

BEN LOMOND NATIONAL PARK DRIVEN ECONOMIC GROWTH NORTHERN TASMANIA

Feasibility Study



Project Description:

- Ben Lomond National Park is home to Tasmania's only commercial downhill ski field. The Alpine Village at the base of the slopes comprises of an inn, public day shelter, cafe, equipment hire and ski instruction business, office of the ski tows and lodges. The village is less than one hour's drive from Launceston and it's airport
- Ski seasons are short at best and in recent years snow cover has become increasingly unreliable. This constrains ski and snow play tourism potential



Project Description (continued):

- Some stakeholders argue infrastructure upgrades on the mountain would provide a consistent winter snow season, attracting 800 additional visitors per week to Northern Tasmania in the traditionally low visitation Winter season. Thus making Ben Lomond a key driver in economic development
- Others argue:
 - the mountains altitude, topography, rainfall and terrain challenge the technical feasibility of achieving consistent snow coverage; and
 - Even with consistent snow seasons, Ben Lomond cannot compete with interstate and New Zealand ski resorts for the skier and snow play visitor market



Study Objective:

- To investigate the feasibility of establishing Ben Lomond as a financially viable, seasonally reliable, beginners/low intermediate skiing and snow play visitor destination
- The TRC Tourism were contracted to undertake the study and the final report was submitted in November 2015



Advantages & Attributes:

The study provides answers to two key questions:

- Would infrastructure and associated developments, above and below ground, contribute to a more reliable and longer snow season? And if so, detail the infrastructure and associated developments that would be required and provide indicative costs.
- Would a more reliable and longer snow season attract sufficient increased tourist visitation and spend in the region generally and alpine businesses specifically, to warrant expenditure on the infrastructure and associated developments and ongoing operating costs?



Influences:

Significant recent shifts in circumstances that make it timely to undertake the feasibility study include:

- A new State Government with explicit objectives for increasing economic returns from Tasmania's natural areas
- Renewed momentum on the part of the Ben Lomond Committee (represents businesses and lodges)
- Study funding commitments by key stakeholders
- Interest from new business proponents
- Climate change and associated responses including snowmaking, snow harvesting, diversification to four season operations



Partners:

- Ben Lomond Committee
- Denis Reinhardt
- Kate Williams
- Launceston City Council
- Northern Midlands Council
- Northern Tasmania Development
- Parks & Wildlife Services
- Regional Development Australia (Tasmania)
- State Growth
- Tourism Northern Tasmania



Study Outcome:

Consultants concluded:

Investment of \$1.8 million in the Ben Lomond Skifield will provide a major tourism and recreational product of state significance, capable of generating new and complimentary tourism investment in Northern Tasmania and contributing to the economic growth of the wider region.

Council is working with the key stakeholders on implementing the study recommendations.



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