feet. Nearly all the trails feature waterfalls, wildflowers, and high alpine lakes.	▪ Booking.com lists 465 properties, 3 of which are 5-star properties. There are 12 hotel properties, 4 chalets and 3 lodges. The remainders are apartments and holiday homes.	▪ The town is a former silver mining camp. ▪ The town is alpine themed and has an attractive look and feel. ▪ Thriving F&B scene.
Stowe, Vermont, USA 4.3k residents 	▪ Train station situated 15 mins from Stowe	▪ ½ hour drive to the nearest ski resort being Stowe Mountain Resort (owned by Vail) and near Mount Mansfield State Forest average snowfall: 4.7 m	▪ Referred to as a four-season destination. ▪ There are several signature events held in each season, along with smaller events. ▪ Many galleries and museums are scattered throughout the town. ▪ 50 miles of mountain biking tracks, Stowe is often referred to as "mountain biking mecca". ▪ Hiking is one of the most popular summer activities. ▪ There are a variety of guided hikes.	▪ Booking.com lists 139 properties, 7 of which are 4-star rated. ▪ There are 2 branded properties.	▪ In 2016, the town centre was redeveloped (valued at US$90m and part of a larger US$500m redevelopment of the resort).

Village Name, State/Country, Population	Distance from Major Population Centres & Connectivity	Alpine? If so, Average snow depth & season length	Major activities/attractions/ experiences (other than alpine)	Accommodation Offering	Additional Info.
Sils Maria, Switzerland ~700 residents 	▪ The Furtschellas cable car begins near the village and leads to many ski runs and, in summer, to trails above the tree line. ▪ Car-free except for residents of the valley	▪ 20 mins to the nearest ski resort town of St. Mortiz ▪ Average snowfall: same as St. Moritz: 3.3m	▪ Besides the tremendous natural experience, there are also many cultural experiences to undertake. ▪ Variety of different walking trails of varying difficulties – 7 can be accessed from within the village. Many others via the gondola.	▪ Booking.com lists 35 accommodation properties, 11 of which are 4-star or higher. ▪ There are two branded properties in the village.	▪ Village design and architecture is highly attractive. ▪ Any new development is in line with existing aesthetics/look and feel. ▪ Considered the gateway to one of the most impressive landscapes in Switzerland, The Upper Engadine. ▪ The largely traffic-free upper valley with its rich flora is the ideal starting point for exploring the mountains.
Merano, Italy ~41k residents 	▪ Serviced by a train and bus network. ▪ Vehicles are permitted.	▪ ½ hour drive to the nearest ski resort of Merano 2000 ▪ Average snowfall: same as Merano 200 Ski Resort: 1.9 m	▪ Trauttmansdorff Castle encompasses Touriseum, an interactive museum, with exhibits about Alpine tourism. ▪ Known for its thermal baths/spas and art nouveau buildings. ▪ Merano 2000 resort offers many trekking and mountain huts which offer different F&B experiences.	▪ Booking.com lists 213 accommodation properties, 84 of which are hotels. There are 4 5-star properties which appear to align with high-quality, international standards.	▪ Village design and architecture is highly attractive. ▪ Any new development is in line with existing aesthetics/look and feel.
SilverStar, Canada 40,116 (Vernon) 	▪ Accessible by car ▪ Kelowna International Airport (approximately 1 hour's drive) ▪ The closest semi-urban hub is Vernon (22 km away)	▪ Season: Late November – mid-April ▪ Average snowfall: 4 m ▪ Largest Nordic cross-country skiing network in Canada ▪ Aerial training site ▪ Dual Moguls Racecourse ▪ Ski-in ski-out pedestrian village	▪ Major mountain biking and hiking focus during summer – more than 50km of downhill bike trails and 30km of XC trail. ▪ Day spa on mountain ▪ Indoor rock climbing	▪ Booking.com lists 66 properties, 28 of which are 4-star or higher ▪ There are no branded properties in the village ▪ Accommodation consists mostly of apartments and holiday homes	▪ Strict development controls including colour coding of all buildings ▪ Major ski destination for Australians ▪ All-inclusive seasons pass offers a range of activities from downhill and cross-country skiing to skating, fat biking and snowshoeing ▪ 5 highly rated restaurants from fine dining to tapas

Village Name, State/Country, Population	Distance from Major Population Centres & Connectivity	Alpine? If so, Average snow depth & season length	Major activities/attractions/ experiences (other than alpine)	Accommodation Offering	Additional Info.
Sunshine Village, Canada 7,847 (Banff) 	▪ Base located 15 km from the town of Banff ▪ Calgary International Airport (approximately 1.5 hrs drive) ▪ Accessible by car	▪ Season: Early November – late May ▪ Average snowfall: 7 m ▪ Since it straddles the Continental Divide, Sunshine receives more snow than neighbouring ski resorts. ▪ Hosts many alpine ski and snowboard events	▪ Slush Cup event in late May to celebrate the end of season ▪ Hosts Marjoe Gortner Celebrity Sports Invitational for charity ▪ Banff hot springs with a historic spa and bathhouse ▪ Hiking trails available during the summer. ▪ Guided photography and nature walks during the summer.	▪ Only one ski-in/ski-out lodge (84-room hotel) ▪ Booking.com lists 47 properties in Banff, 9 of which are 4-star or higher ▪ 1 branded luxury property	▪ Situated within Banff National Park in the Canadian Rockies ▪ Limited parking has been a source of friction between visitors and Parks Canada ▪ The majority of food and nightlife is located off the mountain in Banff
Sun Peaks, Canada 616 	▪ Kamloops Airport (approximately 45 minutes' drive) but many visitors prefer to fly into Kelowna (2.5-hour drive) ▪ The closest urban centre is Vancouver (4.5-hour drive) ▪ Accessible by car and airport shuttle service	▪ Season: Late November – mid-April ▪ Ski-in/ski-out village ▪ Second largest ski area In Canada (behind Whistler) ▪ Average snowfall: 4 m	▪ Day spa ▪ An extensive mountain bike park ▪ Golf course is at the highest elevation in British Columbia ▪ Canoe and kayaking in McGillivray Lake ▪ Fly fishing ▪ Geocaching ▪ Hiking tours, horse-drawn tours and horseback trail rides ▪ Mountain cross carts ▪ Mining experience	▪ Booking.com lists 95 properties, 91 of which are 4-star or higher ▪ There are no branded properties	▪ Family-friendly with kid-focused activities and childminding and ski school facilities ▪ European-style village ▪ Limited nightlife as it has a family-friendly focus
Big White, Canada 300 	▪ Kelowna airport (1-hour drive) ▪ Accessible by car and airport shuttle service ▪ The closest semi-urban centre is Vernon ▪ The closest major urban centre is Kelowna (1 hours' drive)	▪ Average snowfall: 6 m ▪ Ski-in/ski-out village ▪ Season: late November – mid-April	▪ Day spa ▪ Dynamic nightlife ▪ The Toonie Experience – a mountain bike race ▪ Craft & Country Beer and Mountain Festival ▪ Ciderfest ▪ Huckleberry Pie Festival ▪ Swimming in Rhonda Lake ▪ Self-guided walks ▪ GEO Hiking ▪ Mudd, Sweat and Tears obstacle course event	▪ Booking.com lists 46 properties, 5 of which are 4-star or higher ▪ There are no branded properties ▪ Accommodation properties mostly made up of mid-range apartments ▪ Accommodation is located partway up the ski area	▪ Car-free village ▪ Award-winning Kid's Centre ▪ The village is considered a small resort with only a handful of shops but that is part of its charm ▪ Several on-mountain eateries ▪ Casual North American style dining as well as fine dining options

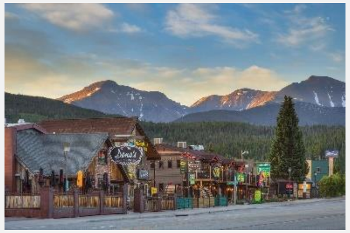
Village Name, State/Country, Population	Distance from Major Population Centres & Connectivity	Alpine? If so, Average snow depth & season length	Major activities/attractions/ experiences (other than alpine)	Accommodation Offering	Additional Info.
Winter Park, Colorado 1,051 residents 	▪ Closest major resort to Denver International Airport (1.5 hours' drive) ▪ Winter Park town is only 1 mile from the resort and contains the majority of dining and retail experiences ▪ Accessible by car and airport shuttle service	▪ Average snowfall: 6.5 m ▪ Ski-in/ski-out village ▪ Season: mid-November – early May ▪ Renowned location for Nordic cross-country skiing in the U.S. ▪ Fat Biking, ice skating and snowshoe tours are just some of the many winter-based attractions available	▪ Host events to celebrate common festivals such as Mardi Gras and St. Patrick's Day ▪ Host mountaintop concerts ▪ Putting course ▪ Self-guided walks and guided hikes ▪ Scenic gondola tours ▪ Alpine Slide luging experience ▪ Hosts several mountain bike competitions ▪ Aerial adventure park, guided rock climbing (indoor and outdoor) and ropes course ▪ Zipline experiences ▪ Summer tubing attraction ▪ Day Spa	▪ Booking.com lists 210 properties, 51 of which are 4-star or higher ▪ There are 2 branded properties ▪ Accommodation properties mostly made up of apartments ▪ Some village lodgings are ski-in/ski-out	▪ Voted number 1 ski resort in North America by USA Today (2018) ▪ Prides itself on containing local restaurants rather than chain restaurants

Image Credit: Destination NSW (The Diggings, Kosciuszko National Park)

PART 4: BARRIERS TO TOURISM GROWTH

Identification of barriers to growth which are impacting on tourism growth and investment in the SAP.

4.1. The Barriers Linked to Destination Management Components

For the SAP (and the Snowy Mountains region more broadly) to develop and grow as a sustainable and year-round visitor destination, a number of challenges and barriers need to be adequately addressed. Many of these barriers were identified during the literature review, consultation and analysis undertaken for this Tourism Development Study.

Importantly, they have not been included as a criticism – many other destinations have the same challenges – however, to mitigate or resolve these, first requires an acknowledgment of them.

This section is deliberately focused on the barriers; it does not identify opportunities to mitigate these. Section 5.2 of this Tourism Development Study outlines opportunities which may mitigate or resolve these barriers.

The barriers – which are alphabetically ordered - have been aligned with the destination management components of product development; infrastructure; governance; sustainability; and marketing & promotion. Table 9 provides a summary of the barriers and their relationship to the destination management components. This is followed by an explanation of each barrier.

Table 9: Barriers to Growth as a Destination Linked to Destination Management Components

Barrier	PRODUCT & EXPERIENCES	INFRA-STRUCTURE	GOVERNANCE	SUSTAINABILITY	MARKETING & PROMOTION
A 5-star natural environment, 3-star built environment	●	●	●	●	●
A lack of higher-quality accommodation properties	●	●			
A lack of room capacity in peak visitor periods	●	●			
Ageing infrastructure		●			
Climate change	●			●	
Competition from some Victorian ski fields	●				
Constraints on summer-based activity development	●			●	●
Differing lease arrangements	●	●			
Digital literacy of operators					●
Expensive lift tickets & hire	●	●		●	
Extremely high seasonality	●	●			●
Gaining agreement on acceptable levels of visitor economic growth from all stakeholders				●	
Lack of interpretive signage	●				●
Limited all-weather, paid visitor experiences	●			●	●
Limited commissionable tourism experiences	●				●
Limited evening activities to grow overnight visitation	●				●
Limited number of family-friendly visitor experiences	●				●
Limited public transport & connectivity		●			
Limited SP3 tourism zoning to support tourism development	●	●			
Limited tourism investment flows	●	●			
Overtourism concerns from community/stakeholders				●	●
P2P accommodation challenges	●			●	
Shortage of affordable worker accommodation		●			
The cost of trail maintenance and a desire for more trails		●			
The need to think larger than the status quo	●	●			

4.2. The Barriers Explained

4.2.1. A 5-star natural environment, 3-star built environment

Although the SAP's natural environment is a strong drawcard with appeal to visitor markets, the quality of the built environment (including accommodation, town/streetscaping, infrastructure etc. and often the general look and feel of urban areas and town centres) does not generally match.

This is particularly the case for alpine villages which face strong competition with many highly attractive and historic alpine villages prevalent throughout Europe and North America (see Figure 32). These villages tend to have their own unique look and feel which is ubiquitous in all buildings constructed throughout the village. There is a level of consumer expectation that a similar, high-quality, built experience should be offered within the Snowy Mountains to compensate for the lack of heritage and historic structures.

Figure 32: Higher-quality alpine villages[18]

Queenstown, in New Zealand, has a design code which encourages the use of the local schist rock in ground floor cladding of commercial buildings and a more consistent alpine village aesthetic look and feel.

Jindabyne's built environment, including residential, commercial, infrastructure and public spaces are not considered inviting or reflective of an alpine destination. The ability for pedestrians and cyclists to safely and intuitively perambulate around Jindabyne is constrained by lack of connectivity.

The location of Kosciuszko Road impacts on connectivity and vistas, cutting off much of Jindabyne village from direct access to the Lake.

4.2.2. A lack of room capacity in peak visitor periods

One of the consequences of strong tourism seasonality that the Snowy region faces is a lack of accommodation properties that can cater to increased demand during peak visitor periods while having ample spare capacity and very low occupancy rates during non-peak periods. This impacts on:

- the ability to encourage reinvestment into existing properties and to entice new investment;
- the ability to encourage a longer length of stay and to support activity such as functions and conferences etc;
- the ability to introduce medium to larger-scale events, particularly those during winter periods; and
- the room rates being charged by operators (with extremely high rates charged in peak season and low rates during out of peak season).

4.2.3. A lack of higher-quality accommodation properties

Although some properties throughout the SAP self-rate as 4-5-star properties, a top-line audit, along with stakeholder feedback and site visits, indicates that a more realistic rating for many of these properties is within the 3-star quality bracket. This is particularly the case when these properties are compared with what is offered in other alpine destinations globally and which many Australians travel to each year.

This disparity in rating is particularly challenging in the peak season when guests are paying very high average room rates but the quality on offer does not always match the rates charged.

The strong seasonality which the region faces impacts on the ability and desire for existing accommodation operators to reinvest in their properties. And the low average annual occupancy rates coupled with low average annual achieved revenue per room, act as a disincentive for new development to occur.

The majority of accommodation stock comprises smaller-scale B&Bs/holiday homes/farm stays/cottages and motels, equating to

[18] Hallstatt, Ausztria; Cortina D'Ampezzo, Italy; Zermatt Swtizerland

approximately 70% of accommodation properties in the region. During peak periods, such as during major events or winter school holiday periods, there is often a lack of larger accommodation properties that can cater to demand. This impacts on the ability to convert day trippers to overnight visitors, to encourage a longer length of stay and to support the higher-yielding conference and events niche market.

4.2.4. Ageing infrastructure

The SAP currently has a number of infrastructure challenges, particularly within the alpine resort areas. These include issues associated with ageing water and sewerage infrastructure, along with parking infrastructure. These challenges are particularly evident during peak visitation periods.

The need to upgrade ageing infrastructure to better support sustainability requirements exists currently in a variety of alpine resorts. The cost of delivering this is noted as a current challenge to both resort owners and government agencies overseeing the infrastructure.

4.2.5. Climate change

Issues associated with climate change in the region and their impact on tourism activity are already well documented and need to be carefully considered. A report completed by the NSW Government notes that "climate change is likely to impact the alpine areas more than any other region in NSW"[19].

Climate change needs to not only be considered based on the impacts it will have on the snow season (diminished snow levels and reduced ability to make snow[20]), but also bushfire impacts during summer and their impact on summer-based activities.

As indicated in Figure 33 on the following page, almost all of KNP is classified as Category 1 Bush Fire Prone Land which is the most hazardous vegetation category.

Information provided by DPIE on climate change factors for the Snowies region has highlighted challenges relating to:

- higher ground temperatures challenging the ability to make snow;
- less precipitation over winter and spring;
- higher rainfall over summer periods; and
- a reduced area of natural snow coverage particularly post-2041.

A continuing focus on the winter peak season as the primary driver for the visitor economy for the region may, therefore, not be sustainable into the future.

It is important to note that the alpine resorts within KNP consider that technology improvements to snowmaking will enable winter activities to remain operational despite climate change impacts. The introduction of snow factories and future snowmaking technology at higher temperatures are thought to be sufficient to address potential climate change risks. There is therefore a divergence of opinion on whether climate change impacts can be mitigated successfully.

4.2.6. Competing with Victorian ski fields

With a limited number of alpine/ski destinations in Australia, the cluster of ski resorts within the Australian Alps face strong competition amongst each other noting the capacity and size of Mount Buller. This is particularly the case for Thredbo which is the only resort of the "big 4" Australian resorts not owned by Vail Resorts.

The season length and the resorts all being within a 100km radius (as the crow flies) of one another, only further compounds this competition and strengthens the need for differentiation to foster a marketing point of difference and improved competitive advantage. Victorian ski fields have the added advantage of being closer to Melbourne, than the Snowies ski fields for Sydney.

4.2.7. Constraints on summer-based activity development

Of the Australian alpine resorts, Thredbo, Mount Buller and Falls Creek appear to have the strongest summer tourism product, with extensive mountain biking, hiking and trail running product. Thredbo has been operating in summer for 40 years, has experienced 30% annual growth in mountain biking, and hosts the biggest mountain biking event in the Southern Hemisphere.[21]

To most visitors, it may appear that Perisher has underinvested in summer infrastructure and experiences, however, Perisher (and Charlotte's Pass) are severely constrained in what they can develop due to the need to protect threatened species that are more prevalent in the resort precincts.

The ability, therefore, to develop year-round alpine experiences within KNP other than at Thredbo, is noted as challenging. It is recognised (not just by NPWS) that development in summer in Perisher and Charlotte Pass would be challenging for a number of reasons, including impacts to threatened species. The Biodiversity Conservation Act (2016), which lists almost all of Perisher and CPV (but not Thredbo) as high-value habitat (hence automatically invoking the Biodiversity Offset Scheme) is not under NPWS jurisdiction. NPWS has an obligation, however, to enforce it on the NPWS estate.

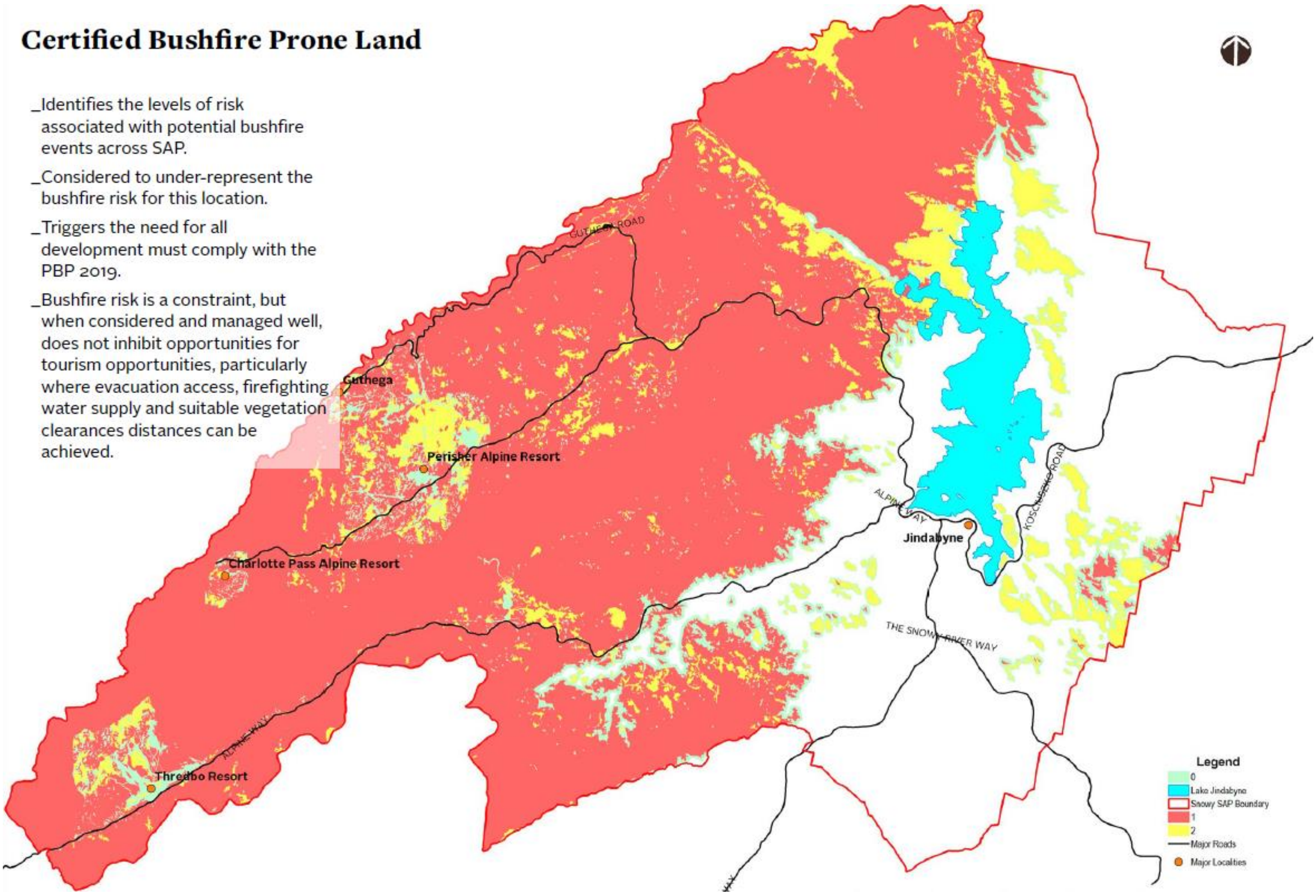
[19] Climate Change Impacts in the NSW Alpine Region, NSW Government, 23/7/2020, page 3.
[20] Due to decreased precipitation and higher temperatures

[21] Snowy Mountains Special Activity Precinct Structure Plan: Draft Context, Issues and Opportunities Analysis, Jensen Plus.

4.2.8. Bushfire Prone Area

As indicated in the map below, a significant percentage of the SAP area is designated as bush fire prone which creates challenges for the development of sites and the limited access roads out of the SAP region in case of bush fires occurring.

Figure 33: Bush fire prone land



4.2.9. Digital literacy of operators

Some of the region's operators have a limited understanding of digital media and related digital literacy. This includes mechanisms to apply social media tools to better profile product and experiences to a wider audience. This was especially evident when completing the product audit for this Tourism Development Study, with many operators not being listed on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) or other major destination sites and OTAs.

In tandem with this, it is important to recognise that parts of the region have limited internet connectivity and some parts are still isolated. Digital literacy will, therefore, depend on the ability of the sector to access the internet and digital services on a timely and cost-effective basis.

4.2.10. Expensive lift tickets & hire prices

Australian ski resorts have often faced claims of being overpriced when compared with the cost of skiing at resorts overseas[22], particularly when compared to resorts overseas with far more extensive ski runs and facilities.

Table 10 illustrates comparative alpine ski resorts with ticket and hireage process adjusted to Australian dollars as of 1st August 2020. The results reflect the higher cost of lift passes and ski hireage when compared to many top global alpine ski resorts and including destinations in New Zealand, Japan, Canada, USA and Europe.

[22] https://www.hotel.com.au/blog/is-skiing-in-australia-worth-it#:~:text=Skiing%20is%20free%20at%20ski,resorts%20and%20%2466%20in%20Niseko.

