

PALAWA LUGGANAH



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A fresh and innovative Tasmanian Tourist Attraction

A truly memorable holiday combines fun, adventure, scenery, delicious food, friendly people and rich, cultural history. Look no further than ***palawa lugganah*** in the Huon Valley, which will leave you rested, exhilarated and with new understanding. The traveller will be part of a breath-taking journey to the southernmost beach in Australia.

palawa lugganah - is a new cycling and walking adventure from town to town, through river, forest, coast and lagoon landscapes, meeting locals and enjoying regional food and hospitality. The track will tell the story of the Ilyequeunny & melukerdee people and 45,000 years of continued connection to land and sea. It will explore how culture contains us through many generations and shed light on a future path.

1. Overview

palawa lugganah track will link the towns of Huonville, Geeveston, Dover and Southport with a world class walking and cycling track. It's a unique holiday allowing travellers to adventure through the region while still allowing plenty of time for relaxing and meandering through the towns to enjoy bushwalking, water sports, vibrant shops, boat-building, farm tours, food and wine tastings, and workshops. Palawa lugganah offers holiday flexibility from a single day to a full 5-day adventure.

For tourists **palawa lugganah** will be designed and marketed as a walking and cycling adventure to cater to this burgeoning tourist demand. This form of transport on dedicated world-class tracks will have enormous and broad appeal for visitors and locals alike.

palawa lugganah - *footmark of blackman - where culture and landscape are one... a journey exploring a 45,000 year history of humanity.* An authentic presentation of local Aboriginal cultural will be central to the whole experience. With cultural interest as the major driver attracting tourists worldwide, this will provide the project with a unique competitive advantage. Local businesses working in isolation could be anywhere. With this theme the *palawa lugganah* track is a linking element that makes the experience cohesive.

Each day has a distinctive flavour. Starting with the beautiful rural landscape along the Huon River, followed by a climb through forests for panoramic views to the South-West wilderness and Bruny Island. A day is spent crossing headlands, bays and beaches along an unspoilt coastline. At Southport lagoon travellers will encounter the rich cultural history of the lileuquonny people. From Cockle Creek, the track traverses world heritage wilderness to South Cape Bay to witness the swell rolling in from Antarctica

Exhilarated after a day's ride, spend your nights in our vibrant Valley towns. Get to know the warmth of the locals, appreciate the gourmet food and enjoy the intimate traveller experience that can only be supplied by bed and breakfast accommodation. After a week's exciting holiday you will leave with a new understanding and memories of the stunning beauty of the Huon Valley — an experience so rich you'll want to come back for more!"

This "European" style bike travel is highly popular worldwide. One of the outstanding features of the **palawa lugganah** proposal is that it links the towns of the Valley, allowing visitors to ride in sequence or at random. Travellers can move from town to town or base themselves in one place. Family groups can choose their own activities, be it kayaking, riding or shopping, yet dine together each evening. This flexible system will be supported by a shuttle-bus which will also provide a much-needed service to locals.

The track from Huonville to Geeveston for Day 1 follows the river and will be designed as a two-way cycleway to service tourists and locals. The tracks for Days 2, 3 and 4 are dedicated walking/cycling tracks that are one directional from North to South. These are the sort of tracks that cyclists travel the world to ride. These are cycleways rather than mountain bike tracks and will be designed to be enjoyable even for a beginner. They will wind and undulate at 5% grade for maximum fun for all riders. Distance on roads for connections into towns is minimised, however the advantage of arriving in town by bike is

that you already have transport to restaurants and accommodation. The first two kilometres of track heading out from towns will be multi-use and wheelchair accessible. This will provide locals with day walks and enhance the visitor experience.

Electric bikes not only make the track possible to less fit riders but they make it a hell of a lot of fun. For the visiting family this technology is a game changer for motivating the kids and catering to differing levels of fitness.

A phone app will provide Aboriginal and Western history and stories along the way, with detailed information of fauna and flora, track notes, maps, signage, location and safety. Our local climatic conditions are predictable and moderate, ensuring a longer high-season than other Tasmanian destinations.

The overall design of *palawa lugganah* guarantees value for money for all types of traveller. The track is publicly owned and is free of charge. Accommodation, food and services will be provided by small businesses in the towns and supply and demand will govern pricing to suit each traveller. There will be a camping alternative for those who enjoy staying out in nature. These riders will stop for coffee, lunch and local food in the towns and then ride on in the afternoon to their next camp. Because travellers have the full resources of the towns to choose from they can customise their trip to budget, taste interest and time constraints.

2. Economic Considerations

The combined statistics for the Huon Valley do not represent the socio-economic situation of each town, due to the varied individual conditions. The West side of the Huon south to Cockle creek has suffered from the end of the export apple industry and the contraction of the timber industry. There is a desperate need for economic stimulus and employment to bring back the young people that have left the area to pursue work elsewhere. The major untapped potential is tourism.

