

Dove Lake Shelter – Cradle Mountain Development Proposal and Environmental Impact Statement

DOVE LAKE AS A MAGNIFICENT NATURAL EXPERIENCE...

...rather than an unnatural and privatised disappointment.

Gustav Weindorfer, 1910: “This must be a national park for the people for all time.”

Dove Lake lookout as it is.



HOW THE PROPOSAL FAILS.

The proposed development of the Dove Lake Viewing Shelter is a recipe for degradation of one of the most beautiful precincts on Earth.

Preservation of this natural precinct, with its view across the lake to Cradle Mountain, should be the priority for enhancing visitors' natural enjoyment of this natural amenity. The proposal reverses 'wild experience' priorities by giving cloistered mass human visitation and commercial interests precedence over the protection and authentic human enjoyment of nature.

The description of the concrete shelter as like 'a rock embedded in the landscape as if carved by a glacier' might equally be 'a blob on the landscape as if nature is the enemy'.

There were 268,000 visitors to this site in 2017. Projections are for 350,000 visitors per annum by 2023, half a million by 2050 (up to 3,200 per day and 550 per hour), and forever growing. Rather than limitation being a management imperative, these unmanageable numbers are being treated as an unbridled bonanza to be accommodated and exploited. It is simply NOT POSSIBLE to accommodate such numbers on the limited, fragile site beside Dove Lake without increasingly debasing both the site and the experience.

This Viewing Shelter plan gives no clue as to how the lake and mountain precinct will cope with the inevitable on-flow of hundreds of thousands of people to the lakeside and beyond.

Without stated reason, the plan prioritises private business in the bus parking, kayak storage and, likely, kiosk operation. All visitors should be treated equally and commercial trip visitors should catch the buses or cable car access like everyone else. The facilities are being designed at public expense and should be managed for the public by the Parks and Wildlife Service.

Remarkably, the whole of the Cradle Mountain access plan is being manipulated in three silos: the (old airport) Visitor Centre with its privatised gateway, the publicly-funded \$65 million cable car (access to be handed over to privatisation) and this Dove Lake Viewing Centre with its privileged private business access such as parking. No reason has been given by the premier or minister for this fragmented, unprofessional approach to a much-loved Tasmanian icon, abandoning best practice and the wider public good.

This siloing favours creeping privatisation and privileged access to a public treasure. It is ethically wrong. Gustav and Kate Weindorfer would be horrified.

WHAT SHOULD BE.

The Dove Lake precinct, already marred by the carpark and extensive track developments, ought to be protected from this limitless, growing impact.

HERE IS HOW:

- Place the off-form concrete shelter including its arrival chamber, internal courtyard, walker registration, locker room, carpark, toilets, 'temporary' bus turning circle and kiosk selling hot and cold beverages and snack food, roadside behind (northwest of) the hill. This will afford visitors, on the sunnier side of the hill, a sweeping view back towards Cradle Valley. It will also truly minimize the visual intrusion of the lookout amenity. The plan assertion that this would lead to greater environmental impact is fatuous.
- Provide here, or back at the gateway, a diorama of the Dove Lake and Cradle Mountain scene in all its changing magnificence for visitors who prefer indoors protection to a natural alpine experience.
- Bring visitors from the bus/cable car terminus via a walkway to the current carpark and lookout over Dove Lake.
- Provide a trolley, as in airports, for disabled visitors.
- Halve and tier the open-air lookout to maximize both the natural alpine experience and views for visitors - rain, hail, snow or shine.
- Limit visitor numbers to make this short walk and idyllic viewing experience as comfortable as nature affords, unpressured and memorable.
- Restore the natural vegetation between the lookout and lake.
- Provide a link track from the concrete shelter to the Cradle Mountain region's established walking tracks.
- Ensure that periods of each morning and evening are free of kayaking on Dove Lake for photographers and viewers who want to take in the scene in its full wild, historic natural glory.
- Improve existing visitor access to other local natural, less weather-dependent spectacles, to relieve pressure on Cradle Mountain: for example, the Dasher Canyon, Alum Cliffs and local, very accessible waterfalls.

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