Table 10: Lift ticket price comparison (adjusted to AUD)[23]

Resort	1 Day Adult Ticket (Adjusted to AUD)	3 Day Adult Ticket (Adjusted to AUD)	1 Day Adult Ski Hire (Adjusted to AUD)
Aspen	AU$249	AU$479	AU$93
Thredbo	**AU$159**	**AU$477**	**AU$135**
Vail	AU$222	AU$458	AU$93
Beaver Creek	AU$152	AU$458	AU$93
Park City	AU$152	AU$458	AU$78
Whistler	AU$145	AU$458	AU$53
Perisher	**AU$152**	**AU$433**	**AU$100**
Mount Hotham	AU$129	AU$382	AU$68
Falls Creek	AU$142	AU$376	AU$70
Charlotte Pass	**AU$125**	**AU$369**	**AU$101**
SilverStar	AU$111	AU$310	AU$60
Zermatt	AU$120	AU$291	AU$59
Niseko	AU$106	AU$285	AU$77
Lech	AU$97	AU$282	AU$62
Cardrona	AU$121	AU$278	AU$47
Remarkables	AU$108	AU$273	AU$47
Coronet Peak	AU$108	AU$273	AU$47
Cortina	AU$95	AU$254	AU$37
Revelstoke	AU$135	AU$235	AU$49

4.2.11. Extremely High seasonality

Despite a determined and prolonged focus on growing shoulder and off-season demand, the SAP and surrounding Snowies region has achieved little seasonality spread and is still impacted by seasonality to the same extent in 2019 as it was in 2013 (see Figure 69). It is noted as the "most seasonal tourism region in Australia".[24] With over 50% of visitation occurring during the 3-month winter peak period, the region suffers from trying to manage a significant inflow of visitors during the peak period and with minimal economic activity in many other months of the year.

The net effect of this ongoing seasonality issue is the impact this has on commercial operators generally, and with limited accommodation occupancy levels and achieved room yield out of the peak season and attraction utilisation which impacts business profitability. The seasonality issue also impacts the ability of regions to attract new investment into the visitor economy both to upgrade existing product and to support investment into new tourism ventures.

This also has a flow-on effect into other industry sectors who provide the goods and services to support the visitor economy which is heavily reliant on a strong winter season to carry them through the rest of the year.

Many visitors come at times which correlate to when they can often take time off work (school holidays etc.). The weather conditions (especially cooler and wetter locations) also dictate when peak periods are.

Seasonality is a major financial challenge for many tourism businesses in the region:

- many of these businesses struggle to generate adequate financial returns in quieter periods which leads to the need for other revenue streams to be found as these businesses cannot always rely on tourism to carry them through lower seasonal periods on an annual basis;
- there are challenges, at times, in engaging staff year-round, and the associated issue of staff finding other employment in the low season with evidence of staff leaving the region to find seasonal work elsewhere;
- some tourism businesses opt to operate on a seasonal basis only, or shutting down for quieter periods of the year rather than operating at a loss which impacts on the region's product offering and overall marketability; and
- a lack of revenue able to be generated in the shoulder and low season periods impacts on lack of spend through the local/regional economy and, at times, makes it challenging for tourism businesses to reinvest as well as encouraging new investment and development to occur.

4.2.12. Gaining agreement on acceptable levels of visitor economy growth

There are divergent views on what an acceptable level of visitor economy growth is for the Snowies. While there is a strong desire to generate more jobs and greater economic benefit and uplift for the region (which is one of the primary purposes of the SAP), there is also a desire to determine and implement carrying capacity levels to ensure the community's social licence for tourism is not retracted and environmental sustainability principles are applied, and the environment remains protected and of high quality.

A lack of current alignment amongst key stakeholders on what is an acceptable level of economic uplift is an issue which needs to be resolved.

4.2.13. International Alpine Destination Competition

From a domestic market perspective, Australian-based resorts are also competing with New Zealand resorts, particularly those in Queenstown and Wanaka which are heavily frequented by Australian skiers and snowboarders. With direct international flights into

[23] Prices downloaded 30/07/20

[24] Snowy Mountains Special Activity Precinct Structure Plan: Draft Context, Issues and Opportunities Analysis, Jensen Plus, page 6.

Queenstown from Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne, travelling to Queenstown is often quicker for Australian's based in major capital cities than driving or flying to Australian resorts.

Queenstown is a globally renowned destination, having strong brand cachet and a sophisticated range of visitor attractions, experiences, and a wide range of accommodation options. Of the 1.3m overnight international visitors to Queenstown in 2019, almost 30% (367k) were Australians.[25] It continues to grow and develop new product and facilities. Queenstown also benefits strongly from being a year-round destination, with summer-based visitation being a stronger market now than winter visitation.

Queenstown-based resorts also offer cheaper lift tickets. By way of example, a 3-day adult lift pass at Thredbo is AU$477, compared with AU$273 at the Remarkables in Queenstown.

There are over 110k Australians who also ski overseas annually in January, in Japanese ski resorts in Canada and the USA. In-fact Australians are the largest group of international owners of alpine based apartments in Japan.

Pre COVID-19, Australians had a very strong propensity to travel internationally and often to undertaken activities such as skiing and snowboarding, especially in NZ, Japan, Canada and the USA and to a lesser extent Europe. It is estimated that in January-February 2019 approximately 110k Australians travelled overseas to ski/snowboard. This excludes the significant numbers of Australians who separately travel to NZ in June – September to also ski.

Australians will continue to access international ski destinations when international travel is possible, which will be strong competitors to the Snowy region into the future. Having quality competitive product and facilities is therefore critical for the SAPs ongoing competitiveness.

4.2.14. Lack of interpretive signage

There is currently a lack of interpretive signage which could/should profile Aboriginal culture and heritage along with the distinct colonial period history and the more recent Snowy Hydro development phase. The potential exists to introduce interpretive signage which helps share Aboriginal stories with locals and visitors at sites of significance and on trails in KNP. Raising awareness of the cultural and heritage history of the region is important and shouldn't just be considered within a museum-style facility or context.

More broadly, the potential exists to develop an interpretive signage strategy which focuses on enhanced (and consistently designed) signage to assist visitors and locals to better understand the significance of certain sites from a cultural, historical or environmental perspective.

Ensuring consistent signage is provided can be challenging, particularly because there are a variety of agencies often involved, depending on the land/road where signage sits. There is benefit in developing a consistent destination signage approach for the entire region, regardless of who the landholder is.

4.2.15. Limited all-weather, paid visitor experiences

The region has a variable climate ranging from winter-based snow and related harsh outdoor conditions through to temperate periods and often high temperatures in summer periods. There is often an incorrect assumption that most visitors will only want outdoor visitor attractions and experiences. Visitors more often tend to prefer a mix of both natural outdoor attractions and experiences and all-weather indoor attractions which enable them to visit facilities in the middle of winter and the peak of summer when outdoor temperatures and climatic conditions may not always be so agreeable.

There is a distinct lack of all-weather visitor attractions which can be enjoyed year-round. The potential exists to introduce additional all-weather paid visitor experiences within the SAP, which will not only attract a wide range of visitor markets but will help activate higher daily visitor spend and stronger economic benefits.

Without more all-weather attractions and experiences, the sustainability of the region's visitor economy will continue to be challenged, with high seasonality impacting on visitor demand. The proposed Snowy Heritage Centre is a facility to offer an all year round and all-weather visitor attraction.

4.2.16. Limited commissionable tourism experiences

The SAP struggles to offer sufficient new commissionable tourism product (attractions, experiences, accommodation etc.) to assist in encouraging:

- stronger year-round visitation;
- greater levels of visitor spend, particularly in the non-winter period; and
- greater economic uplift from the visitor economy.

Although interacting with the landscape will likely always be the primary motivation to visit, the need to refresh mature product and develop new commissionable product is essential. This new product development must be differentiated from existing visitor offerings. It is the effective marketing of great visitor experiences and attractions that will be attractive additions to itineraries and help extend visitor length of stay within the region.

Overall, the SAP offers many visitor experiences for free outside of the winter period, such as walking trails, lake-based recreational experiences, cycleways etc. There is currently insufficient

[25] New Zealand International Visitor Survey

commissionable tourism product in the region, to help stimulate stronger economic outputs for the visitor economy and to encourage stronger interest from tour wholesalers, inbound operators, travel agents and other intermediaries who are needed to actively help promote a destination, if there is a commission to be had. Although offering a number of free experiences is important, particularly for the local community, without more commissionable and diverse commercial tourism experiences including accommodation and attractions, the ability to grow the visitor economy and associated benefits are going to be significantly constrained.

Additionally, greater consideration is required to ensure that before new free experiences such as cycleways and walking trails are created by public funders (local, state and federal government), opportunities for offering commissionable products to leverage off these (pop up cafes, transit transport services, glamping and lodges etc) are developed or at least assessed on a parallel basis. Too often free experiences are created without leveraging paid product, which can further improve the overall free experience which has been invested in.

4.2.17. Limited evening activities to grow overnight visitation

There are insufficient evening experiences to encourage overnight visitation and to strengthen the opportunities for more recreational activity to better meet the needs of locals. To assist in growing the number of overnight visitors to the region and to further encourage locals to visit more parts of the region, the need exists to expand evening activities including the food and beverage offering and encouraging more overnight visitor experiences.

4.2.18. Limited number of family-friendly visitor experiences

While the SAP has a range of natural, outdoor-based recreational experiences, these are not always appealing to the family market particularly with children under 14 years of age. There is a need to investigate the introduction of experiences for younger children and families as one cannot always rely on snow sports, walking tracks and cycle trails as a sufficient motivator for all markets. And stakeholder feedback indicates a large market of visitors keen to have snow play areas designated for use, along with facilities such as tubing etc which can be undertaken all year round.

4.2.19. Limited public transport & connectivity

The SAP is a car-dominated destination with frequent and ongoing traffic bottlenecks, pedestrian safety issues and car parking congestion at peak periods. While visitors can access some of the resorts via the ski tube (which is noted as a good asset but is allegedly expensive to operate), this requires visitors driving to Bullocks Flat, situated on a 20-minute drive from Jindabyne if traffic is light.

The collective view of alpine resorts is that the typical visitor is wanting to pack the car up in primarily Sydney, put the kids in the back, and then drive door to door to where they are staying. In winter they come with ski gear and related equipment and if staying in a lodge or apartment will often bring food and beverage, so they are heavily laden. In summer it is very similar except snow gear is replaced with mountain bikes and other equipment.

Getting visitors to stop and leave a private car in say Jindabyne, to then transfer all equipment and family members to public transport to then access the alpine resorts in winter or summer, is not seen as sensible or viable.

To introduce public transport options (hydrogen or electric buses, a high-speed gondola system or a new form of alpine rail system) are all seen as capital intensive and unlikely to generate sufficient private sector investment unless all visitor private vehicle access[26] to alpine resorts within KNP was reduced to help incentivise public transport. We understand that options for improving connectivity and weighing up the viability of introducing public transport options are still being investigated.

Improved air access either into Cooma and/or into an upgraded Jindabyne airfield, may support the viability and demand for a number of public transport options, especially shuttle bus services which could take people from airports to ski resorts or Jindabyne so door to door services. This system runs well overseas.

Despite these challenges, traffic congestion during peak times of the day within winter is high already and with a desire of the alpine resorts for more car parking capacity on-site, the traffic congestion problem may not be easily resolved.

4.2.20. Limited SP3 zones

The SP3 Tourist Zone is a special purpose zone which aims to "provide for a variety of tourist-oriented development and related uses".

Figure 34 illustrates the zones and planning controls for the SAP area and Jindabyne more specifically. It demonstrates that, currently, there are limited designated SP3 zones. The six areas that have SP3 zoning are already developed. There is currently no SP3 zoned land which is greenfield, therefore limiting the potential for new sites.

While having SP3 zoning is not guaranteeing that all tourism development is acceptable, it does signify to developers that the respective council is keen to encourage this form of development. It provides developers with a stronger level of certainty.

[26] This would probably need to exclude workers living in Jindayne and having to access the alpine resorts daily for work along with NPWS personnel and those undertaking service deliveries etc.

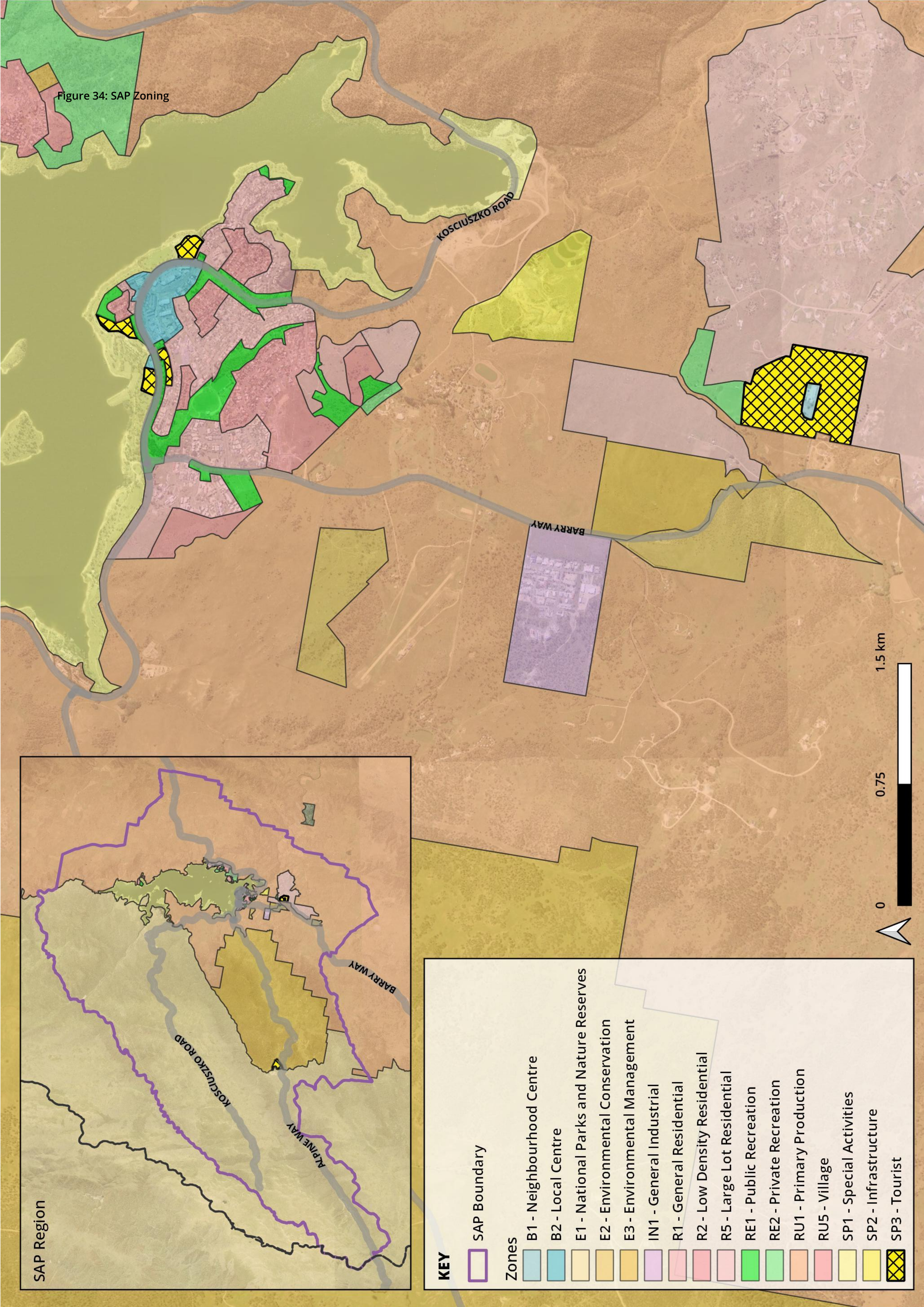


Figure 34: SAP Zoning

4.2.21. Limited tourism investment flows

Except for some limited investment in lift and snowmaking infrastructure at the resorts, there has been little new investment in tourism experiences, attractions, accommodation and tourism-related infrastructure generally for quite some time. New investment is required to support:

- the continual upgrade and improvement needed to existing commercial accommodation, P2P accommodation such as Airbnbs, for retail outlets, cafes, bars, restaurants, and attractions;
- the development of expanded facilities and including new facilities to better cater for market needs and to support future-proofing the region as a visitor destination;
- broader economic uplift throughout the community including encouraging support services to base permanently in the region such as medical-based support, education-based support, etc.; and
- public transport and related services and infrastructure such as ensuring that airports strengthen their viability etc.

4.2.22. Overtourism concerns

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines overtourism as "the impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitor experiences in a negative way".[27] Overtourism is strongly linked to host community social licence to support an influx of visitors into the host community.

Overtourism is highly topical with concern that many destinations do not have adequate infrastructure to cope with greater visitation, so issues linked to overcrowding and environmental degradation occur. Visitors are often blamed for various environmental problems though evidence exists that at times, it is a mixture of local community and visitor markets which share this responsibility.

Options to help address overtourism, whether real or perceived, include:

- implementing new product and different pricing strategies to influence demand from niche markets;
- reducing peak flows by re-directing visitor flows to comparable experiences where this is possible; and
- placing a limit on visitor numbers (carrying capacities).

There is often a need for visitor numbers to be monitored and where possible, better managed. Currently, there is no evidence of work being completed to assess the potential carrying capacity levels or limits for selective highly sensitive areas. There is a risk is that these significant landscapes may be degraded over time and breaching capacity levels when it may be too late to then reverse visitor impacts.

Research would be valuable to help resolve this, especially in pristine and sensitive sites. However, there does not appear to always be a willingness amongst some key stakeholders to move toward this, with the notion of carrying capacity levels or limits being viewed as alarmist or too reactionary.

The issue is whether it is simply a matter of better visitor management which can resolve both real and perceived conflicts with visitation levels and overtourism, or whether alternative measures (such as scientifically determined carrying capacity levels and limits) need to be considered.

4.2.23. P2P accommodation challenges

Although Airbnbs, Stayz and other forms of Peer-to-Peer (P2P) accommodation do fill an important accommodation gap in the SAP and add to the diversity of accommodation on offer, they do bring a variety of challenges, including the following.

- The regulation of P2P properties is challenging, including OH&S requirements and food safety requirements (for those who supply F&B).
- For larger groups, including event and conferences, there is a strong preference for attendees to stay at the same accommodation venue. P2P accommodation options generally cannot support this need though they do offer accommodation to meet the needs of individual travellers or couples and family groups.
- The P2P sector is seen as fragmented as a sub-sector and offers a challenge when trying to coordinate these forms of accommodation outlets.
- Many P2P properties are not available year-round, and, therefore, can create an inconsistency in the level of accommodation available in a region.

4.2.24. Shortage of affordable worker accommodation

The vast majority of resort workers live in Jindabyne and commute (mostly via the tube and carpooling) to their respective workplaces (i.e. 80% of Thredbo's seasonal workforce – 1,100 staff - live in Jindabyne and most of Perisher's seasonal workforce – 1,400 – also live in Jindabyne).

Jindabyne is noted as having a shortage of affordable accommodation for seasonal workers. This problem is exacerbated over winter periods when many landlords prefer to rent their properties out for short term, and far higher yielding ski visitors over winter. This has resulted in market rentals for locals (including

[27] 'Overtourism'? – Understanding and Managing Urban Tourism Growth beyond Perceptions | World Tourism Organization". www.e-unwto.org. doi:10.18111/9789284419999.

seasonal workers) being often for 9-month periods only, so longer-term tenants are having to relocate to find different accommodation over the winter period. In addition, the lack of visitation over the 9 other months of the year results in some seasonal workers moving out of the region to find work elsewhere.

The lack of sufficient worker accommodation, particularly in regional and remote locations, is an issue for encouraging the ongoing uptake of tourism and hospitality positions in the SAP.

The following case study demonstrates that this challenge is not unique to the SAP. Alpine destinations globally more often have high costs of living and face challenges with housing seasonal workers.

Case Study (Queenstown & Milford Sound)

For operators in Queenstown and Milford Sound, the unavailability and cost of rental accommodation are proving a disincentive to seasonal workers who are staying shorter periods than previously.

Jim Boult, Queenstown Mayor, has previously noted that the "lack of workers accommodation was an ongoing issue for the town where house prices are the most expensive in NZ … it will not get resolved until we get some purpose-built seasonal accommodation for workers".[28]

Skyline Enterprises, one of the major tourism operators in Queenstown, found that "supplying accommodation had become critical to retain staff who were leaving town because they could not find homes".[29] To mitigate this issue, the organisation purchased four separate properties to accommodate staff.

4.2.25. The cost of trail maintenance and competing regions

While the walking and cycling trails which the SAP offer are an important key recreational attraction, these all require regular maintenance and upkeep. Most of this is undertaken by NPWS, Thredbo and SMRC (who offer an extensive array of mountain biking trails). The trails offered by NPWS generate limited direct revenue though park use fees are generated and maintaining them in an environment of declining government funding is challenging. SMRC trails are maintained by volunteers.

As previously commented, consideration needs to be included of strengthened facilities at trailheads to offer users food and beverage seasonal pop-up facilities etc.

From a competitive perspective, it needs to be noted that many other regions in NSW and Victoria have extensive mountain biking trails and facilities, including within the Victorian Alps. It is unclear yet whether the SAP region has a clear competitive advantage or not for mountain biking, but opportunities exist for expanding trail options. Mountain biking is also recognised as a valuable recreational pursuit with many coming into the region for day riding experiences before heading back the same day or staying overnight. There is, however, limited evidence to suggest that mountain bikers (as a niche market) are a reasonable visitor spend market and in fact, in many locations, the opposite is found because they quite often do not stay overnight in regions so average daily spend may be lower.

But the mountain biking market is a quickly growing niche segment and the introduction of e-bikes has also helped in generating stronger growth.

Evidence from various sources indicates that annual maintenance on mountain biking trails especially can average $2k + per kilometre and for steeper and more challenging terrain, the cost can be noticeably higher. The cost of funding regular annual maintenance most often falls to councils to cover unless a commercial operator of various outdoor attractions and amenities is able to support the ongoing funding of opex for trails where they can derive some form of commercial benefit as well.

As regional and national competition to attract mountain bikers is intense Australia wide, having well-designed and maintained trails are particularly important for the SAP if it is to gain a competitive edge in this market.

[28] Queenstown housing crisis bites, tourism giants buy staff accommodation, April 13, 2018, https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/103017338/queenstown-businesses-plan-more-staff-accommodation-as-housing-crisis-bites

[29] Ibid.

4.2.26. The need to think larger than the status quo

While some are less optimistic about the ability to create transformative change in this SAP, others are of the view that fresh thinking and ideas are warranted to deliver a transformative change, however, this is defined. There is also a difference of opinion as to what transformative change means with some reflecting on:

- the need for greater environmental awareness and sustainability principles to be introduced
- protecting the values that people are coming to enjoy so higher environmental awareness
- others reflecting on a need for ideally fewer peak season visitors but more in non-peak times so impacts are better handled
- some wishing to see higher spending visitors attracted so the focus shifts to yield rather than volume; and
- others wishing to see transformative growth which can revitalise the region and support much of the proposed government investment into amenities and infrastructure for the local communities first.

There is a temptation to only focus on the status quo, rather than considering wider strategic opportunities which could open new initiatives for broader development and investment.

A paradigm shift is required to get industry, developers, investors, and government to consider tourism opportunities outside of current thinking constraints. This may entail encouraging new players to look at potential opportunities to broaden the scope of product options including a move to positioning the region as an all-year-round destination. To achieve this is likely to require significant government intervention to help de-risk private investment aimed at growing year-round visitation as it may struggle to occur naturally otherwise.

4.2.27. Lack of Carrying Capacity Estimates

The lack of carrying capacity assessments for KNP, other sensitive environments including waters ways/lake areas etc, makes it challenging to determine how many visitors at any one time, can or should be accommodated on sites, and at different times of the year.