2.1 The Substantial Benefits to our Community

palawa lugganah is designed to bring prosperity and employment to this area by enhancing and expanding small business activity. It will provide an economic impetus in the construction phase both with building tracks and building housing and accommodation. It will provide ongoing dispersed economic income by bringing tourists to stay in the towns and spend money with small businesses. Because existing towns and businesses will provide the necessary built infrastructure, a low-maintenance trail network can be created with fantastic return-on-investment to our communities.

2.2 Bike Tourism

Although the track can be walked or ridden, cycle tourism is booming worldwide while overnight walking is in decline. This trend is born out in Tasmania with overnight walking numbers for 2017-18 decreasing by 9.8% and cycle tourism experiencing an increase of 10.4% in the same period. More money is spent in a region when people move slowly by bike compared to day trips by car or bus tours. Equally significant, a far greater tourist load is possible without major traffic congestion or parking problems. Because travellers

on the palawa lugganah stay in towns they will support existing and new accommodation providers. Mixed businesses will open, creating the extra employment our area needs.

2.3 Added Prosperity to Local Small Businesses

Because travellers are not constrained in the use of *palawa lugganah* there will be a steady flow of visitors to other tourist activities such as sailing, kayaking, history tours etc. These activities will not only enrich the travellers experience but will further develop small businesses throughout the Valley. These types of businesses require low capital start-up costs and therefore can be profitable whilst being seasonal.

2.4 Economic Benefits from *palawa lugganah*

The Track can easily support 50 riders a day on each section. Because the walkers and campers travel at a different time of day, there can be a further 40 people per day arriving for lunches and morning teas. Accommodation and food outlets in each town are the governing factor for numbers of visitors and will develop to cater to these numbers and beyond. Assumptions have to be made to predict economic benefits. A conservative assessment based on similar tourism offerings suggest the following:

There are five linked days and 150kms of quality track. It is realistic to assume an overall density of one person per kilometre per day. Allowing for rest days and including other experiences, we can assume 50 visitors in each town. Again, the capacity of private accommodation and food providers will govern numbers and profitability.

Direct expenditure: \$8.2m p.a.

Fifty people spending \$170 a day in Huonville, Geeveston, Dover and Southport for 180 days a year will contribute \$6.1m p.a. A further forty campers spending \$100 a day for 120 days a year will deliver \$2.1m p.a.

Indirect expenditure: \$6m p.a.

This income to the Valley will be amplified, as it will be spent again in the local economy. A factor of 1.75 can be applied in this situation to allow for money recirculating in the broader local economy.

Total value to the valley:- \$14.2m p.a.

On conservative figures *palawa lugganah* will generate over \$14 million per year to this area. These figures and assumptions take no account of the extra economic activity generated in the Valley from building, construction and maintenance. To put this in perspective, the annual total personal incomes for the years 2015/16 for Dover and Southport was \$22.2 million, and Geeveston \$46.4 million.

During construction it is estimated there will be 80FTE jobs in trackwork, building and construction. Once operational, Tourism Research Australia estimates 11.4 FTE jobs for every million in direct expenditure in tourism. This equates to 90FTE ongoing sustainable jobs. Many Huon valley residents want part time work for lifestyle reasons, therefore the

number of people getting the employment they need will be much more than this. It is important to emphasise that the employment will be spread across the region with people working in close proximity to their homes.

3. Planning for sustainability

The Huon Valley has a distinct character much loved by residents and tourists. It is important for future development to maintain this so as not to detract from what tourists are coming to experience. Importantly, *palawa lugganah* will provide sustainable prosperity and add significantly to Tasmania's reputation as a preferred tourist destination.

3.1 The failure of the suburbs

The Huon valley has a chance to avoid the pit falls of suburbanisation and commuting to Hobart. This will preserve our image and allow our tourism to blossom. It also has benefits for our health and the health of our communities. Distances of travel in suburbs quickly becomes unmanageable by bicycle and walking. There are already traffic problems in Hobart and more commuters will make this less sustainable. Developing Huonville as a regional centre that services compact towns with a shuttle bus system to Hobart is a better option. Jason Byrne is professor of human geography and planning at the University of Tasmania. He states that "long commutes increase health problems such as obesity, as well as anxiety and depression. They make for less exercise, social isolation, and less time at home with children and friends." We must act to create better housing with bike and walking connections to public transport routes.

3.2 Planning issues

The *palawa lugganah* project will drive investment in local housing both for tourist accommodation and for the increase in residents employed in the tourism industry. One consequence of this European style tourism is the competition for local housing. This problem can be alleviated by actively encouraging construction so that supply keeps up with demand. Although local employment will rise rapidly, housing affordability must be a priority. It is important to avoid suburbanisation while expanding housing.

If we encourage and streamline the approval process of high-density, small, sustainable, infill housing in areas with existing sewerage, water, power and road access. This will build supply ahead of demand. These important measures will alleviate rental and affordable-housing shortages. In the long-term, this planning structure has immense potential to create expansion whilst preserving what is special about our Valley. Rather than sprawling suburbs, small hamlets can be strategically developed. Ideally, towns at 10-15km spacing will suit pedestrian and public transport connections. This kind of development enhances community cohesion and public trust. Ultimately, it will preserve the Huon's unique character—the defining aspect of what makes a tourism destination.