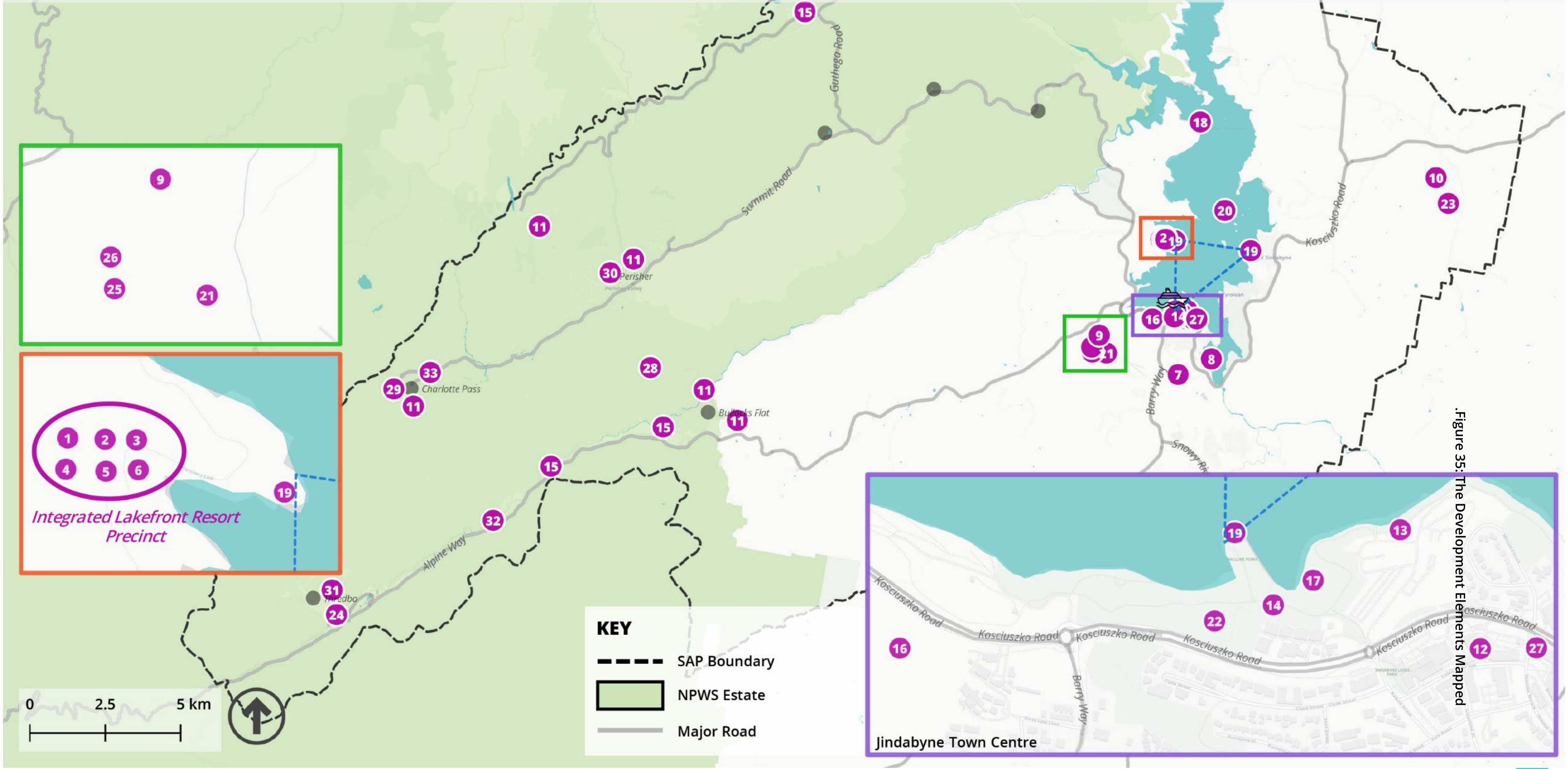
Carrying capacity determinations require the assessment of environmental constraints and impacts, social impacts, cultural impacts, along with economic determinants and visitor requirements; it is not just the natural environments ability to cope with visitation. The quality of the visitor experience is a key determinant which needs to be assessed so overcrowding etc. is avoided.

Image Credit: Destination NSW (Thredbo)

PART 5: OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Identification of a tourism vision for the SAP going forward, critical success factors and opportunities to sustainably grow the visitor economy.

1. Eco 4-5-star 250-room Hotel
2. 120 Owner Occupied Apartments
3. National Alpine Conference Centre (500-Seat)
4. Hot Pools & Wellness Facility
5. Fly Fishing School
6. 18-Hole Golf Course
7. 250-room Athlete/Student Accommodation
8. 4-5-star, 200-room Lakefront Spa Hotel
9. Outdoor Adventure Hub (Zip Line & Mtn Coaster)
10. Airport
11. KNP Iconic Walk
12. Snowy Mountains Discovery Centre
13. E-Bike Cycleways
14. Hallmark Winter Sporting Event
15. Upgrade of Ngarigo, Thredbo Diggings & Island Bend Campgrounds
16. New, Higher-Quality Destination Holiday Park
17. Evening 2 Week Seasonal Sound & Light Show
18. Iconic Overnight Horse Trek
19. Water Taxi/Ferry Service
20. Lake Jindabyne Water Activities & Experiences
21. Mountain Biking Hub (Master Planned)
22. Hallmark Summer Sporting Event
23. Aviation Tourism Experiences
24. Tubing Park/snow play area (All Seasons)
25. Mountain Luge Experience
26. Zorbing Attraction
27. Indoor Fun Park
28. Major Cantilevered Viewing Sky Deck at Porcupine Rocks
29. Day Walk (Charlotte Pass to Mt Kosciuszko Summit)
30. Perisher Branded 4-5-star hotel (120 + rooms)
31. Thredbo branded 4–5-star hotel (120+ rooms)
32. Ranger Station Fishing Lodge & Glamping
33. Parking area and turning circle at Charlotte Pass



.Figure 35: The Development Elements Mapped

Image Credit: Destination NSW)

5.1. Overview of the Development Element Recommendations

This Tourism Development Study has identified 35 tourism development recommendations for the SAP. These have been created to deliver on the goals identified in this Study which are led by governments desire to introduce sufficient development to support SAP activation and related government funding to leverage strong private sector investment. .Figure 35 on the previous page provides initial approximate locations for the various development elements identified. These various sites have been visited and while deemed desirable for various tourism products, have not been assessed through feasibility studies and related business cases. They should therefore be considered strategic level opportunities only.

As previously noted, but for the SAP driving the need for greater development to support its activation and government-related funding, the level of development and number of suggested projects, would normally not be suggested, as, without strong government intervention and support, they would be less likely to be viable.

5.2. The Development Elements Aligned to Study Goals

Table 11 demonstrates the various development elements that have been recommended and how they align with the goals identified in this Tourism Development Study.

Table 11: Development Elements Alignment with Components and Goals

Development Element	Continue to Protect the Environment	Reduce Tourism Seasonality	Grow Visitor Yield	Strengthen Social License for Tourism	Position Jindabyne as Australia's Alpine Capital
1. Eco 4-5-star 250-room Hotel (Mixed-Use Development)	●	●	●		●
2. 120 Owner Occupied Apartments (Mixed-Use Development)	●	●	●	●	●
3. National Alpine Conference Centre (500-Seat) (Mixed-Use Development)		●	●		●
4. Hot Pools & Wellness Facility (Mixed-Use Development)	●	●	●		
5. Fly Fishing School (Mixed-Use Development)		●	●		
6. 18-Hole Golf Course (Mixed-Use Development)	●	●	●		
7. 250-room Athlete/Student Accommodation (as part of the Sports and Rec complex)	●	●			●
8. 4-5-star, 200-room Lakefront Spa Hotel (Copper Tom)	●	●	●		●
9. Outdoor Adventure Hub (Zip Lines & Mountain Coasters)	●	●	●		●
10. Airport/airfield enhancements (existing)		●	●		●
11. KNP Iconic Walk	●	●	●	●	
12. Snowy Mountains Heritage Centre	●	●	●	●	●
13. E-Bike Cycleways	●	●		●	
14. Hallmark Winter Sporting Event		●	●		●
15. Upgrade of Ngarigo, Thredbo Diggings and Island Bend Campgrounds	●			●	
16. New, Higher-Quality Destination Holiday Park		●	●		
17. Evening 2 Week Seasonal Sound & Light Show (1 x winter; 1 x summer)		●	●	●	●
18. Iconic Overnight Horse Treks		●	●		●
19. Water Taxi/Ferry Service	●		●	●	
20. Lake Jindabyne Water Activities & Experiences	●	●	●		●
21. Mountain Biking Hub (Master Planned)		●			
22. Hallmark Summer Sporting Event		●	●		
23. Aviation Tourism Experiences		●	●		
24. Tubing Park/snow play area (All Seasons)		●	●		●
25. Mountain Luge Experience		●	●		●
26. Zorbing Attraction		●	●		●
27. Indoor Fun Park		●	●	●	
28. Major Cantilevered Viewing Sky Deck at Porcupine Rocks	●				
29. Day Walk (Charlotte Pass to Mt Kosciuszko Summit)	●			●	
30. Perisher Branded 4-5-star Hotel (120 + rooms)			●		
31. Thredbo branded 4–5-star hotel (120+ rooms)			●		
32. Ranger Station Fishing Lodge & Glamping		●	●	●	
33. Parking area and turning circle at Charlotte Pass	●	●	●		

5.3. The Development Elements Explained

The following section provides a summary of potential projects to be developed on a staged basis over the next 40 years (being the timeframe for the SAP).

Some of these developments are deliberately proposed to help attract new visitor markets who do not currently visit (such as higher spending niche markets and special interest groups) and others are proposed to support existing visitor demand and, therefore, will not add to the number of new visitors to the region.

As stated previously, it is important to note that any visitor projections (both status quo and SAP development scenario modelling) were out of the scope of this Tourism Development Study. All projections have been undertaken by The Centre for International Economics (CIE) and are available as part of their report.

Stafford did, however, provide inputs to CIE for estimated demand to individual tourism development elements. These inputs are contained in Appendix 3.

5.3.1. Mixed-use development (Integrated Lakefront Eco-Resort Precinct)

The integrated lake-front resort precinct is ideally located within 3-7km of Jindabyne as an all-inclusive destination close to or on the western side of Lake Jindabyne. The concept is to encourage a stronger level of market demand for year-round visitation and is, therefore, not seen to be competing with the existing alpine resorts or mid-range accommodation currently available within Jindabyne. There are large privately held parcels of land along with lakefront land owned by Snowy Hydro on the western side of Lake Jindabyne, though land would need to be rezoned fit for tourism purposes.

Initial research indicates the residential enclaves on the eastern side of the lake make it difficult to find potential sites for tourism development so hence the focus on the western side of the lake.

Because of prevailing wind conditions (which may require solid windbreaks) and to offer privacy, any development would need to have extensive vegetated buffer zones and screening to give it a feeling of seclusion and to offer comfortable outdoor areas. Importantly, there are elements which could be used by non-guests (being locals and other visitors) to ensure the development also offered inclusiveness so different user groups could benefit from it.

Initial assessment of the western side of the lake also illustrates much of the land has been disturbed and cleared over time, with few environmentally sensitive sites, so this area may offer fewer site constraints than many others

An integrated resort, as proposed, should be considered an important "anchor" development for the region, especially if the SAP outcomes are intending to raise economic benefits and value of the visitor economy to the region, to stimulate sustainable employment growth and to help overcome serious seasonality problems which the region currently grapples with (and which restricts new investment from occurring).

This development would be supply-led; that is, if one refers to current annual occupancy rates being achieved in the SAP, they are not high enough to support a demand-driven approach to fill a current market need. But by introducing this development element, one is introducing new quality product to help:

- entice a new series of visitor markets who do not currently visit the region; and
- support the existing visitor markets to the region with new product options to encourage longer length of stay, higher visitor spend and year-round visitation.

5.3.1.1. Eco 4-5-star, 250-room Hotel (Integrated Lakefront Resort Precinct)

There are limited quality branded hotel and resort facilities in the broader region.

A new 4-5-star internationally branded property is suggested to support a year-round visitor market and to appeal to a higher spending and more discerning visitor market.

Suggestion is that the rooms be larger twin share rooms to provide for a slightly higher guest ratio per room to reflect (smaller family units) and to offer a quality environment for those staying to attend a conference or function, or coming to base themselves at the resort for a leisure break in winter or summer etc.

The hotel should also have facilities to support *medical/wellness tourism*; being the ability to support guests recuperating after medical procedures and not needing to be near a teaching hospital (but if required, could be helicoptered to Canberra if an emergency occurred). Alpine areas are often viewed as desirable locations for health and wellbeing enhancements, and therefore suitable as destinations for rest and recovery accommodation and supporting amenities. As the development would also have a variety of sports, fitness and recreational facilities, these would potentially fit well with those needing to use such facilities as part of their recovery process.

5.3.1.2. 120 Owner Occupied Apartments (Integrated Lakefront Resort Precinct)

The development also includes owner-occupied apartments which can use the dining and other facilities which the resort hotel has to offer. When not being used by owners the apartments could go into a rental pool, to add to the accommodation mix available, and to offer owners a return on investment.

Apartments may also offer greater flexibility for family groups requiring sleeping facilities for 4+ guests as apartments are likely to be a mix of two-three-bedroom facilities.

5.3.1.3. 500-Seat Conference Venue (Integrated Lakefront Resort Precinct)

A quality conference and convention venue is suggested with capacity for smaller to medium size regional and national conferences, conventions and functions. The facility could offer a valuable asset to support a large regional catchment area noting that some existing facilities in the region are smaller and older now. The venue should also be able to support a wedding and family function market along with the broader business and meetings market.

5.3.1.4. Hot Pools & Wellness Facility (Integrated Lakefront Resort Precinct)

The integrated resort precinct could also include a major day spa, wellness centre and/or hot pools facility to support the venue being positioned as a holistic health and wellness location with the ability to offer guests and other visitors a range of facilities.

It could also double as a venue for medical tourism to support those recuperating from medical procedures etc and staying (often with family) in either the hotel or the apartments.

The health and wellness facility would need to have:

- a large indoor pool;
- gym;
- sauna and steam rooms;
- hot pools and plunge pools; and
- a climbing wall as part of the exterior wall of the building and/or internal climbing wall.

The health and wellness hub should also double as the access point for water sport activities on the lake such as kayaking, paddleboarding, hobby cats etc.).

Figure 36: Examples of Health, wellness and hot pool facilities[30]

[30] Queenstown Onsen, NZ; Spa Elysia, Hunter Valley; Blue Lagoon, Norway; Peninsula Hot Springs, Victoria; Lake Tekapo, NZ

5.3.1.5. Fly Fishing School (Integrated Lakefront Resort Precinct)

Visitation data indicates that many visitors come down throughout the year to fish in the lake and its tributaries as they offer a well-known venue for fly fishing. A key feature for the integrated resort could be a fly-fishing school which provides a base for:

- hiring and sale of fishing tackle and gear;
- fishing guides to hire;
- fly-fishing school for training (with basic, intermediate, and advanced programs); and
- fly-fishing events and competitions.

5.3.1.6. 18-Hole Signature Golf Course (Integrated Lakefront Resort Precinct)

The opportunity exists to introduce an 18-hole signature destination golf course as part of the integrate lakefront resort precinct. The rationale for including this is as follows.

While total numbers of those playing golf globally are gradually reducing, there is pent up market demand for high-quality signature courses which also offer limited numbers of memberships. Signature courses of national and potentially international standing also provide the potential for major golfing competitions as well as encouraging casual use by members and visitors.

The inclusion of this would be dependent on the size of available land (noting the need for at least 40-60 ha. for an 18-hole course). The facility should ideally have:

- a quality 18-Hole Signature Golf Course professionally designed
- an onsite pro for lessons and a pro shop for equipment hire and sale; and
- a golf driving range.

Figure 37: Examples of signature destination golf courses[31]

[31] Barnbougle Dunes Golf Links, Tasmania; Cape Kidnappers, NZ.

5.3.2. 250-room Athlete/Student Accommodation (as part of the Sports and Rec complex)

The Jindabyne Sports and Recreation Centre is set on 87 ha and provides a wide range of services, facilities and accommodation options school camps, family groups, sporting events, ski trips and corporate training.

As part of the SAP, a more detailed investigation has been undertaken into the expansion of the Sports and Recreation Centre, including the potential to integrate high-performance athlete facilities. As part of this, we are advised that the potential exists to incorporate up to 500 beds (250 rooms) within the complex for a mix of athletes, support staff, and for students. The facility would be developed primarily to support sports activities and events, allowing for onsite accommodation for participants, supporting families and staff and visiting school groups etc. When not being used by sports teams and related stakeholders, the potential may exist to offer it for accommodation to a wider visitor base.

Stafford has also met with the NSW Institute of Sport to better understand the wider use of the SAP region for elite sports training programs and future development needs and has discussed options with Populous, the architects engaged to develop design options for the sports and rec centre.

5.3.3. 4-5-star, 60-80 room Boutique Lakefront Spa Hotel (Copper Tom)

An attractive site exists as a lakeside peninsula near the Jindabyne town centre on land owned by Snowy Hydro known as Copper Tom. Initial desktop analysis indicates that it could offer a site for a town-based boutique hotel with day spa facilities. The land area is circa 12-15 ha. though only part of this would be needed for a lakefront spa hotel, so the remainder could be retained as vegetated open space with mountain biking and trekking trails if required.

Whilst we have been advised that there are a variety of environmental constraints with this site, it could offer a longer-term development opportunity (post 2035).

This hotel would need to be developed at a later stage than the suggested 250 room 4-star integrated resort proposed as part of the integrated lakefront resort precinct on the western side of the lake, to avoid any risk of an oversupply being created. It could occur earlier, however if the integrated resort precinct was not able to be activated in a shorter time frame from 2021-2030.

Figure 38: Examples of lakefront, high-quality resort developments[32]

5.3.4. Outdoor Adventure Hub (Zip Line & Mountain Coaster)

As indicated via the tourism attraction product audit, the SAP region lacks:

- non-winter-based attractions/things to do;
- commissionable (paid) tourism product; and
- family and community-based tourism product.

To support greater visitor demand and market interest in visiting the SAP region outside of the winter season, it is suggested that new "hero experiences" are warranted which can provide:

- adrenaline experiences for thrill-seekers
- locational experiences to get visitors into different terrain with views and attractive vistas but outside of KNP
- experiences which are not available in other locations within Australia; and
- which could offer experiences which rank as "world best" either through the use of technology, the length of the experience, the ability to undertake it during the day or night, and the ability to offer experience options which can cater for a very wide age range (5-85-year-olds).

Visitation data currently illustrates that the SAP region is underrepresented in the over 55-year-old market and the under 25-year-old market. Yet it is often these very markets which offer the best chance for encouraging:

- higher spending visitor markets (especially the over 55s);
- the family market looking for a range of new experiences able to be undertaken by a range of age groups; and
- encouraging the 25-55-year-old market to undertake higher spending experiences which they are often willing to do.

The experiences are thought at times to be challenging to locate within KNP due to the scale of the facility, larger parking requirements, site development and operational factors including possible noise and other site disturbances, and whether they are appropriate for a national park environment, with stronger natural and cultural values especially.

These attraction options have also been discussed with NPWS who have advised that other than the possibility of having some of these potentially located within the current footprint of the ski resorts, it is highly unlikely that a suitable site can be found within KNP, and therefore, these should be located outside of KNP as a preference.

Site options have been assessed and a potential site on Snowy Hydro land (above Jindabyne town centre) which is where the proposed mountain biking hub is being considered for, is noted as a preferred location. The site is large, covering over 600 ha. and offers the possibility of a series of mountain biking and walking trails on the side of the hill facing Lake Jindabyne and above the current Jindabyne airstrip. The various built outdoor experience attractions could also be accommodated on this site, either on the opposite side of the hillside facing the Alpine Way and KNP or overlooking Jindabyne as well.

Consideration could be for facilities to include the following.

- Up to two separate zip line courses, both being dual ziplines (so two people or more can use one line as a tandem) and with potential for one course being a 4 line zip course and the other potentially as a 2 line zip course. One should ideally be at a different exhilaration level than the other so one may cater for the thrill rider (adrenaline junky) and the other could be orientated more mainstream as a family orientated experience.
- A major mountain coaster (with a 1.5km - 2.5km distance) and including tunnels and bridges so it can offer unique elements with the option of more than one course,
- Ropes course which may also double as a possible way to link elements of the attractions to offer a continuous trail of experiences.
- Stage 2 of the outdoor adventure hub could include a luge ride (Queenstown/Rotorua style) which will require shuttle buses or

[32] Hilton, Queenstown (on Lake Wakatipu); Stoneridge Estate (on Lake Hayes)

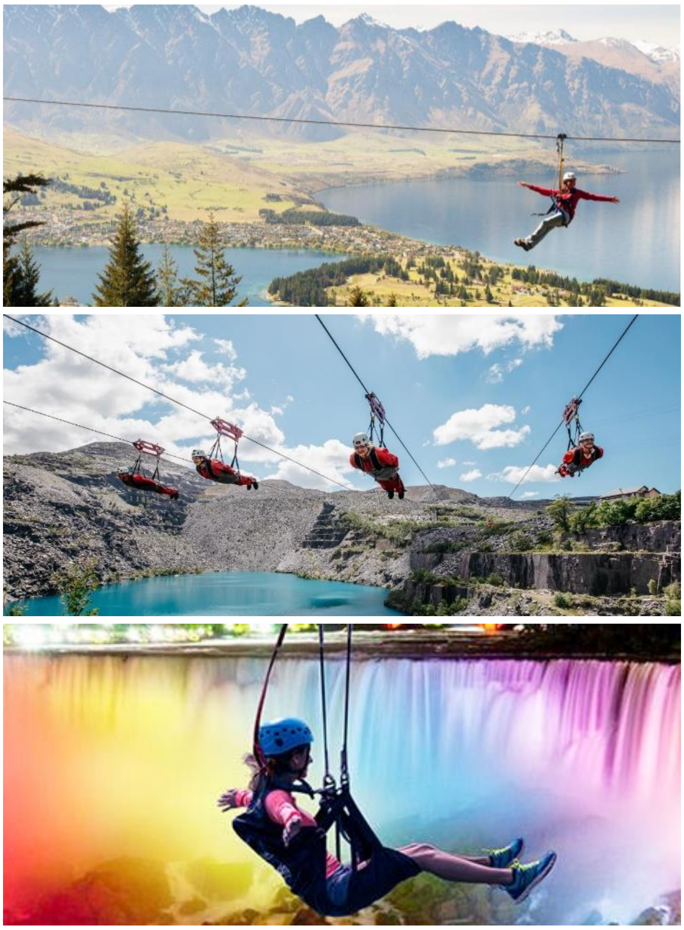
a chairlift to get users back up to the start of the luge (and mountain coaster and zip line attractions).

- Major ticketing reception centre as an arrival point.
- Café facilities with the option of a facility at the top of the hill to allow users to take a break in between experiences and separately, dining and retail outlets at the bottom of the hill as part of a reception/entry area and linked to parking.
- Car parking for up to 150 cars and spaces for minivans and coach parking.
- Facilities (zip line and mountain coaster) should also be able to operate at night, possibly on a seasonal basis so a luminous outer layer could be introduced on zip harnesses and seating and on the mountain coaster seating.

The hub could have the potential to offer both free and paid experiences with the mountain biking trails and bushwalking tracks as free experiences primarily on one side of the hill and the paid attractions and experiences on the alternative side of the hill.

Some of the industry stakeholders in Jindabyne are also keen to include a proposed heritage centre as part of the activity adventure hub in this location, to leverage off visitation and to allow for visitors to also relax and admire the extensive views over the lake.

Figure 39: Zip Line and Mountain Coaster Experiences[33]



[33] Moa Zipe Line Queenstown; The Breathtaker Alpine Coaster (in summer), Colorado; The Breathtaker Alpine Coaster (in winter), Colorado

5.3.5. Airport

A variety of options have been investigated as part of the SAP with the preference being to use existing airport-airfield facilities in the wider region and including:

- Canberra Airport as an international gateway into the region
- Cooma Airport as an enhanced airport for both intrastate and interstate domestic flights
- Jindabyne airfield as a site for scenic flights, aviation leisure activities and helicopter flights and longer-term, for scheduled or charter flights from Canberra and other locations.

Development of improved air access for the SAP is seen as an important element of strategic infrastructure to support growth in new higher spending visitor markets which many of the development elements are aiming to attract.

Improved air access is important to also grow:

- a functions, meetings and conference market;
- short break leisure visitation from Sydney, Melbourne and potentially Brisbane;
- event attendees; and
- as an important asset to support the local community needs.

In the medium to longer-term, if the airports are to have maximum value as a driver of higher-yielding visitation and to be a catalyst project to support the SAP desired outcomes, the Cooma Airport may need to eventually be jet capable to ensure that:

- it can deliver larger numbers of visitors more quickly and efficiently;
- it is capable of helping the SAP region to become far more competitive especially for visitor markets ex Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane who can already fly to Queenstown in NZ for summer and winter experiences within 2.5-3 hours;
- it can actively encourage more short break visitors to the region
- noting that jet aircraft are often less susceptible to navigational constraints which smaller turboprop aircraft can have, especially in flying into alpine areas; and
- to offer greater flexibility for flight frequency and capacity for locals wanting to fly in and out for leisure, business and other purposes.

5.3.6. KNP Iconic Walk

KNP already offers a number of walks. There remains, however, the opportunity to create an “Iconic” walk to grow the profile of the destination.

New Zealand (a market leader for Great or Iconic Walks) has ten Great Walks[34]. The jewel in the crown, and the most popular of the Great Walks, is the 53km Milford Track which travels through Fiordland National Park and the Te Wāhipounamu World Heritage Site.

In 2019, eight of New Zealand’s Great Walks attracted 112k walkers, 51% of whom were Kiwis and 49% of whom were international visitors. The Milford Track attracted just over 7k walkers. The most walked Great Walk was the Abel Tasman Coast Track, and this is likely because it is one of the easiest tracks, particularly for families. The average price for one person to complete the Milford Track for a guided tour is NZD $2,230 (5 days/4 nights) so it is a higher-yielding product.

The target market for Great Walks is described in Figure 40. The market tends to be high yielding, environmentally conscious, seeking an active experience, but not too adventurous, preferring to travel with guides and having comfortable accommodation and meals cooked for them.

Figure 40: Target Market Identification for Great Walks in Australia[35]

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 55% female 45% male
- 50-59-year olds, followed by 60-69 then 40-49
- average client: 51-year-old female

PSYCHOGRAPHICS

- city dwellers who enjoy the outdoors
- urban professionals/self-funded retirees who are eco empathetic
- higher than average disposable income and high yield

[34] https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/walking-and-tramping/great-walks/

[35] Based on confidential industry advice

MARKET SIZE FOR MULTI-NIGHT GUIDED WALKS

- 70,000 Australians walk overseas every year - at current yield that is a $250m leakage to the economy
- NSW is not yet represented with a Great Walk
- NZ is the regional market leader - Milford traffic alone is larger than all Australian Great Walks combined

GEOGRAPHICS

- 33% NSW followed by 30% VIC then 16% QLD
- 14% are international, predominantly UK/Europe, USA, Japan and noticeable increase in Chinese and Korean walkers

It is a good fit for the SAP region. We note, however, that NPWS did not pursue introducing a series of eco huts/lodges in strategic locations to support the preferred alignment of the great walk and to offer attractive overnight accommodation, and instead, relied on the recommendations from the 2010 Australian Alps National Landscapes Masterplan which recommended utilising the resort villages as accommodation hubs. This means that walkers will have to stay in existing accommodation facilities within the alpine ski resorts.

Though this experience has already been funded, we question whether market demand may be compromised as a result of having to link to the alpine resorts for accommodation overnight and whether an element of "iconic" has been lost. It is also appreciated that it would be most challenging to allow the walk to go through pristine wilderness designated areas so there are limitation the walks alignment.

Research that was undertaken for the development of Great Walk experiences in Tasmania[36] found:

- commercial bushwalkers[37] tend to prefer 3-4-day walks, while independent bushwalkers[38] prefer 5 to 6-day walks;
- a high portion of commercial bushwalkers have high incomes ($150k+);
- commercial bushwalkers like creature comforts: no heavy rucksacks and good quality tent, cabin or lodge accommodation;
- commercial bushwalkers like to combine "other experiences" with their bushwalk eco-boat cruises, helicopter rides and spa treatments etc;
- commercial bushwalkers avoid large groups, opting for the intimacy of smaller groups; and
- independent bushwalkers place a premium on experiencing the wilderness, a sense of escape, solitude and a challenge while commercial bushwalkers place a premium on experiencing wildlife and nature with creature comforts.

As understood, the KNP Iconic Walk would most likely be a 2-night, 3-day walking experience with a possible additional night (3-night, 4-day) option dependent on visitor demand research.

The walk is planned to use existing alpine resort accommodation facilities so no new accommodation facilities would be required in KNP. Ideally, this is a guided walk experience to best manage the experience and to offer a far greater quality interpretation of the area, its fauna and flora, heritage and historic significance etc.

The KNP iconic walk offers the potential to add the product in as a "must do" experience, in a similar fashion to the Milford Track in Fiordland, New Zealand or the Cinque Terre in Italy.

5.3.7. Snowy Mountains Heritage - Discovery Centre

The existing visitor centre at Jindabyne resembles a traditional visitor information centre with static displays and information counters. Significant research has been undertaken in the visitor information space on how best to deliver visitor information and related services and has ultimately determined that it is time to "rethink visitor servicing".

The opportunity exists to apply this updated way of thinking to develop a highly appealing, all-weather Snowy Mountains Heritage Discovery Centre which functions as an attraction as well as the primary hub in Jindabyne which offers:

- a primary venue for visitors to purchase tickets from for attractions, experiences, and events so it is a comprehensive ticketing venue;
- as an interactive visitor information facility to be "a one-stop-shop" for all visitor information; and
- a year-round visitor attraction which can tell multiple stories of the region and which can activate " the man from Snowy River legend".

The concept is similar to the highly successful "visitor hub" in Queenstown but with added elements. As a result of this, the numbers of visitors and locals travelling through the Centre could be significant, which in turn supports the attendance numbers required for the visitor attraction element, which already has a feasibility study to support it.

A development which has been proposed within the 2019 Snowy Monaro Destination Management Plan, is a proposed Aboriginal heritage centre, which could be one of the anchor attraction elements within the wider Discovery Centre to support its longer-term viability.

Elements of the Heritage Discovery Centre could therefore include:

[36] Based on confidential data provided by industry operators
[37] Includes those undertaking a guided multi-day experience
[38] Includes those not undertaking a guided experience

- the ability to purchase attraction, experience and event/festival tickets;
- high-quality visitor information services;
- aboriginal themes, storytelling, facilities for First Nations communities to meet, workshop facilities for art etc and training and immersive experiences;
- covering the history of KNP as a park based immersive experience to understand its development, environmental challenges and risks to threatened species and the impact of climate change over time;
- covering the story of the Snowy Hydro scheme through immersive experiences;
- an interactive audio-visual facility to offer movies relating to the themes and stories noted above and to offer an all-weather year-round visitor attraction; and
- with the facility's overall direction focused on edutainment and infotainment to help appeal to a wide visitor audience.

Cultural heritage centres on their own have often traditionally struggled globally to remain in constant visitor demand but when combined with other visitor experiences, can benefit from leveraging off these.

This development element ideally should be located within Jindabyne township, so it is easily walkable from cafes, retail, hotels etc and effectively becomes the focal point for visitor services. The alternative could be as part of the adventure hub access point as there are retail and food and beverage facilities to also leverage off. The downside, however, of moving this out of the township is that it won't be a walkaway location for those staying in Jindabyne and it potentially weakens the strength of Jindabyne as the "gateway" to KNP and surrounding areas.

5.3.8. E-Bike Cycleways

There is growing interest in E-Bikes which support the creation of generic cycleways including for road cycling. Visitor data on activities undertaken in the SAP region highlight good interest in cycling but this does not differentiate road cycling from mountain biking.

Potential may exist to develop a series of cycleways to help link existing and new development elements including around different parts of the lake and to locations within KNP.

We note that Council is shortly to undertake a Regional Trails Masterplan to investigate the opportunities for all user groups so combing or sharing mountain biking trails with E-bike trails to offer generic trails would be possible.

Separately, we understand that Council has received $11.8m grant funding to expand the Lake Jindabyne trail project which will expand the network from Tyrolean to Kalkite and Thredbo Valley Track to Jindabyne and Creel Bay.

5.3.9. Alpine Sporting Destination Events Program

The region has been gradually developing an event program to encourage stronger year-round visitation. There is an opportunity to gradually develop a stronger sports-based events program, especially during Spring-Autumn to bolster regional profile and branding, and to encourage greater demand for accommodation and retail facilities.

The Outdoor Adventure Hub could be the base for new sporting events to either start or finish providing it is located at a site which lends itself to this.

The development of the sports and rec complex and facilities for elite sports training may also provide a venue for a variety of events to be programmed from. What appears to be missing are the supporting infrastructure elements for major events.

5.3.10. Upgrade of Ngarigo, Thredbo Diggings and Island Bend Campgrounds

Based on site visits and discussions with NPWS, the opportunity exists to upgrade existing camping sites within KNP, including:

- Ngarigo Campground
- Thredbo Diggings Campground
- Island Bend Campground

Both Ngarigo Campground and Thredbo Diggings Campground (see Figure 41 below) are situated just off Alpine Way. They currently both offer non-powered sites which provide basic toilet, barbecue and drinking water facilities. They do, however, require improved amenities such as ablutions (toilets) and cooking areas. We concur with NPWS that keeping the existing capacity of both these camping areas is desirable, as any expansion would necessitate the removal of surrounding trees and other vegetation which would most likely reduce the attractiveness of both locations as well as potentially impact on fauna and flora preservation and protection etc.

Figure 41: Ngarigo and Thredbo Diggings Campgrounds

Island Bend Campground is also currently a relatively basic campsite with basic toilet, barbecue, and picnic table facilities. The campground currently has 30 campsites. Discussions with NPWS indicates the opportunity to potentially expand this to 100+ campsites, with improved toilets, kitchen/barbecue facilities, hot showers and pathways between sites etc.

Island Bend would appear to offer the greatest potential, based on discussions with NPWS, for expanded camping facilities within KNP and through the ability to leverage off the existing campsite facilities.

We have also assessed the potential for introducing expanded camping facilities and amenities at Sawpit Creek, Sponars and Ski Rider on the road up to Perisher but consider these sites are constrained by:

- Their isolation and lack of facilities around them to easily leverage off
- The highly seasonal nature of their use which is primarily just for the winter ski season though we note Sponars is now operating as a BnB in summer
- The need to expand the development footprint in the Park for both to enable camping and supporting facilities to be introduced.

Figure 42: Island Bend Campground

5.3.11. New, Higher-Quality Destination Holiday Park

Although the broader Snowies region does have a range of caravan parks and camping areas, these tend to resemble more traditional transit style caravan parks or campgrounds.

The opportunity does exist to introduce a true, higher-quality destination holiday park akin to what is available in many coastal areas throughout Australia (see Figure 43).

Destination holiday parks require sites of approximately 8 ha. or more. Potential may exist to introduce a higher quality and professionally run destination holiday park with suitable facilities to cater to the family market in particular and offering:

- eco-cabins to meet the needs of visitors year-round;
- powered and unpowered camping and caravan sites;
- recreational features and amenities to support a longer length of visitor stay, such as heated water play parks, water slides, bike parks, jump pillows, climbing walls, major jungle gyms/play equipment areas, mini-golf and bike/trike hire.

These holiday parks are highly landscaped and function as destinations in their own right.

Dependent on the site locations possible, a destination holiday park may include circa 20-30 eco-cabins, 70-90 powered sites and 30-50 unpowered sites.

With respect to locations, the ideal sites are within easy access of Jindabyne so users can access food and beverage and retail outlets in Jindabyne.

Figure 43: Examples of Higher-Quality Destination Holiday Parks[39]

[39] NRMA Merimbula Holiday Park, NSW; BIG4 Wallaga Lake Holiday Park, NSW; Habitat Noosa, QLD; Discovery Parks Barossa valley, SA

Figure 44: Evening-based Activities[40]

5.3.12. Evening Based Activations for Jindabyne

To support a stronger destination offering and to encourage longer length of visitor stay within the region, consideration could be given to evening based activities (particularly for introducing into Jindabyne) including:

- a winter pop-up ice-skating rink as a seasonal day and evening attraction;
- summer sound and light show as an attraction feature and potentially linked to a festival or series of events;
- night-time food markets; and
- within time, a wider range of food and beverage outlets and bars so Jindabyne gets stronger recognition as an alpine hub.

The ongoing challenge for Jindabyne will be that as the various catalyst projects get introduced, demand for needing to be within Jindabyne may reduce or, at best, flat line, as other locations (existing and new), offer new food and beverage offerings, new attractions and experiences, and easier access to winter ski experiences and summer mountain biking and bushwalking trails.

The repurposing of Jindabyne as a true alpine town and hub for the region, with various day and evening attractions, therefore, becomes essential. Making sure the critical mass of attractions and amenities remain in Jindabyne is therefore very important.

5.3.13. Evening Based Activations outside of Jindabyne

Potential exists to introduce:

- night sky viewing in KNP; and
- luminous mountain coaster and zip line experiences within the alpine adventure hub so the facility becomes an exciting night-time experience for both users and onlookers.

While the alpine resorts will have their own activations for night-time activities, the potential exists for other operators, and during non-winter periods, to encourage exciting evening experiences which add to the overall visitor experience and help make it more memorable.

5.3.14. Overnight Horse Treks

Although horse riding is already permitted within KNP on management trails in the southern parts of KNP and even off track in sections of northern KNP, the potential should be investigated for introducing an overnight horse trek (akin to the iconic overnight walk). An overnight horse trek in KNP would need to extend beyond the SAP footprint, however. There are already several commercial horse trekking companies operating in northern KNP and the Bicentennial National Trail (from Melbourne to Cairns via linked trails) goes through KNP.

[40] Pinnacles Sunset Stargazing Tour, Swan Valley, WA; Cathedral Square Temporary Skating Rink, Sydney;

This might also be able to extend into:

- a wider regional series of bridle trails for overnight horse trekking experiences outside of the SAP if and where desirable;
- equestrian events and competitions as seasonal events; and
- equine training facilities.

This opportunity acknowledges that there are various existing horse trekking operators already in the region, but this product is provided to explore the potential to expand equine activities into a more prominent product to be offered throughout Spring-Autumn.

5.3.15. Water Taxi/Ferry Service

As visitation to the SAP grows, the potential could exist to introduce a seasonal ferry service on Lake Jindabyne to enable visitors the chance to see parts of the lake, to get closer to Snowy Hydro infrastructure, and as a possible water taxi service to link, the western lake edge integrated resort precinct development to Jindabyne's town centre and residential locations on the eastern side of the lake.

The practicalities of this need to be further investigated with a focus on:

- where jetties/wharves and supporting infrastructure could be located;
- whether the concept could work with changing lake levels and/or would this make a ferry/water taxi service a seasonal operation only;
- what restrictions on operating on the lake may exist and what impact this may have on the viability of a service.

5.3.16. Public transport options to link attractions

Addressing traffic congestion issues especially during the winter ski season and the need to reduce car dependency in getting visitors to and from the various alpine resorts is noted in other technical reports for the SAP.

Public transport suggestions which have been discussed included electric or hydrogen-powered buses and other forms of rail-based people movers.

The viability of public transport will require careful testing as if car parking capacity at Thredbo and Perisher were to be increased and as currently planned, this would potentially mitigate the need for public transport options or at least make them less viable.

There may, therefore, need to be a financial mechanism to incentivise public transport use and/or disincentivise the use of private vehicles particularly into KNP which would need far greater assessment.

5.3.17. Lake Jindabyne Water Activities & Experiences

Lake Jindabyne is a major feature of the region though, for most locals and visitors, it acts as a passive backdrop only. Other successful alpine resort towns such as Queenstown, use the lake as a recreational asset for tightly controlled commercial activities (heritage ferry service across the lake, shark boat on water and underwater experiences, fishing excursions, kayaking etc.). Other less developed alpine towns with lakes such as Wanaka, also offer tightly controlled commercial and recreational on water uses.

Encouraging greater use of the lake for recreational activities during summer is important including:

- Fishing
- Kayaking
- Paddleboarding
- Yachting
- Water skiing
- Seasonal ferry services
- Scuba diving
- Other attractions

5.3.18. Mountain Biking Hub

The potential exists to introduce a central mountain bike hub just on the outskirts of Jindabyne with a location already designated by the local mountain bike club in the location of Widows Peak. The hub could provide a wide range of high-quality and diverse mountain biking trails which could also be used for biking events, possibly orienteering competitions, trail and cross-country running events etc. The total site covers just over 600 ha.

The mountain biking hub could include:

- a small-scale pop-up shop selling and hiring mountain bikes and related equipment/gear;
- a pop-up café to operate during peak periods and for events;
- an information facility to provide information on tracks at the hub and within the broader region generally;
- a bike repair/maintenance facility;
- toilets and related amenities;
- a pump track;
- a gold coin or similar bike wash facility; and
- upgraded parking facilities.

While general mountain biking at the hub would be free, the hub may also incorporate a commercial operator to provide mountain bike lessons, training courses and guided tours.

Figure 45 provides examples of best practice mountain biking hubs elsewhere, as competition in the region is high with facilities at Thredbo, as well as throughout NSW and Australia generally.

The mountain bike market is generally a reasonable yielding market if overnight stayers are able to be included, with data[41] suggesting:

- mountain biking is one of the world's fastest-growing recreational, sport and tourism activities;
- riders have a mid to high-income average;
- riders spend, on average, $3k - $6k per mountain bike, with more than 70% of mountain bike riders owning two or more bikes;
- enthusiasts ride frequently (2-3 times per week), and, where there is trail diversity, more often;
- 60% of those surveyed travel interstate annually to ride;
- an additional 8% travel interstate more than three times per year; and
- 34% of those surveyed travel overseas annually to ride: New Zealand is a popular destination.

With good tracks and supporting facilities, the SAP could capture a larger share of the higher-yielding mountain bike market. It will also help to continue position the SAP as a nature-based recreational getaway. The development of new tracks will also assist in reducing the level of unsanctioned trail usage by mountain bike riders. This will help to protect sensitive landscapes; reduce conflict with other land uses and decrease risk and liability for landowners and managers.

Ideally, mountain biking trails and circuits are aimed at encouraging an overnight visitor market and/or a day market where a fee for use is able to be charged. The cost of maintaining trails, associated signage and other supporting infrastructure is not insignificant and industry feedback indicates average maintenance cost per annum per kilometre starts close to $2k. As more trails are developed, finding additional ways of generating revenue from the users of these, is an important consideration.

Figure 45: Examples of best practice mountain biking hubs & pump tracks[42]

[41] https://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/media/vanilla_content/files/MTB%20Market%20Profile%20PP-%20Dirt%20Art.pdf (based on a survey of 2,844 mountain bikers) and http://wamba.org.au/docs/Western_Australian_Mountain_Bike_Strategy_2015-2020.pdf

[42] Dalby Bike Barn and Café at Dalby Forest, UK; Swinley Bike Hub, UK; Maydena Bike Park, Tasmania; Derby Bike Park, Tasmania; Pump Track Cesis Latvia,

5.3.19. Hallmark Summer Events

Part of the challenge of encouraging higher visitation to the region outside of the winter 3-month period is the low level of visitation for the remaining 9 months of the year and lack of compelling product to drive stronger non-winter visitation.

The potential exists to introduce a summer-based hallmark major event to act as a strong driver of visitation, ideally for a week or two. Consideration should be given to a sports-based event due to the natural strengths of the region and the ability to leverage off the environment. Options to consider might include the following.

- A road cycling event (we note there was an international event held in the region for 4 years, but this had to be discontinued because the event has to be relocated to other locations globally. A road cycling event would enable riders to come up in advance of the event to train so the length of time in the region could be longer. It would also provide the potential for individuals, clubs and teams to participate along with corporate groups.
- A triathlon or duathlon which may be able to offer mountain biking, kayaking, swimming, running, road cycling and/or other sports and which could also encourage individuals and groups to come to the region in advance to train.
- Motor rallying or motocross assuming there are the roads and areas to allow for this.
- Equestrian based eventing.
- Orienteering competitions.
- Fly fishing events and competitions.
- White water kayaking events.
- Mountain biking events and competition.
- Intrepid adventure backcountry event focussed on canyoning, rafting, rock climbing etc.

Potential may also exist to introduce, in time, arts and cultural-based events and festivals providing there is the critical mass of practitioners to support these events and festivals and there is financial support available from key state and federal level arts and cultural-based agencies to help activate arts programs.

Stafford discussed the potential for arts and cultural-based initiatives with Creative NSW noting that opportunities may be possible in the medium to longer-term as more initiatives are gradually activated. Details on the number of arts practitioners and range of forms of artistic expression within the wider region were not available.

5.3.20. Aviation Tourism Experiences

The potential development of the airfield at Jindabyne presents the opportunity to introduce tourism-based recreational aviation experiences. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- scenic flights;
- gliding and training;
- paragliding;
- parachuting;
- light aircraft training school;
- Microlights; and
- potentially a hub for visitation by light aircraft visitors (flying in) needing parking for aircraft, refuelling and basic maintenance.

5.3.21. Tubing Park (All Seasons)

North American resorts do snow play experiences particularly well and receive strong positive consumer feedback[43] because of this. Such experiences include tubing, tobogganing, safe places to build snowmen and throw snowballs, small ski slope areas, snowshoeing etc.

While there are some smaller-scale snow play opportunities within the Snowies, these are currently limited. Anecdotal feedback indicates that when snow play has been of a larger scale, it has been very well received.

The opportunity exists, therefore, to investigate introducing an all seasons tubing park which functions as a winter tubing park during the snow season and a summer tubing park during the offseason. Figure 46

We do note that some ski resorts are less keen to introduce snow play facilities/areas as the users still require toilets, parking, cafes. Changing rooms etc. but don't offer the yield of skiers or snowboarders. Whilst the SAP project team did investigate the possibility of introducing tubing and other snow play facilities at some of the smaller alpine accommodation nodes in KNP, most were highly constrained by environmental factors and lower altitude which was seen to impact on natural snow conditions, though they had cafes, toilets, car parking and other supporting infrastructure already in place along with accommodation.

Figure 46: Winter & summer tubing parks

5.3.22. Mountain Luge Experience

Potential exists to introduce a mountain luge experience, similar to what is currently offered in Queenstown and Rotorua in NZ. This would be a potential major year-round drawcard to support a wide visitor market ranging from family groups, groups of friends, couples, and others.

It is suggested that this be combined with other adventure experiences as part of a major adventure activity hub to offer a single location for these activities, and which would support a hub of retail and related amenities as well as being co-located with the proposed mountain biking hub.

Figure 47: Mountain luge examples

[43] On travel review websites such as TripAdvisor

5.3.23. Zorbing Attraction

Other attractions which are suggested to support summer-based activity include zorbing, with a variety of locations possible in and around Jindabyne.

Zorbing could also be an attraction added to the adventure activity hub along with the mountain luge, ziplines and mountain coaster and supporting retail and food and beverage amenities.

Figure 48: Zorbing example[44]

5.3.24. Indoor Fun Park

The SAP currently offers limited indoor family-friendly activities not only for visitors but also for locals.

The development of a higher-quality indoor fun park would not only provide an all-weather attraction, it would also provide a year-round activity for visitors and locals to participate in during all seasons.

It has the potential to offer activities for all age groups so all family types especially can be catered for and can offer a lower-priced activity for family groups.

It may also offer an important training space for elite and other sportspeople when not in general use so may have several complementary user groups to appeal to.

Figure 49: Fun park examples[45]

[44] Zorb Rotorua

[45] Bounce, Essendon, Melbourne; Supaworld Hobart, Tasmania; Chu Pea Park, Japan; Supaworld Hobart, Tasmania; Ninja 101, Sydney

5.3.25. Cantilevered Viewing Deck at Porcupine Rocks (KNP)

Though the terrain within KNP is generally lacking in the near-vertical drops often seen in other unique alpine locations, it is understood that a 2.5km walk from Perisher will get the visitor to Porcupine Rocks which offers spectacular vistas of various locations.

It will be important to create a highly attractive and exciting viewing deck and ideally with a cantilevered walkway to maximise the quality of the experience.

While it is suggested that this be a free experience, every effort should be made to encourage paid guided tours by park rangers so visitors get to understand the unique flora and fauna of KNP and the history and importance of the region's geology and ecology.

Figure 50: High-quality viewing deck examples[46]

[46] Skywalk, Grand Canyon, USA; Capilano Cliffwalk, Canada; Dachstein Stairway to Nothingness, Austria; Stegastein Viewing Platform, Norway; First Cliff Walk, Grindelwald, Switzerland

5.3.26. Day Walk from Charlotte Pass to Mt Kosciuszko Summit

Unlike many other alpine destinations globally, the profiling of Australia's highest peak (Mount Kosciuszko) is very passive and not seen as a "must-do" experience for domestic and international visitors.

Creating an attractive day walk experience and promoting the options of undertaking this during different times of the year, offers an important free experience and a way to actively encourage greater visitor interest into KNP.

This would require the upgrade of Charlotte Pass as a visitor node, including improved access and solutions to car parking needs. This opportunity needs to be considered with or without the introduction of a dedicated car parking station at Charlotte Pass, though evidence shows that during peak days in summer over 100 cars are often parked on the roadside leading to Charlotte Pass in the absence of a safe and dedicated parking station.

Consideration may also need to be given to a halfway platform to allow visitors to rest as the return walk is close to 20 km. Whilst some have suggested this should include an area for walkers to camp overnight, the implications of this need to be fully assessed firstly by NPWS as the area does have environmental constraints.

5.3.27. Perisher Branded 4-star Hotel/Apartment complex

Economic and planning firms involved in this SAP have talked about the need for Perisher to develop an alpine village, potentially on its existing car park site which is extensive.

We note that a previous attempt at developing an alpine village environment and new accommodation options as part of a master plan created 15-20 years ago has never been activated. Anecdotal feedback received indicated that it was not commercially viable then and may still struggle to be.

Perisher is noted to have a high percentage of club lodges (shared room facilities) though we understand that market demand is now for self-catered apartments along with fully serviced apartments and hotels.

If the economics shows it to be viable, consideration could be given to encouraging a new 4star branded apartment hotel to both add to the accommodation mix at Perisher and to better meet the needs of the visitor markets, especially during the winter ski season but also potentially at other times of the year. In addition, this may be able to fill the unfilled bed capacity which still exists at Perisher assuming that the apartment hotel can be accommodated within the existing development footprint of the alpine resort.

While we note that there are a variety of wider issues associated with the head lease for Perisher and the level of ageing infrastructure, these issues may need to be resolved before a wider alpine village concept can be realistically advocated for the area.

Whilst Perisher is a highly competitive alpine resort over the winter season due to its higher altitude (1700 m) than its competitors and therefore can leverage more reliable natural snow conditions, it would appear to struggle to be a year-round alpine destination. This is partly due to the surrounding terrain, the risk to threatened species. and the lack of non-winter based activities to support the investment required to turn Perisher into an all year round destination assuming this is practically possible.

A new higher quality and branded apartment hotel, however, may be able to help in positioning Perisher as a more attractive all year round destination rather than expecting to rely solely on the winter peak 3 month period to generate sufficient yield.

Figure 51: Alpine town look and feel examples[47]

[47] Lech, Austria; Silverstar Mountain Resort, Canada (Winter/Summer); Cortina D' Ampezzo, Italy

5.3.28. Thredbo 4 – 5-star Hotel/Resort

Thredbo has also indicated its desire to introduce further commercial accommodation to better meet the growing need of various visitor markets wanting fully inclusive hotel services.

An expanded developable footprint within the existing designated ski resort boundaries has been identified to the SAP project team with the potential to repurpose the current golf course on site.

Thredbo would need to determine if and when to plan for a new higher quality hotel/apartment complex and to ensure that supporting infrastructure (utilities services) have the capacity to cope.

5.3.29. Ranger Station Fishing Lodge & Glamping

The ranger station site on the Alpine Way and within proximity of Thredbo village is seen to offer a potentially desirable site for a quality 20-30 room fishing lodge and a separate glamping development with up to 20 glamping pods (rather than tents).

The site benefits from being:

- within a short drive of restaurants and cafes in Thredbo village
- on the Thredbo Valley cycle trail with the first cycle bridge being opposite the site on the Thredbo River
- being well-positioned for the Thredbo River with multiple locations for fly fishing
- having excellent existing access and egress from the Alpine Way
- already being a disturbed site as the Ranger Station was the previous lower chairlift station for the chairlift which used to access Charlotte Pass,
- having utility services already linked to the site,
- offering a highly attractive natural environment; and
- a site of sufficient size to enable sufficient building setbacks to be introduced and a clear separation between potential car parking for both guests and visitors, and the proposed fishing lodge and the separate glamping pod cluster.

Dependent on feasibility analysis undertaken, the potential may exist to offer a restaurant facility to cater to both casual diners as well as those staying in the lodge and the adjoining glamping pods.

The facility could also offer a discreet hub for mountain biking, bushwalking, and a guiding experience for fly fishing.

The following figure provides examples from other fly-fishing lodges in other unique locations.

Figure 52: Examples of other fly-fishing lodges[48]

[48] Poronui Lodge and Huka Lodge NZ which both specialise in fly fishing, and Currawong Lakes Lodge Tasmania

5.4. The Catalyst Projects

Although there are numerous individual tourism projects identified, only a few of these are deemed to be catalyst projects: that is, they are seen as major drivers of stronger visitation and will support the viability of introducing other projects which can leverage off them. The four tourism catalyst projects identified, either through Stafford's research and analysis or as advised by the government are:

- development of the Jindabyne lakefront to include a small scale boat harbour/marina, waterfront retail/café/bar facilities, commercial accommodation site, cycleways and with the ability to link easily across to the Jindabyne town centre for safe pedestrian movements,
- a lakeside eco precinct on the western side of the lake offering a new 4+ star resort, separate serviced apartment complex, conference and function centre, signature golf course, health and wellness day spa, lake-based recreational activities etc; and
- an activity adventure hub (including a new mountain biking circuit) up behind Jindabyne (Widows Peak) and outside of KNP and most likely offering the proposed local mountain biking hub with multiple trails of different levels of difficulty, a luge experience, multi zipline and or mountain coasters, etc and with associated retail facilities so it offers a composite attraction with multiple experiences for all ages and with the ability to operate throughout the day and into evenings, all year round.
- the medium to longer-term introduction of improved air access into the SAP and wider region leveraging off existing facilities (Canberra Airport as the international gateway, Cooma Airport as the intra and interstate gateway, and Jindabyne airfield as the aviation recreational hub for scenic flights and other tourism-aviation experiences).

Some of the catalyst projects are therefore a mix of bundling of various single project elements together. Based on the visitor forecasting provided, Stafford and CIE are of the opinion that if all of these various catalyst projects are introduced, the ability exists to achieve the forecasted visitor growth over the period 2021 to 2061. However, if some of these catalyst projects are not pursued, this is more likely to result in visitor forecasts reducing.

It is also important to note that many of these catalyst projects provide the leverage for many of the other tourism development projects identified to be activated, so a reduction of these catalyst projects is likely to also result in fewer development projects overall being introduced.

In turn, this may impact on the ability of the SAP overall to deliver on its desired outcomes (including leveraging greater private sector investment to support the level of government intervention) and strengthening year-round visitation.

5.5. Top Line Investment Requirements

33 recommended development elements have been identified, to support and grow the visitor economy and deliver on the Tourism Development Study goals. Many of these will directly benefit local residents through increased recreational and social amenities, services and employment opportunities, as well as improving the offering to existing visitor markets and helping to grow new visitor markets.

The recommendations have been categorised according to whether they are:

- **private/commercial projects:** commercial tourism projects for the private sector to pursue/invest in because the level of ROI is expected to be sufficiently attractive to stimulate private sector interest; and
- **public projects:** projects which will need to be funded by the public sector as a commercial return is not possible but where important public good outcomes and benefits can be derived.

Table 12 outlines the investment type for each project identified in this Study and demonstrates the following.

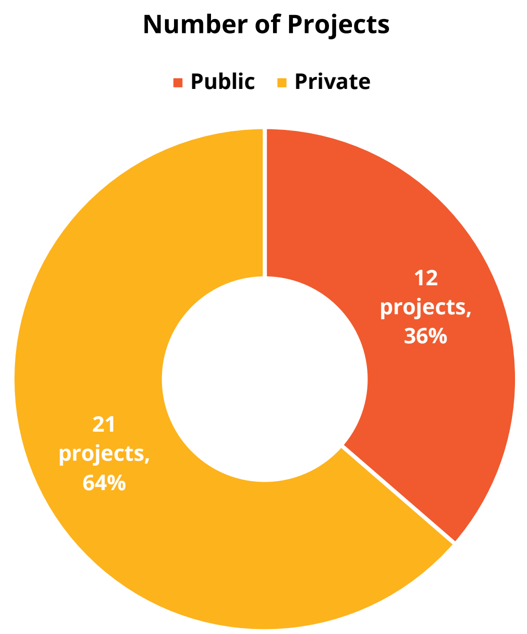
- Summarising the opportunities by project proponent type demonstrates that **36% (12) are public projects and 64% (21) are private/commercial projects** though further analysis and consultation is required to assess if some may be more easily activated as public-private partnership opportunities.
- The total capex requirement to implement all tourism specific opportunities is estimated at approximately **$559m**, noting that this does not include any capex associated with potentially upgrading for the Jindabyne airfield and the Cooma Airport. Both projects have yet to be costed though initial work for Jindabyne airfield in 2015 estimated the cost at $35m.
- The estimated capex only relates to specific tourism development projects and their associated infrastructure (access roads, utilities to sites etc.) and excludes any other forms of general infrastructure or development such as the proposed connector road in Jindabyne and facilities associated with the sport and recreation centre upgrades and town centre improvements etc.
- Of the total capex, **private/commercial funded investment opportunities total an estimated $413m, and public-funded projects total an estimated $146m** illustrating that 74% of estimated tourism investment is expected to be funded through private sector sources whilst public funding is able to leverage direct private investment on a ratio of 1:2.8.
- What the top-line investment elements do not include are the likely capex associated with improving the public realm, particularly in Jindabyne and in the alpine ski resorts such as Thredbo, Perisher, Guthega and Charlotte Pass and in locations

where additional infrastructure support is going to be required (covering road upgrades, car parking, utility supply etc). These elements are related to activating private investment for tourism projects but will require further appraisal with client stakeholders to determine this.

- The estimated capex costs provided are top-line estimates only, to enable an initial understanding of the possible investment quantum from public and private investment sources. It is important to note that if this exercise was a traditional destination management plan without the support of government through a SAP or similar process, the number of projects would likely be far less as would the estimated capital investment indicated. But for the SAP and government intervention, it would not be possible to introduce all of the projects being proposed for the region. This, therefore, is a unique one-off opportunity to leverage far stronger levels of private investment due to government funding support.
- At this early stage of assessment, no provision is made yet for land purchase or lease costs and it is assumed that suitable sites can be found and secured. Importantly, and unlike traditional tourism destination management plans and strategies which generally only reflect requirements for 5-10 year forecasted periods, the following development elements are suggested to support a far longer 40-year time frame, which the SAP requires (out to 2061). They, therefore, need to be considered in this longer time frame context as many may not occur till post-2030, and as mechanisms to help:
  - support the repositioning of the region as a year-round visitor destination;
  - address the potential negative impacts of climate change on reduced snow conditions and potential winter-based existing activities;
  - stimulate a stronger and more sustainable visitor economy with associated social benefits for the local community and improved environmental outcomes; and
  - to support the government desire to invest in the SAP region as a means to generate stronger economic and social uplift and sustainability of the region for the longer term, noting that without the SAP and government intervention, generating a stronger level of economic uplift is far less likely to occur.

Finally, these are top-line cost estimates only and do not include any provision for design or escalation contingencies, developer margin or consultant and design fees. All projects would need to be subject to feasibility study assessments and supporting business cases to verify their viability. Capital cost top-line estimates are merely provided to broadly illustrate the potential quantum of investment (public and private) which may be required and to illustrate what level of private investment especially, the SAP government activation and investment may be able to leverage.

Figure 53: Investment Requirements (by Project Type & Investment Type)



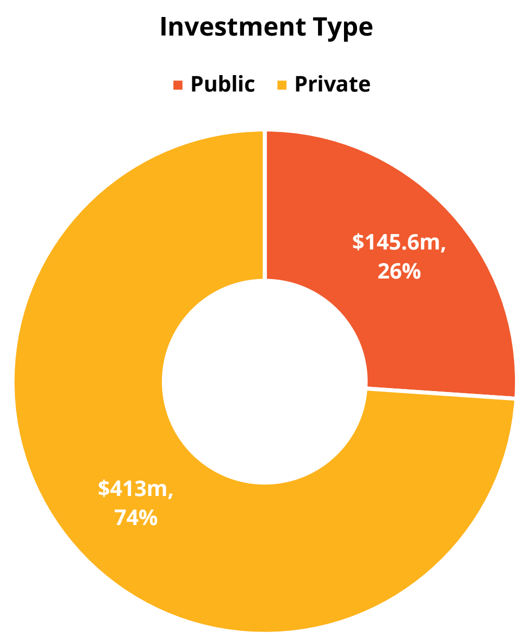


Table 12: Development Element Investment Estimates[49]

Development Over 40 Year Period (2021-2061)	Public	Private	Total	% of Total
Lakeside Eco-Resort Precinct		$205m	$205m	37%
Eco 4-5-star 250-room Hotel		*$77.5m*	*$77.5m*	*14%*
120 Owner Occupied Apartments		*$36.0m*	*$36.0m*	*6.4%*
National Alpine Conference Centre (500-Seat)		*$45.0m*	*$45.0m*	*8.1%*
Hot Pools & Wellness Facility		*$8.5m*	*$8.5m*	*1.5%*
Fly Fishing School		*$2.0m*	*$2.0m*	*0.4%*
18-Hole Signature Golf Course		*$36.0m*	*$36.0m*	*6.4%*
Supporting infrastructure (lake boardwalk, pontoons, access roads, utilities into s	*$20.5m*		*$20.5m*	3.7%
250-room Athlete/Student Accommodation (as part of the Sports and Rec cc	$37.5m		$37.5m	7%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	*$3.8m*		*$3.8m*	*0.7%*
4-5 star Boutique Resort and Spa 60-90 rooms (Copper Tom)		$31.5m	$31.5m	6%
Supporting infrastructure (lake boardwalk, access roads, utilities into site)	*$3.2m*		*$3.2m*	*0.6%*
Outdoor Adventure Hub (Zip Lines & Mountain Coasters)		$28.0m	$28.0m	5.0%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)		*$2.8m*	*$2.8m*	*0.5%*
Airport/Airfield enhancements (TBA by Govt as longer term)			$0	0.0%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	*$0*		*$0*	*0.0%*
KNP Iconic Walk	$1.2m		$1.2m	0.2%
Snowy Mountains Heritage Centre	$35.0m		$35.0m	6.3%
E-Bike Cycleways	$5.0m		$5.0m	0.9%
Hallmark Winter Sporting Event	$1.0m		$1.0m	0.18%
Upgrade of Ngarigo, Thredbo Diggings and Island Bend Campgrounds	$11.5m		$11.5m	2.1%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	*$1.0m*		*$1.0m*	0.2%
New, Higher-Quality Destination Holiday Park		$22.0m	$22.0m	3.9%
Evening 2 Week Seasonal Sound & Light Show (1 x winter; 1 x summer)	$1.0m		$1.0m	0.18%
Iconic Overnight Horse Treks and expanded trails network		$750k	$750k	0.13%
Water taxi/ferry service		$2.0m	$2.0m	0.36%
Supporting infrastructure (lake boardwalk, pontoons, access roads, utilities into s	*$1.3m*		*$1.3m*	*0.23%*
Lake Jindabyne Water Activities & Experiences		$500k	$500k	0.09%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	*$250k*		*$250k*	*0.04%*
Mountain Biking Hub (Master Planned)	$8.0m		$8.0m	1.43%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	$2.0m		*$2.0m*	*0.36%*
Hallmark Summer Sporting Event		$250k	$250k	0.04%
Aviation Tourism Experiences		$500k	$500k	0.09%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	*$100k*		*$100k*	*0.02%*
Tubing Park (All Seasons)		$1.2m	$1.2m	0.21%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	*$100k*		*$100k*	*0.02%*
Mountain Luge Experience		$25.0m	$25.0m	4.48%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)		$1.0m	*$1.0m*	*0.18%*
Zorbing Attraction		$250k	$250k	0.04%
Indoor Fun Park	$1.0m	$1.0m	$2.0m	0.36%
Major Cantilevered Viewing Sky Deck at Porcupine Rocks	$1.1m		$1.1m	0.20%
Day Walk (Charlotte Pass to Mt Kosciuszko Summit)	$150k		$150k	0.03%
Perisher Branded 4-5-star Hotel (120 + rooms)		$36.0m	$36.0m	6.45%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)		*$500k*	*$500k*	*0.09%*
Thredbo Branded 4-5 star Hotel (120 + rooms)		$36.0m	$36.0m	*6.45%*
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)		*$500k*	*$500k*	*0.09%*
Ranger Station Fishing Lodge & Glamping		$18.0m	$18.0m	3.22%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	*$2.0m*		*$2.0m*	0.36%
Parking area and turning circle at Charlotte Pass	$8.0m		*$8.0m*	1.43%
Supporting infrastructure (access roads, utilities into site)	$1.0m		*$1.0m*	0.18%
Total	**$146m**	**$413m**	**$558m**	**100%**

[49] The capex figures offered are indicative only and subject to feasibility assessments and business cases to test their viability. Figures offered are based on similar project development costs from other projects in Australia but do not contain provision for development or escalation contingencies, developer margins or design and related consultancy fees. They, therefore, should be considered conservative at best.

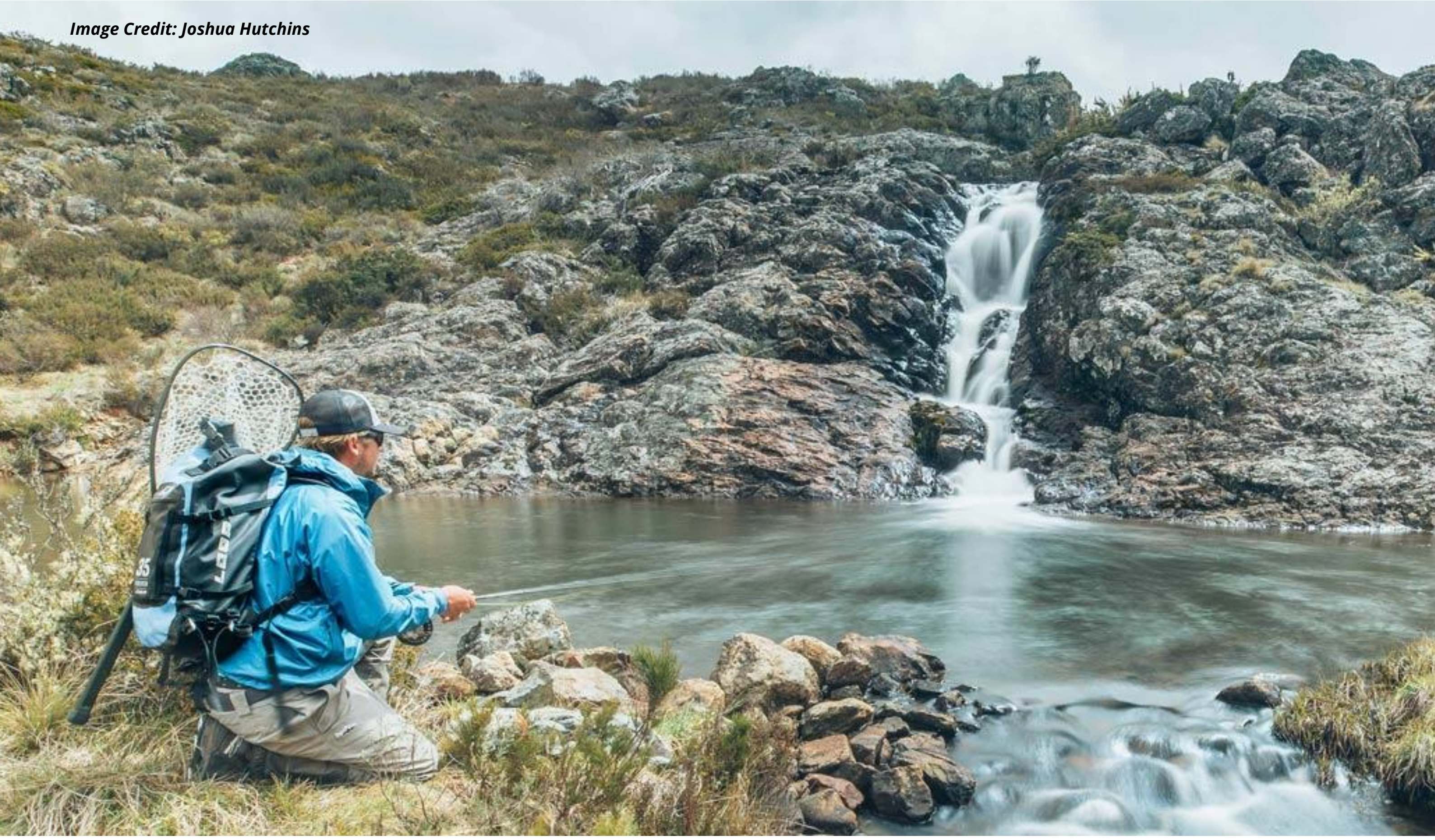


Image Credit: Joshua Hutchins

5.6. Additional Projects

There are also additional projects which need to be noted though they may have already be funded so they are not contained in Table 12. These include:

- the Gaden Trout Hatchery on the western side of Lake Jindabyne which we understand have recently received $3m for upgrading the facility and as they are also located along the Thredbo Valley Track, could provide potential as a tourism cluster noting that the area is picturesque;
- the upgraded cottages already being renovated and repurposed as attractive visitor accommodation at Creel Bay by NPWS which potentially could also support the upgrade to a variety of surrounding camping sites; and
- Lake Jindabyne Dam Lookout though we note the need to avoid encouraging visitors to travel to the area below the dam wall as Snowy Hydro wish to avoid safety risks though an improved pull over area at the top of the dam wall for vehicles would be sufficient.

In addition, the potential may exist to offer some attractive quality but very discreet interpretation at Curiosity Rocks on the western side of the lake, which is noted as a dedicated Aboriginal Place of significance to the Aboriginal community. We have deliberately not included any firm recommendation for this area as it should be determined through a consultation process with local elders and the wider Aboriginal community before anything is suggested, let alone recommended.

As cultural sites need to be protected first and foremost, it may or may not be appropriate to propose visitor interpretation or other infrastructure unless actively supported by the local Aboriginal community. We note this site, however, as it is unique and may be of interest to a range of visitor markets.

5.7. Encouraging Investment

New development is needed to offer an expanded product mix, to entice visitor markets who currently do not yet see the product offering year-round as sufficiently appealing and hence why non-winter visitation is still relatively small.

This is an important investment-related consideration, as current achieved annual occupancy rates for most accommodation facilities are generally too low to support the need for new development based on market demand considerations alone. What is, therefore, being suggested, is a supply-led approach, to bolster destination appeal and encourage new visitor markets focussed on visiting throughout the year, rather than continuing to place pressure on the winter peak season period where supply and demand appear to match.

To achieve this outcome, however, may require State Government intervention to support new forms of tourism investment more strongly (as indicated in the development elements suggested) through:

- reducing imposts and charges for development overall;
- zoning more sites fit for purpose for tourism (SP3 tourism zoning);
- supporting development projects by offering ways to help de-risk projects; and
- where possible, securing land parcels for tourism projects which can be leased long term and/or sold to private developers and operators to help activate select projects.

Table 13 provides some examples from elsewhere of how different agencies have supported new tourism development in areas where development would otherwise not have occurred.

The other important consideration is the potential to find ways to encourage improved sustainability principles and improved building design to be introduced for new development especially if various forms of support can be offered by the government to help de-risk projects.

Government intervention should therefore be considered important to help achieve improved sustainability outcomes, which new forms of tourism development could be actively encouraged to support.

Table 13: Summary of mechanisms to support investment & help de-risk tourism development projects

Stakeholder who can effect change:
◆ Federal Government ■ State Government ● Local Government ▲ Other

Non-financial Incentives	Floor space bonuses & height incentives ●	Release of Crown land for select tourism development ● ■ ◆	Mixed-use development schemes to offer greater site flexibility ● ■	Exclusive zoning for tourism developments ● ■
Non-financial Incentives	Reduction in accessible room requirements for accom facilities under 10 rooms ●	Planning & Process Support ● ▲		
Financial Incentives	Tax exemptions/ concessions ■	Accelerated depreciation allowance for hotels etc. ■	Assisting with access to utility supply ● ■	Government-subsidised loans ■ ◆
Financial Incentives	Income guarantee by operators for owner-occupied apartments etc ▲	Purchase of land and concessions on long term ground leases ● ■	Incentives for heritage conversion to tourism use ● ■	Direct Government Investment ● ■ ◆

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Image Credit: Destination NSW

PART 6: APPENDICES

Additional information which supports the Tourism Development Study.

Appendix 1 Historic Tourism Demand

How Visitation Data Has Been Compiled

Visitor data has been compiled using the National and International Visitor Survey (NVS and IVS) data published by Tourism Research Australia (TRA). The NVS and IVS provide visitation data based on 'Statistical Area 2' (SA2) boundaries. Every LGA and Tourism Region in Australia is made up of one or more SA2s. The SA2s included in the Snowy Mountains Tourism Region are illustrated in Figure 54[50].

The SAP area is included in the "**Jindabyne – Berridale**" SA2 and is the primary focus of this tourism demand assessment. Although the Jindabyne – Berridale SA2 boundary is larger than the SAP boundary, the vast majority of tourism activity that occurs within this SA2 is situated within the SAP boundary.

As per the methodology applied by TRA, visitation data is often averaged over three-year periods, rather than being provided on an annual basis. This minimises the impact of variability in estimates from year to year and provides more robust estimates.

The periods assessed in this Study include:

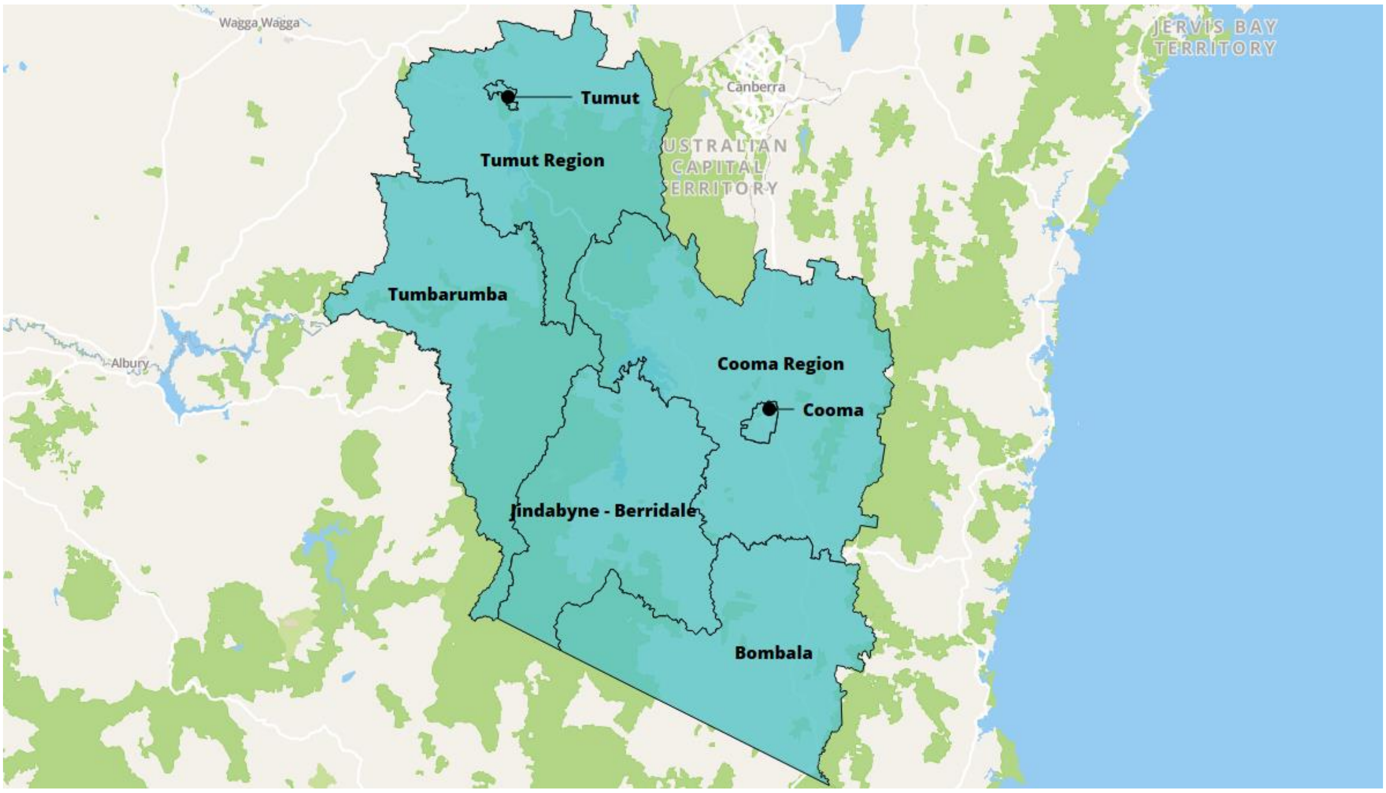
- December 2011 to December 2013, referred to as **2013**;
- December 2014 to December 2016, referred to as **2016**; and
- December 2017 to December 2019, referred to as **2019**.

December YE data (unless otherwise specified) has been applied.

Visitation data is collected by TRA based on visitor type. These include:

- **Domestic day trip** travellers comprising: true visitors: visitors who may be staying overnight in other areas but undertake day trips to the area being assessed; and locals visitors: domestic day trip visitors if they travel more than 25 km one-way and stay in the area being assessed for more than 4 hours (travel to/from work is excluded) so if a resident from Cooma travels to Jindabyne and spends the day (but not overnight) shopping etc. they would be considered a day trip visitor to the SAP.
- **Domestic overnight travellers**: including overnight travel by Australians who stay away from home at least one night, at a place at least 40 km from home.
- **International overnight travellers:** visitors from abroad who stay in the SA2 overnight (international day trip travel is not assessed as part of the IVS).

Figure 54: SA2s in the Snowy Mountains Tourism Region



[50] There is an additional SA2 that is included in the IVS and NVS titled "Snowy Mountains Region No Further Defined (NFD)" which includes data for which an SA2 was not provided.

Visitation to the SAP (Jindabyne – Berridale SA2)

+ Total Visitation

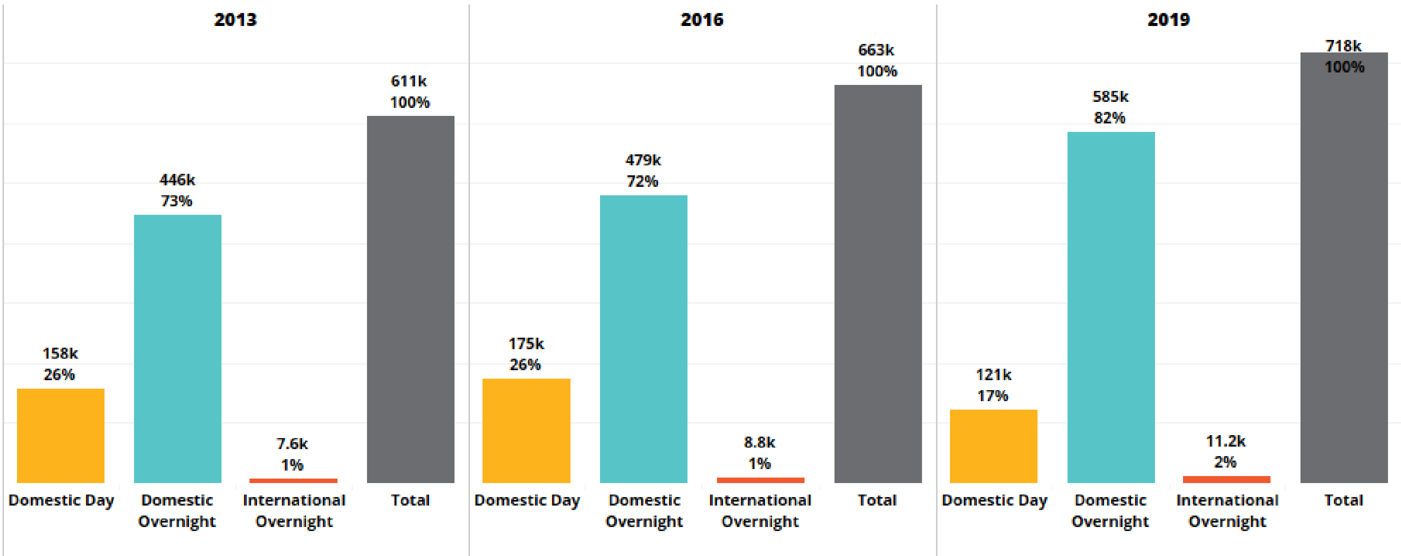
Figure 55 provides a summary of visits to the SAP from 2013 to 2019. In 2019, an estimated 718k domestic and international visitors travelled to the SA2. This is an increase of 18% (107k) from 2013. This growth, however, should be considered within the context of the strong growth levels achieved in other destinations, such as the Blue Mountains (which grew by 58%, or, 1.7m visitors) and NSW as a whole (which grey by 47%, or, 37.7m visitors) over the same period. The growth in visitation experienced within the SAP is, therefore, relatively small comparatively.

Growth to the SAP over the last 10 years has also been modest (2% compounded annual growth rate) compared with the NSW State average of 4.7% compounded annual growth.

The primary visitor market for the SAP is the domestic overnight market, comprising 81% of all travel in the SAP in 2019. There is little international overnight visitation to the SAP, estimated at 11.2k (totalling 1.6% of all visitation) visitors in 2019 and this market has grown modestly over the period assessed.

Unlike many other destinations throughout Australia, the domestic day trip market comprises a relatively small share of visitation to the SAP. This is primarily because of the distance between the SAP and major generating markets such as Sydney. In many destinations Australia-wide, domestic day travel exceeds domestic overnight travel. Although the domestic day market is an important element in the tourism market mix, the desire to encourage stronger overnight visitation is driven by the increased yield (through spend on accommodation, F&B, experiences etc.) that an overnight market is able to generate.

Figure 55: Visitation (by visitor type) to the SAP (2013-2019)[51]



[51] Compiled from Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey

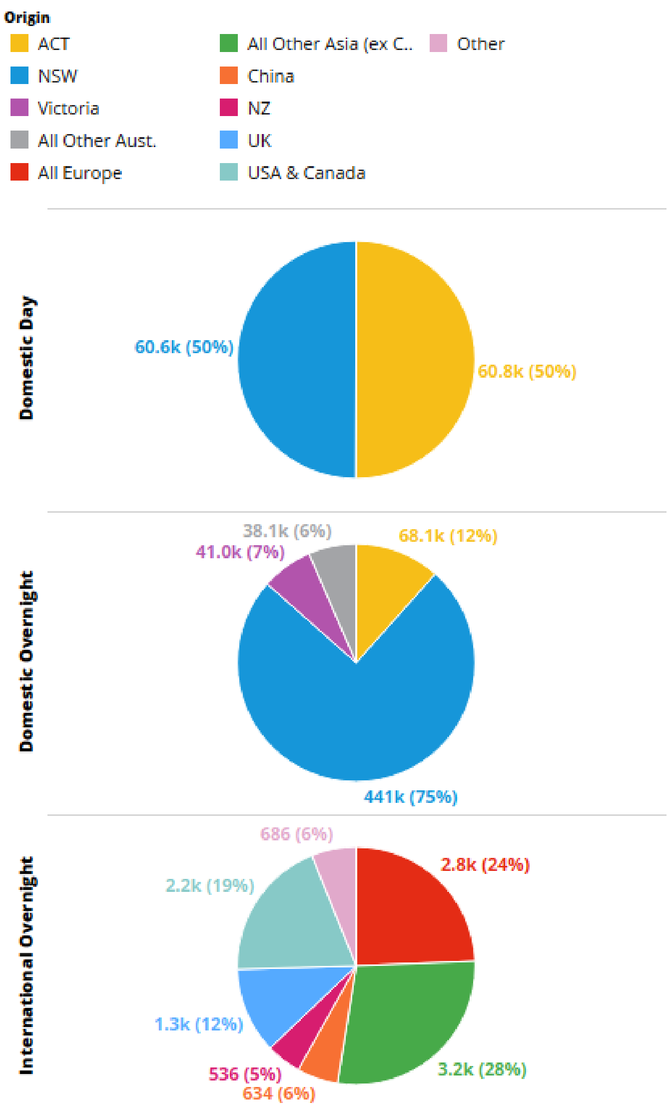
+ Visitation by Origin

New South Wales (NSW) is a major generating market for the SAP, comprising 50% of day trip travel and 75% of domestic overnight travel (see Figure 56). This is followed by the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) who comprise 50% of day trip travel and, a smaller, but still significant in terms of visitor numbers, 12% of domestic overnight travel.

Victorians make up a relatively small proportion of domestic overnight visitation (7%) and this is likely because the major Victorian generating market (Melbourne) is in closer proximity to the Victorian ski fields (such as Mount Hotham and Falls Creek).

While the international visitor market comprises a very small share of visitation to the SAP, the majority of these visitors are from "All Other Asia (ex-China)", followed by "Other Europe" and "USA & Canada".

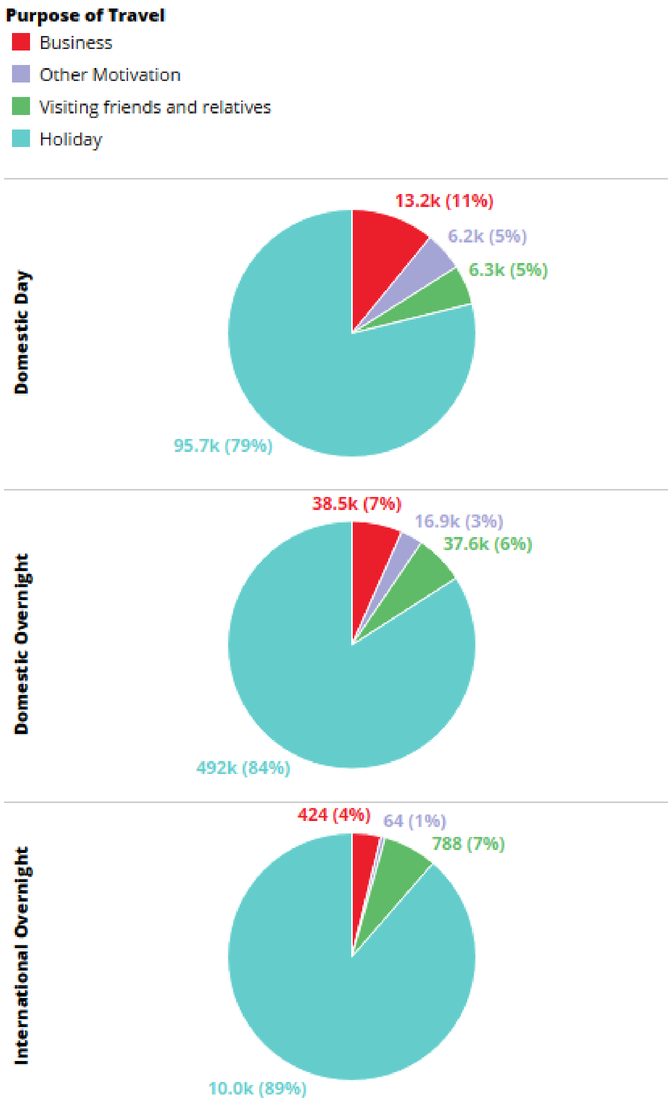
Figure 56: Visitation to the SAP by Visitor Origin (2019)[52]



+ Visitation by Purpose

The SAP is very much a holiday destination. Across all visitor markets, holiday travel comprises 79% or more of travel to the SAP (see Figure 57). This is well above the NSW State average of 43% demonstrating the strength and focus of the region as a holiday destination but also its vulnerability if the reason for travelling is negatively impacted.

Figure 57: Visitation to the SAP by Purpose of Travel (2019)[53]



[52] Compiled from Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey

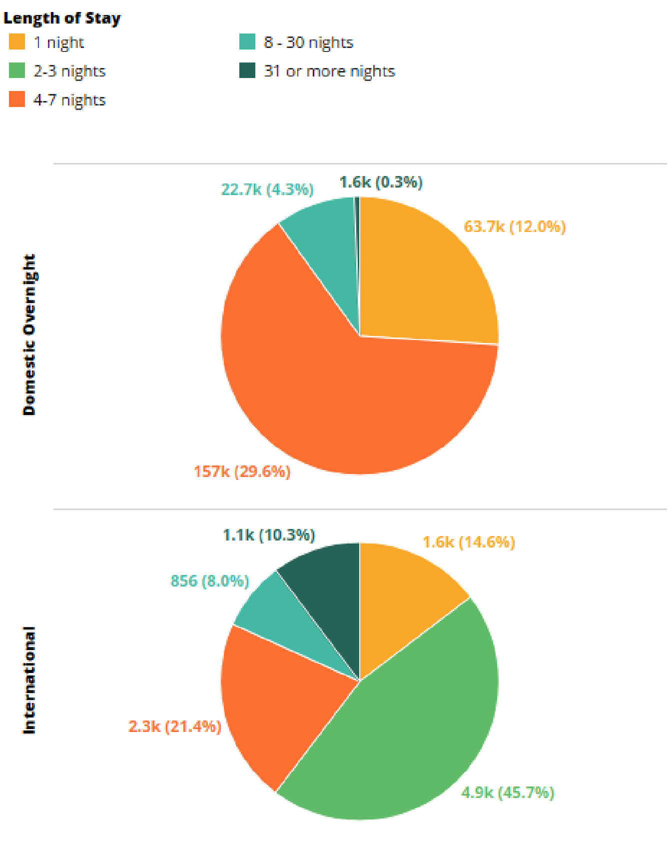
[53] Compiled from Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey

+ Length of Stay

Across all domestic and international visitor types, 2-3 nights was the average length of stay in the SAP, comprising 54% of domestic overnight travel and 46% of international travel (see Figure 58). This reflects a likely visitor stay pattern of Friday – Sunday or Saturday – Monday, with visitors travelling to the SAP for a weekend break rather than midweek. Getting more domestic visitors to come midweek and outside of school holiday periods is a challenge which may require new product and facilities to solve.

In 2019, international visitors were more likely to undertake trips over a longer duration, with just over 18% staying 8 nights or more, compared with only 4.6% of domestic overnight visitors. This is likely impacted by the temporary/seasonal workforce (although a large proportion of seasonal workers are unlikely to be captured in the IVS).

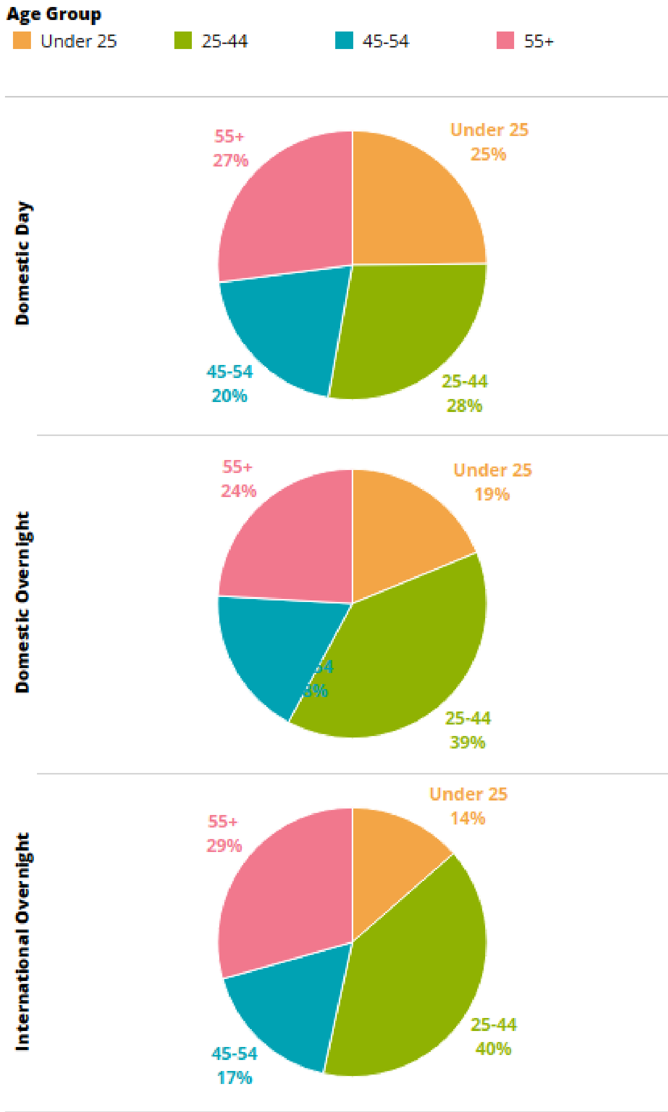
Figure 58: Visitation to the SAP by Length of Stay (2019)[54]



+ Visitation by Age

The predominant age group of visitors to the SAP across all visitor types were 25- to 44-year olds, reflecting service age groups of "young workforce" and "parents and homebuilders" (see Figure 59). It is not recognised as a destination for younger families or older travellers but could be with a wider product range of year-round experiences.

Figure 59: SAP by Visitor Age Group (2019)[55]



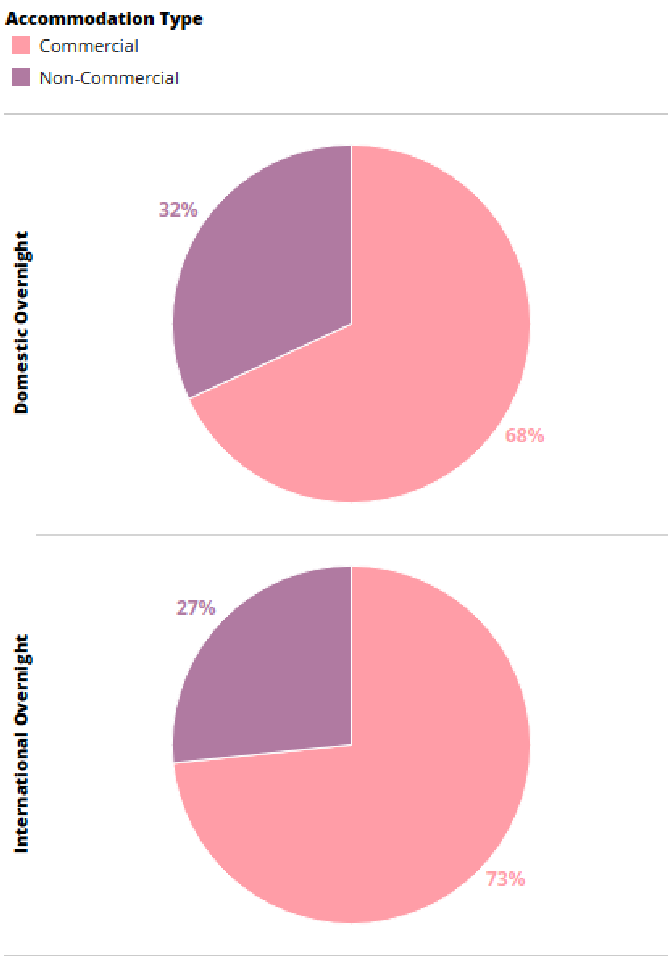
[54] Compiled from Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey

[55] Compiled from Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey

+ Accommodation Utilised by Overnight Visitors

Figure 60 demonstrates the type of accommodation utilised by visitors to the SA2. It illustrates that over two-thirds of domestic and international overnight visitors stay in commercial accommodation. Commercial accommodation - as defined by TRA – includes hotels, resorts, motels, motor inns, backpackers, B&Bs, commercial caravan parks and camping grounds, rented homes/apartments and backpackers/hostels. Non-commercial accommodation includes friends/relatives' properties, own properties and non-commercial caravan/camping.

Figure 60: Accommodation Type Used by Visitors to the SAP (2019)[56]



+ Seasonality of Visitation

The level of seasonality of the SA2 (and the broader Snowies region) is well-recognised as a barrier to encouraging investment into the visitor economy. Figure 61 on the following page demonstrates the extent of seasonality broken down by visitor market.

Out of the three visitor market categories assessed, the domestic overnight market (which is the major market for the SA2) is the most seasonal, with 58% of visitation in 2019 occurring in Quarter 3 (July – September). Quarter 3 comprises the vast bulk of the ski season. Importantly, over the three time periods assessed (2013 – 2019), the proportion of domestic overnight travel occurring during Quarter 3 has not changed (remaining at 58%) reflecting this is a well-established pattern and marketing efforts to grow visitation out of the winter period have struggled.

The domestic day market is also highly seasonal (54% of travel in 2019 occurred in Q3), however, the data demonstrates a greater fluctuation over the years in when domestic day travellers visit. This could potentially be influenced by snowfall levels (with a greater number of residents in surrounding areas and Canberra) making day trips down when snowfall has been particularly good, and they can return home the same day.

The international market is less seasonal and has a greater propensity to visit during spring/summer months, with 50% of travel occurring during Q1 and Q4 in 2019 (compared with only 27% for the domestic overnight market). Although this reflects an opportunity to be leveraged, it is important to recognise that the international market comprises a very small share of visitation to the SAP, and, in terms of real numbers, international visitation in Q1 and Q4 was 5.7k visitors compared with 156.8k domestic overnight visitors over the same period.

+ Activities Undertaken (Domestic Visitors)

Figure 62 on the following page demonstrates the estimated level of participation by domestic visitors in the SAP in skiing, bushwalking, cycling and fishing. It is important to note that this data:

- is non-unique, that is, one visitor can participate in multiple activities;
- cycling includes mountain biking and road cycling; and
- is based on the NVS' question regarding activities undertaken while travelling in the SAP (the IVS only asks this question for the entire trip so it is not possible to narrow down where these activities are undertaken).

The data demonstrates the strength of alpine-based recreation within the SAP, following by bushwalking experiences throughout KNP.

[56] Compiled from Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey

Figure 61: SAP Seasonality of Visitation by Visitor Type (2013 - 2019)[57]

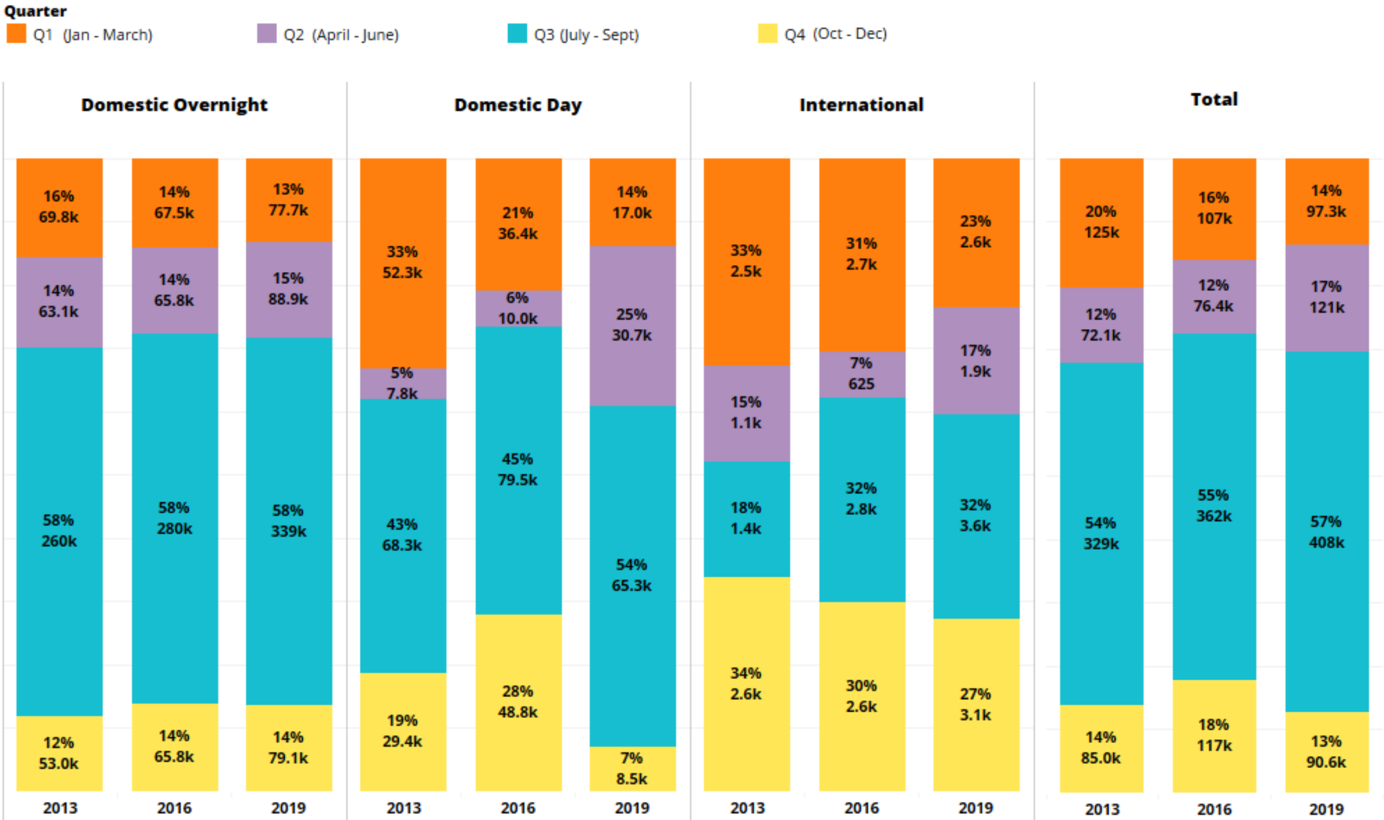
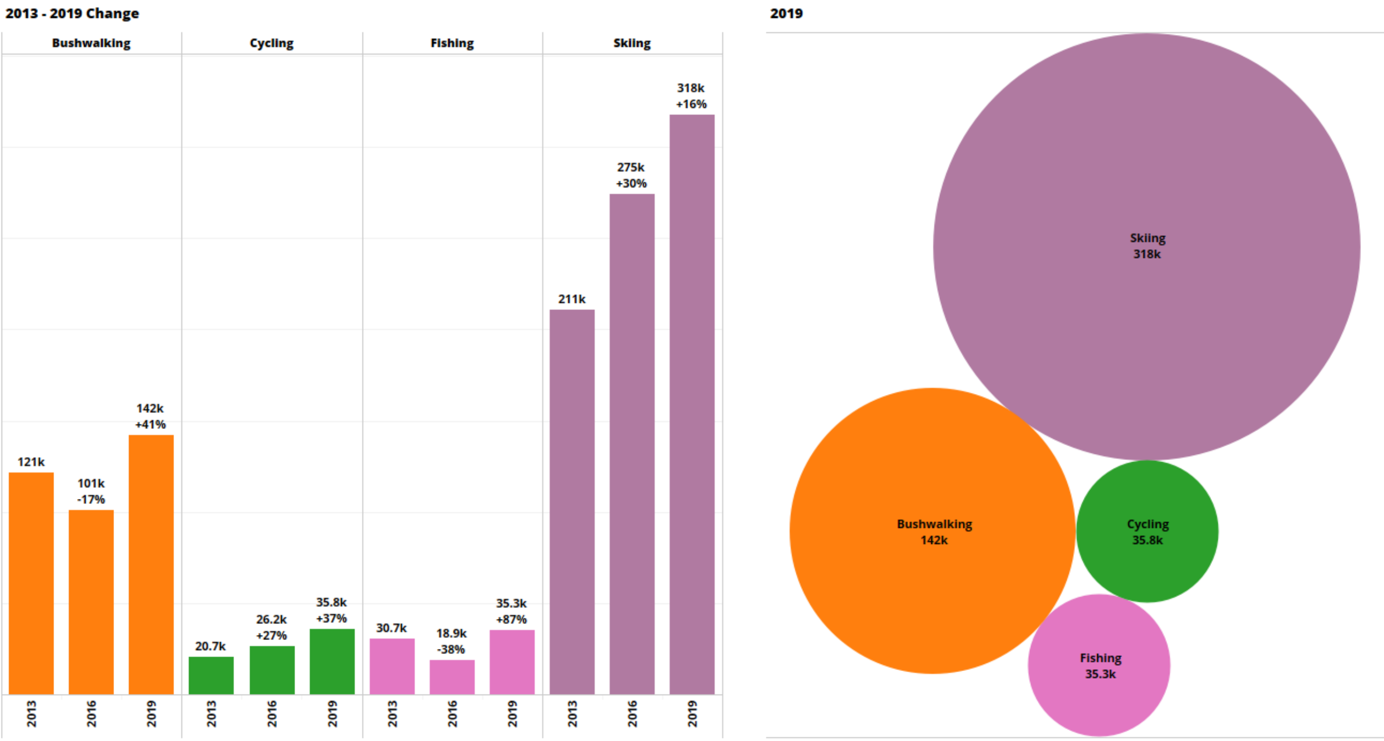


Figure 62: SAP Activities Undertaken by Domestic Visitors Only (2013 - 2019)[58]



[57] Compiled from Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey

[58] Compiled from Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey

+ Visitor Spend in the Jindabyne – Berridale SA2

In 2019, it is estimated that visitors spent $445m[59] in the SA2 (comprising 56% of total regional spend[60]). The significance of the domestic overnight market is not only evident in the actual number of visitors travelling to the region but also by the extent of spend by these visitors. In 2019, domestic overnight visitors comprised 82% of travel to the SA2 – their spend, however, represented 96% of all visitor spend (see Figure 63).

Applying visitor spend to seasonal visitation data (see Figure 64) demonstrates that the largest proportion of visitor spend is attributed to the winter period (quarter 3). This is thought to be an underestimate because of the much stronger level of average visitor spend which is generated in winter (higher accommodation rates, spend on snow sports etc.) than in summer periods.

If average spend were able to be broken down according to season (this data is currently not available), it is suspected that the vast majority of visitor spend would, therefore, occur in Q3.

Figure 63: SAP Estimated Total Spend by Visitors (2013 - 2019)[61]

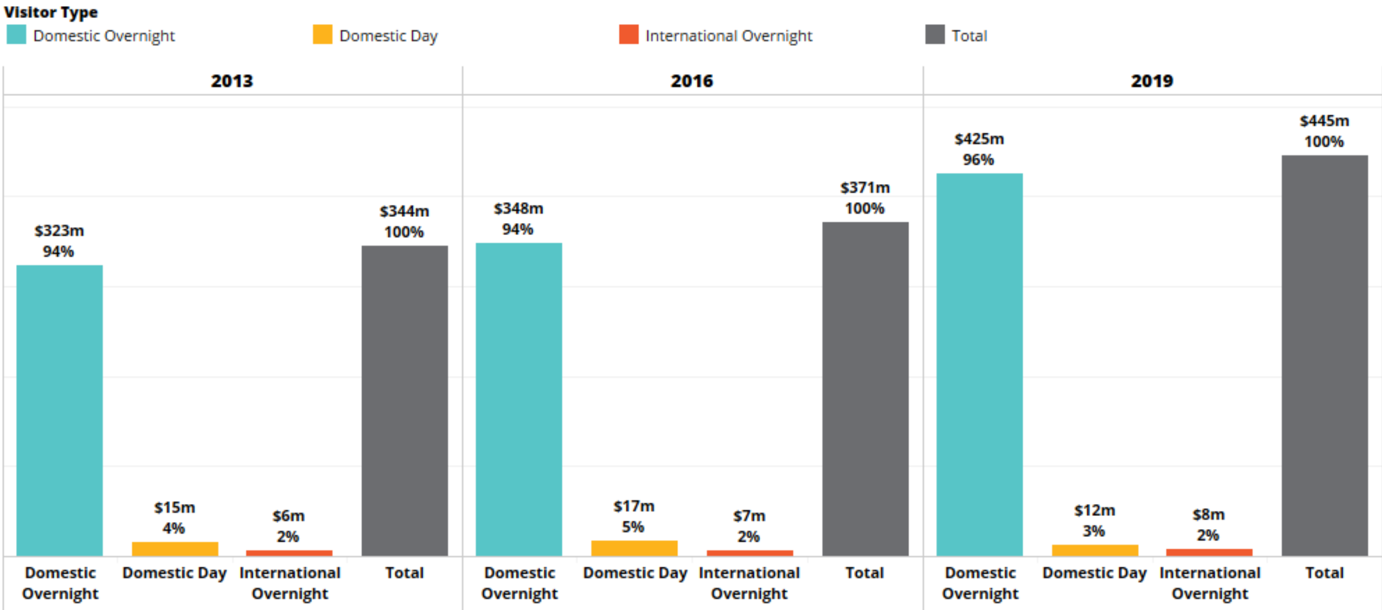
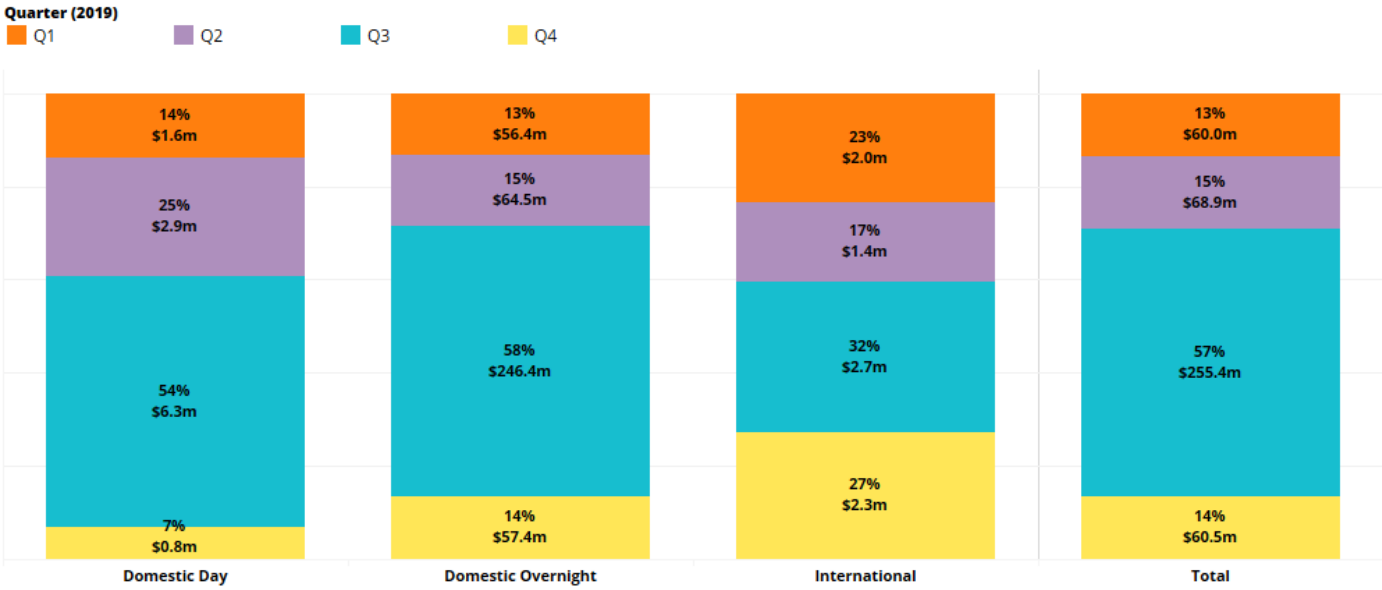


Figure 64: SAP Estimated Total Spend by Quarter (2019)[62]



[59] Visitor spend has been determined based on average spend per visitor estimates (from the DNSW Travel to Snowy Mountains Tourism Region Year ended December 2019 profile) applied to the SA2 visitor estimates.

[60] In 2019, visitors spent an estimated $801m in the Snowy Mountains tourism region (DNSW Travel to Snowy Mountains Tourism Region Year ended December 2019)

[61] Compiled from Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey. Average spend per visitor, per trip figures are based on figures provided in

[62] Compiled from Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey. Average spend per visitor, per trip figures are based on figures provided in

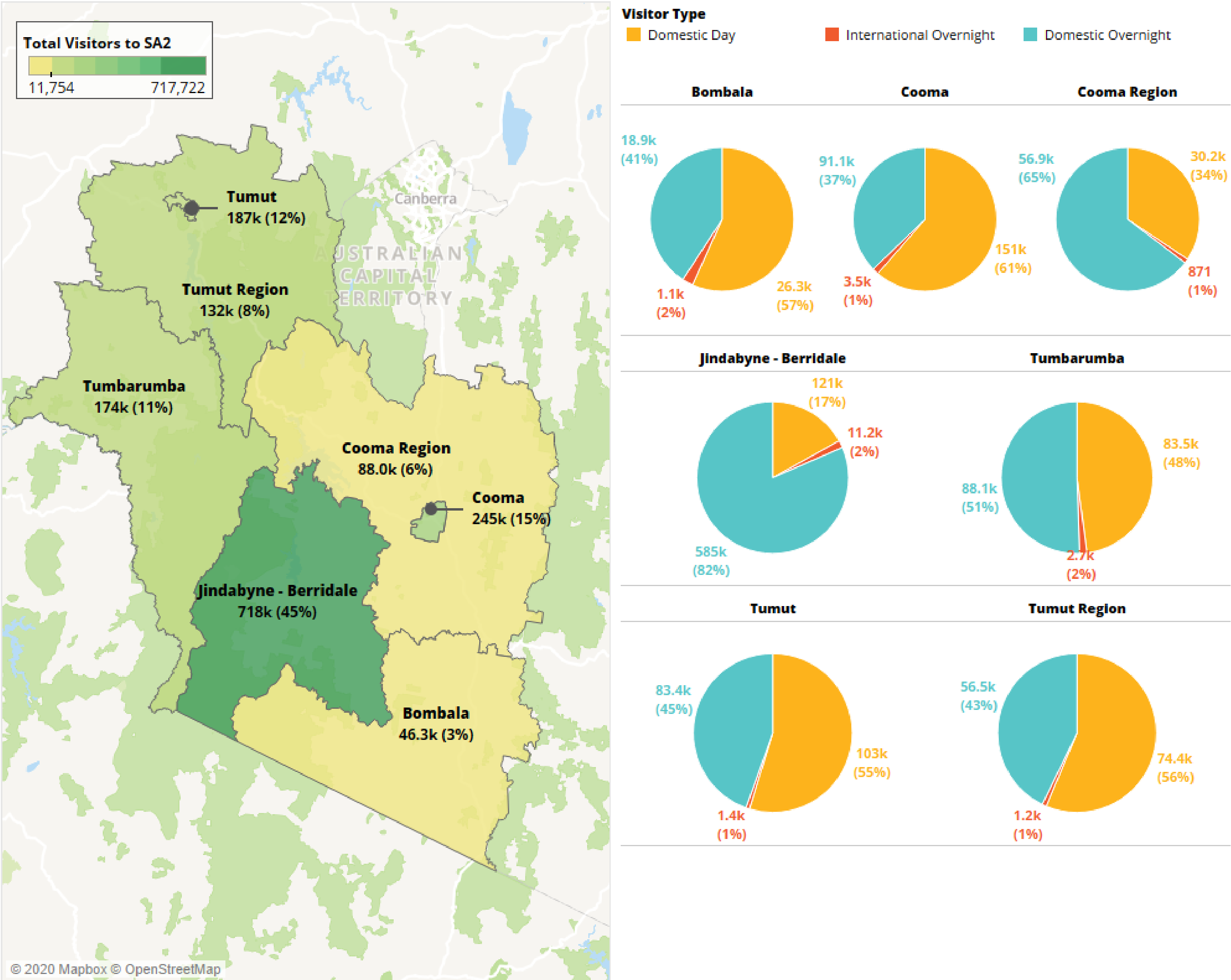
+ Comparison with Visitation to other SA2s in the Snowy Mountains Tourism Region

As outlined earlier, the SAP is situated within the broader Snowy Mountains Tourism region. To demonstrate the significance of the SAP in the region's visitor economy, Figure 65 provides a breakdown of total visitors to each SA2 within the Snowy Mountains Tourism Region in 2019, along with a breakdown by visitor type. The strength of the SAP area is its strong focus on leisure-based visitors while Cooma, Tumut and Tumbarumba are stronger business traveller centres and act as service towns to support a wider community.

It demonstrates that:

- almost half (45%) of travel to the Snowy Mountains region is to the SAP (Jindabyne – Berridale SA2);
- the next largest SA2 (by total visitors) is Cooma (comprising 15% of total region visitation) and Tumut (12%);
- the SAP has the strongest proportion of domestic overnight visitation (82%), followed by Cooma Region (65%); and
- however, in terms of real numbers, the SAP has the strongest level of domestic overnight visitation (585k visitors), followed by Cooma (91.1k visitors.

Figure 65: Visitation to Snowy Mountains Region by Type (2019)[63]



[63] Compiled from Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey

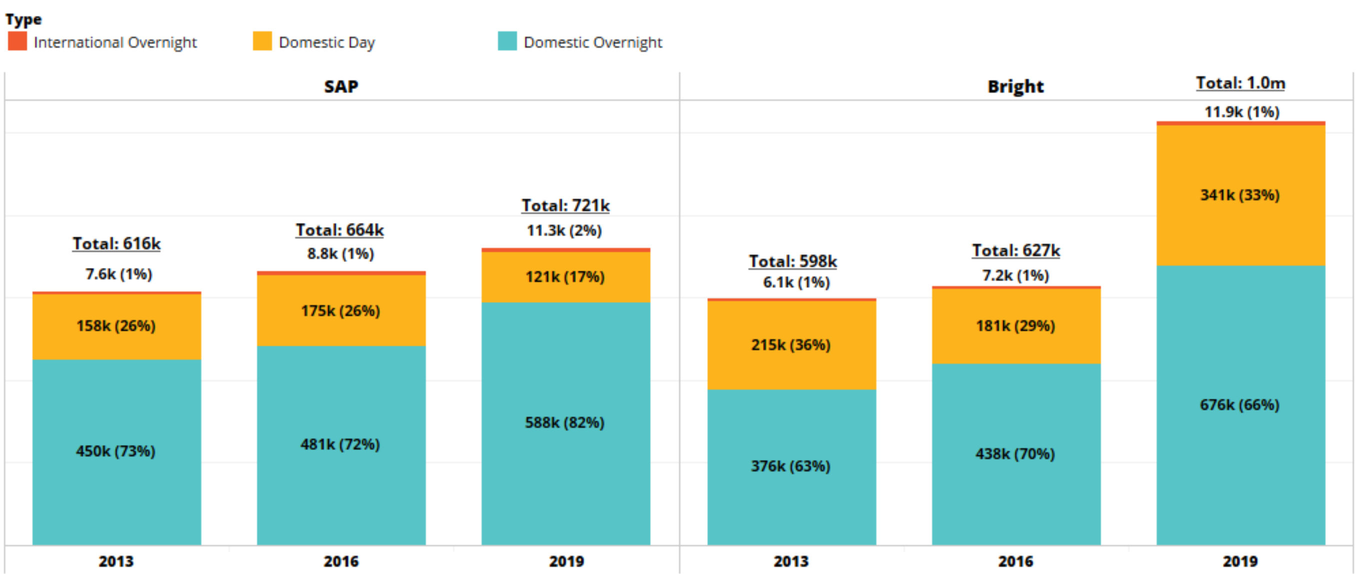
+ Comparison with Bright – Mount Beauty SA2 (Falls Creek & Mt Hotham)

Mount Hotham and Falls Creek ski resorts are situated within the Victorian High Country Tourism Region, and, more specifically within the Bright – Mount Beauty SA2 (referred to as Bright from here forward). They are considered a major competitor to the alpine resorts in the SAP area. Figure 66 demonstrates the location of both SA2s and their proximity to major population centres.

Figure 66: Travel Distances and Access between SA2s and Major Generating Markets

Figure 67 provides a summary of visitation to both the SAP and Bright between 2013 and 2019. It demonstrates that although visitation to both areas has grown over the period assessed, Bright has experienced far stronger growth, increasing by 67% over the period assessed (compared with 17% for the SAP). This strong growth is attributed in part to the summer-based activity and event schedules which Falls Creek, in particular, is well-known for. As demonstrated further on, visitation to Bright is far less seasonal than the SAP as it has positioned itself as a year-round alpine destination.

Figure 67: Visitation (by visitor type) to the SAP and Bright (2013 - 2019)[64]

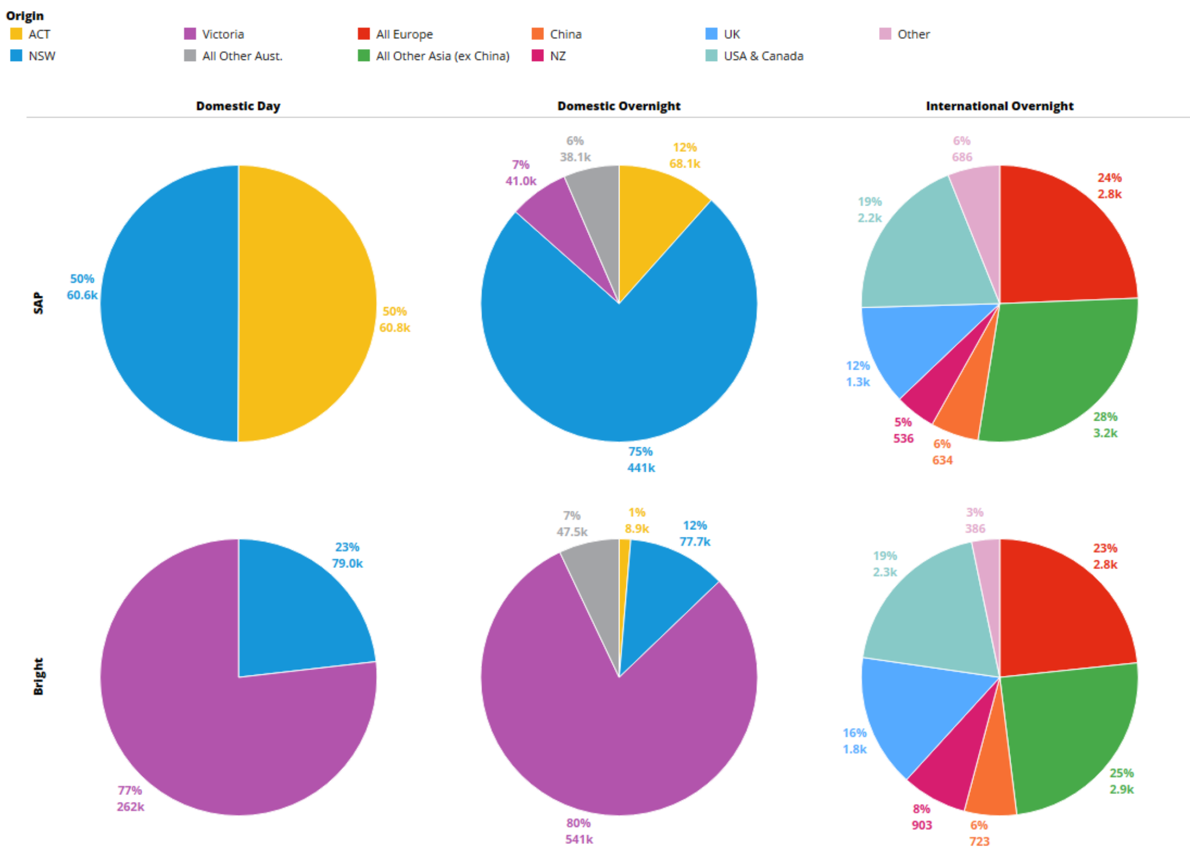


[64] Compiled from Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey

Figure 68 summarises visitation to both areas based on visitor origin and demonstrates the following.

- While there is little-to-no Victorian domestic day trip visitation to the SAP, Bright does generate a fair number of NSW domestic day trip visitation (comprising 23% of domestic day trip visitation in 2019). This is likely to be residents from NSW border towns (such as Albury) undertaking day trips to the area (for instance, Albury is just under a 2-hour drive to Falls Creek).
- For domestic overnight visitation, the major generating market for both areas is their respective intrastate markets (NSW for the SAP and Victoria for Bright).
- Interestingly, just under 78k NSW residents undertook a domestic overnight trip to Bright – almost double the level of Victorian domestic overnight travel to the SAP (41k). This indicates that NSW residents have a greater propensity to undertake domestic overnight trips to the Victorian High Country region than Victorian residents do to the NSW Snowy Mountains region which we suspect reflects the stronger product range available within the Victorian High Country and closer proximity to Melbourne.
- ACT residents make up a far greater share of domestic overnight visitation to the SAP (12%/68k visitor) than to the Bright (1%/8.9k) due to the proximity of the ACT to the SAP.
- The makeup of international visitation to both areas is fairly similar, with "All Other Asia (ex-China)" and "All Europe" making up the largest share of visitation. Although China, the USA and NZ are NSW' three largest visitor markets, they comprise a relatively small number of visitors to both regions. This is likely because:
  - The Chinese market to NSW (and Australia more generally) is a structured tour market and more typically visit major bucket list destination/icons in capital cities. The proximity of the Snowy Mountains from Sydney CBD is likely a major detractor for this market.
  - The USA and NZ markets have a multitude of alpine options in their respective countries and are less likely, as a consequence, to be attracted to travel to an alpine region during their travel within Australia.
  - There is minimal packaging of Mount Kosciuszko as a must-do iconic experience for international travellers to Australia, so it is relatively unknown.
- The largest market for both areas is the domestic overnight market.

Figure 68: Visitation to the SAP and Bright by Origin (2019)[65]



[65] Compiled from Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey

Although both areas are considered seasonal, with the majority of visitation to both SA2s occurring during Quarter 3 (winter peak period), Figure 69 demonstrates that the SAP has a far higher degree of seasonality and that this seasonality is more consistent. In 2019: 34% of visitation to Bright occurred during Quarter 3, compared with 57% for the SAP; and 43% of visitation to Bright took place during Quarters 1 and 4 (summer and spring periods), compared with 27% for the SAP.

A reason for this reduced seasonality is due to the extent of summer-based activity that takes place in Bright. Falls Creek, in particular, is well-recognised as a major mountain biking hub and both resorts are recognised for walking-based and trail running activities.

This is supported by Figure 70 below which shows in 2019 the NVS recorded:

- an estimated 300k domestic visitors having undertaken bushwalking activities in Bright (with significant growth in this activity being achieved between 2013-2019), compared with 142k in the SAP (less than half what Bright achieved);
- an estimated 97k domestic visitors participated in cycling experiences in Bright, almost triple the number in the SAP (36k); and
- an estimated 52k domestic visitors participated in fishing experiences in Bright compared with 35k in the SAP.

The only activity which the SAP recorded having more "activities undertaken" by domestic visitors was skiing experiences supporting the assumption that the SAP is perceived more so as a winter-based activity destination than Bright.

Figure 69: Seasonality of Visitation to the SAP and Bright (2019)[66]

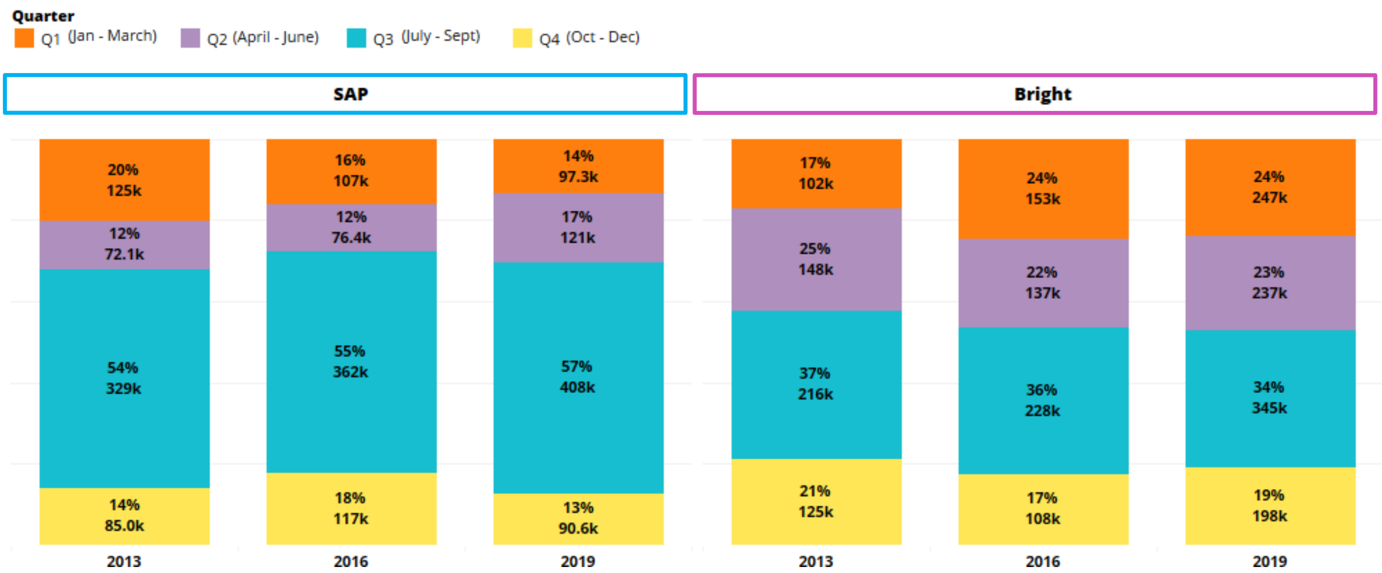
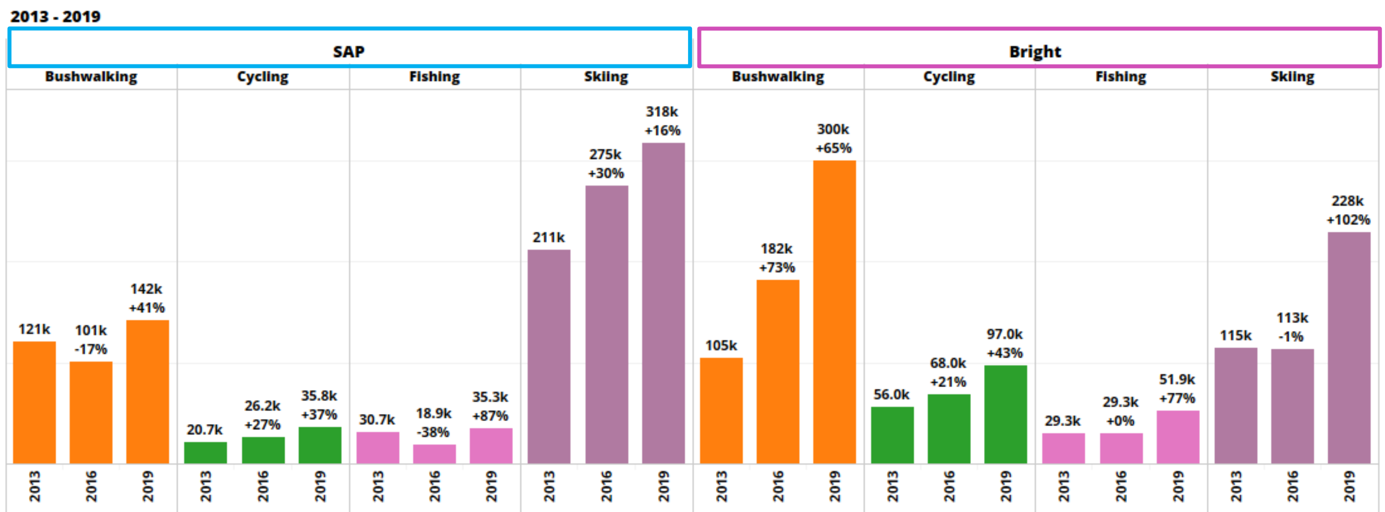


Figure 70: SAP and Bright Activities Undertaken[67]



[66] Compiled from Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey
[67] Compiled from Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Survey

Appendix 2 Audit – Full Findings

+ Accommodation Audit

Due to the size of this audit, the full listing has been included as a separate document titled: "*Snowy Mountains Tourism Development Study Accommodation Audit 040820.pdf*"

+ Product Audit

Due to the size of this audit, the full listing has been included as a separate document titled: "*Snowy Mountains Tourism Development Study Product Audit 040820.pdf*"

Appendix 3 Visitation to Individual Elements

Table 14: Visitor number estimates to elements (non-unique)

#	Element	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061
	Status Quo Visitation (CIE provided)	775k	784k	793k	802k	811k	820k	829k	837k	846k	855k	863k	871k	880k	888k	896k	904k	903k	902k	901k	900k	899k	898k	896k	895k	894k	893k	892k	891k	890k	889k	888k	887k	886k	886k	885k	884k	883k	882k
	Elements																																						
1.1	Eco 4-5-star 250-room Hotel	-	-	-	-	38k	40k	42k	43k	45k	46k	47k	48k	50k	51k	52k	54k	55k	55k	56k	56k	56k	57k	57k	57k	58k	58k	59k	59k	60k	61k	61k	62k	62k	62k	62k	62k	62k	62k
1.2	120 Owner Occupied Apartments	-	-	-	-	22k	23k	24k	25k	26k	26k	27k	28k	29k	29k	30k	31k	31k	32k	32k	32k	32k	33k	33k	33k	33k	34k	34k	34k	35k	35k	35k	36k	36k	36k	36k	36k	36k	36k
1.3	National Alpine Conference Centre (500-	-	-	-	-	4.5k	4.8k	5.1k	5.4k	5.7k	6.0k	6.3k	6.6k	6.9k	7.2k	7.5k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k	7.8k
1.4	Hot Pools & Wellness Facility	-	-	-	-	48k	48k	49k	50k	51k	52k	53k	54k	55k	56k	57k	58k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k	59k
1.5	Fly Fishing School	-	-	-	-	2.9k	3.0k	3.0k	3.1k	3.1k	3.2k	3.2k	3.3k	3.3k	3.4k	3.4k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k	3.5k
1.6	18-Hole Signature Golf Course	-	-	-	-	7.3k	8.0k	8.7k	9.5k	10k	11k	12k	12k	13k	14k	15k	15k	16k	16k	17k	17k	17k	17k	17k	18k	18k	18k	18k	19k	19k	19k	19k	20k	20k	20k	20k	21k	21k	21k
2	250-room Athlete/Student Accommodation (as part	-	-	-	-	-	-	11k	11k	11k	11k	11k	11k	11k	12k	12k	12k	12k	12k	12k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	14k	14k	14k	14k	14k	14k	15k	15k	15k	15k	15k	15k
3	4-5 star Boutique Resort and Spa 60-90 rooms	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34k	36k	37k	37k	37k	38k	38k	38k	39k	39k	40k	40k	40k	40k	40k	40k	40k
4	Outdoor Adventure Hub (Zip Lines & Mountain	-	68k	71k	73k	76k	79k	82k	84k	87k	90k	93k	95k	98k	101k	103k	106k	109k	112k	114k	117k	120k	122k	125k	128k	131k	133k	136k	139k	142k	144k	147k	150k	152k	155k	158k	161k	163k	166k
5	Airport/Airfield enhancements (TBA by	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	KNP Iconic Walk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	Snowy Mountains Heritage Centre	121k	121k	124k	124k	126k	126k	129k	129k	131k	131k	134k	134k	136k	136k	138k	138k	141k	141k	143k	143k	146k	146k	148k	148k	151k	151k	153k	153k	155k	155k	158k	158k	160k	160k	163k	163k	165k	165k
8	E-Bike Cycleways	-	12k	12k	12k	13k	13k	13k	13k	14k	14k	14k	15k	15k	15k	15k	16k	16k	16k	16k	17k	17k	17k	18k	18k	18k	18k	19k	19k	19k	19k	20k	20k	20k	21k	21k	21k	21k	22k
9	Hallmark Winter Sporting Event	-	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k
10	Upgrade of Ngarigo, Thredbo Diggings and	-	10k	10k	11k	11k	11k	11k	12k	12k	12k	12k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k	13k
11	New, Higher-Quality Destination Holiday Park	-	-	-	-	-	-	22k	23k	23k	23k	24k	24k	24k	25k	25k	25k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k	26k
12	Evening 2 Week Seasonal Sound & Light Show (1 x	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	49k	51k	54k	56k	59k	61k	64k	66k	69k	71k	74k	76k	78k	81k	83k	86k	88k	91k	93k	96k	98k	100k	103k	105k	108k	110k	113k	115k
13	Iconic Overnight Horse Treks and expanded trails	2.4k	2.7k	2.9k	3.2k	3.4k	3.6k	3.9k	4.1k	4.4k	4.6k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k	4.9k
14	Water Taxi/Ferry Service	-	24k	27k	29k	32k	34k	37k	39k	42k	44k	47k	50k	52k	55k	57k	60k	62k	65k	67k	70k	73k	75k	78k	80k	83k	85k	88k	90k	93k	96k	98k	101k	103k	106k	108k	111k	113k	116k
15	Snowy Mountaineer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.48m	3.62m	3.72m	3.82m	3.92m	4.02m	4.12m	4.22m	4.32m	4.41m	4.51m	4.59m	4.66m	4.74m	4.81m	4.87m	4.94m	5.00m	5.06m	5.12m	5.18m	5.25m	5.31m	5.37m	5.43m	5.50m	5.56m	5.62m	5.68m	5.74m	5.81m
16	Lake Jindabyne Water Activities & Experiences	-	36k	36k	38k	38k	39k	39k	41k	41k	42k	42k	44k	44k	45k	45k	47k	47k	48k	48k	50k	50k	51k	51k	52k	52k	54k	54k	55k	55k	57k	57k	58k	58k	60k	60k	61k	61k	63k
17	Mountain Biking Hub (Master Planned)	-	29k	31k	33k	35k	37k	39k	41k	43k	45k	47k	49k	51k	52k	54k	56k	58k	60k	62k	64k	66k	68k	70k	72k	74k	76k	78k	80k	82k	84k	86k	87k	89k	91k	93k	95k	97k	99k
18	Hallmark Summer Sporting Event	-	-	-	-	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k	10.0k
19	Aviation Tourism Experiences	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.6k	3.9k	4.1k	4.4k	4.6k	4.9k	5.1k	5.3k	5.6k	5.8k	6.1k	6.1k	6.1k	6.1k	6.1k	6.1k	6.1k	6.1k	6.1k	6.1k	6.1k	6.1k	6.1k	6.1k
20	Tubing Park (All Seasons)	-	-	-	-	-	-	47k	50k	53k	56k	59k	62k	65k	68k	70k	73k	76k	78k	81k	83k	85k	87k	87k	87k	87k	87k	87k	87k	87k	87k	87k	87k	87k	87k	87k	87k	87k	87k
21	Mountain Luge Experience	-	-	-	-	-	-	139k	142k	145k	148k	151k	153k	156k	159k	162k	165k	168k	171k	174k	177k	180k	183k	186k	189k	191k	194k	197k	200k	203k	206k	209k	212k	215k	218k	221k	224k	226k	229k
22	Zorbing Attraction	-	-	-	-	-	-	28k	30k	33k	36k	39k	42k	45k	48k	51k	54k	57k	60k	62k	65k	68k	71k	73k	75k	78k	80k	80k	80k	80k	80k	80k	80k	80k	80k	80k	80k	80k	80k
23	Ice Rink (All Seasons)	23k	26k	29k	32k	35k	38k	41k	44k	46k	49k	52k	55k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k	58k
24	Indoor Fun Park	-	-	-	-	25k	28k	31k	34k	37k	39k	42k	45k	48k	51k	54k	57k	60k	63k	66k	69k	72k	74k	77k	80k	83k	86k	89k	92k	95k	98k	101k	104k	107k	110k	112k	115k	118k	121k
25	Major Cantilevered Viewing Sky Deck at	-	-	-	-	26k	26k	26k	27k	27k	27k	28k	28k	28k	29k	29k	30k	30k	30k	31k	31k	31k	32k	32k	33k	33k	33k	34k	34k	34k	35k	35k	35k	36k	36k	37k	37k	37k	38k
26	Day Walk (Charlotte Pass to Mt Kosciuszko Summit)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27k	28k	28k	28k	28k	29k	29k	29k	30k	30k	30k	30k	31k	31k	31k	31k	32k	32k	32k	32k	33k	33k	33k	33k	34k	34k	34k
27	Perisher Branded 4-5-star Hotel (120 + rooms)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23k	34k	45k	57k	69k	81k	93k	106k	120k	134k	148k	159k	170k	182k	193k	204k	215k	226k	236k	247k	259k	270k	282k	293k	305k	316k
28	Thredbo Branded 4-5 star Hotel (120 + rooms)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23k	34k	45k	57k	69k	81k	93k	106k	120k	134k	148k	159k	170k	182k	193k	204k	215k	226k	236k	247k	259k	270k	282k	293k	305k	316k
29	Ranger Station Fishing Lodge & Glamping	-	-	-	-	6.7k	6.9k	7.0k	7.1k	7.3k	7.4k	7.5k	7.6k	7.8k	7.9k	8.0k	8.1k	8.3k	8.4k	8.5k	8.7k	8.7k	8.8k	8.8k	8.9k	8.9k	8.9k	8.9k	8.9k	8.9k	8.9k	8.9k	8.9k	8.9k	8.9k	8.9k	8.9k	8.9k	8.9k
30	Expand KNP camping grounds (Island Bend etc)																																						
31	Parking area and turning circle at Charlotte Pass																																						