3.3 Agriculture and Food Production

Tasmania's food is world-renowned and is a vital component of the tourism experience, believed to be as important as climate, accommodation and scenery. The concept of "paddock to plate" allows the discovery of where our delicious food comes from and how

it gets to the table. It includes provenance, food miles, organics and animal husbandry. Small-scale production of high-quality food already exists in the Huon and there are a number of restaurants basing their marketing around local and organic produce. Two connections can be made between the *palawa lugganah* project and agri-tourism. Activities showing the process of food production such as farm tours and food-making workshops and Aboriginal native food collection will naturally become a part of the overall tourism experience. Increased sales to visitors and higher values of the produce through food outlets will support the agriculture itself. The increasing value of the land for food production will further reduce the desire for sub-division of farmland and will reinforce the rural atmosphere of the area. With increasing climate volatility such an arrangement that enhances local food production and jobs would be appropriate.

3.4 Preventative Health and Amenity

The development model proposed and supported by *palawa lugganah* is one of towns linked by trails. These bring enormous benefits in terms of health and fitness to locals. Physical activity and connection to nature are well-known as essential elements for our physical and mental wellbeing. Metabolic illnesses such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes can be avoided. Physical activity encouraged by this development will save the community in medical costs, and suffering; not to mention productivity losses. There is no end to studies to support this. In contrast suburban sprawl makes driving and cars a necessity because services are not within walking distance.

3.5 Art, Craft and Music

The Huon has long been a haven for art, craft and music with many festivals exhibitions and events. *Palawa lugganah* track will connect our artists to a far greater clientele and the phone app will allow personal contact. This is a symbiotic relationship as the traveller will enjoy this contact as a part of the experience.

3.6 Employment, Development and Training

palawa lugganah is one of many trails planned for the Huon Valley and will spearhead further funding from grants and the private sector. Economic growth due to tourism will invigorate housing and construction and has the capacity to employ more locals. An ongoing project of trail construction using public money will provide the momentum for training in jobs such as woodwork and other traditional skills. The rolling-out of staged construction will allow “on the job” training. Hand-work and small machinery will allow the skills development of trainees before they move on to employment with local contractors on expensive equipment.

The lack of public transport is currently a fundamental obstruction to youth accessing the Trade Training Centre in Huonville. New public transport associated with the track could alleviate this and the Centre could be expanded to accommodate much of the skills and training needed to service all aspects of the proposal.

4. Operational Considerations

The *palawa lugganah* track has good access and is not in extreme terrain. This, plus the mild climate will not necessitate a high level of maintenance or supervision. Detailed design of the Tracks will provide cost-effective, natural-formed trails with good drainage. Where the conditions are wet or where special access is required, the surface will be

upgraded to hardened trails. The main trunk trail will cater to the smooth, undulating ride for maximum fun on mountain and electric bikes—the most desired form of travel. As further funding becomes available, dedicated mountain-bike walking tracks can be added. These will be created in parallel to make use of the same overall system and provide other activities for travellers.

Track maintenance will be minimised through good design and construction and clever management. Maintenance is a critical task in managing the track for safety, risk minimisation, maximising usage and to ensure its longevity. Maintenance of trails is required to limit physical changes due to naturally occurring processes and trail use. Some typical changes that may occur are:- fallen branches, leaves, twigs, bark, encroachment of surrounding vegetation into the trail corridor, water damage, cupping of trails from use, blocked grade reversals and sign damage. SETAC will employ track rangers to carry out routine inspections and maintenance work. Major work will be contracted to Council and private operators. Based on industry average costs and the length of trail proposed and the remote sections of parts of the trail, an estimate of cost to maintain the track is \$600,000 per annum.

The track will be booked on line with a surcharge to cover maintenance costs. Because accommodation has the equivalent of a 20% booking fee through the online booking applications Palawa lugganah will be able to offer a saving to accommodation businesses at the same time as generating the funds required for maintenance.

4.1 Costs

A traditional development that caters to this number tourists spread across this area could have enormous infrastructure and management costs. *palawa lugganah* has low cost tracks funded from grants that decrease pressure on road infrastructure. Sewer, power, and road infrastructure for accommodation are largely existing. Parks and Wildlife will manage bookings for camping and camping sites. Accommodation bookings will be managed by B&B owners and private businesses.

4.2 Infrastructure

Accommodation is in existing towns making use existing infrastructure. This is economical compared to the outdated model of 'greenfield' suburbanisation which is expensive on roads and services, erodes the tourism potential of the area and destroys agricultural capacity. Concentration of residences is also the key to efficient public transport. Palawa lugganah decreases the load on roads at the same time as increasing tourist numbers. Existing roads will be adequate if the Council adopts the necessary planning approaches described. At present, tourists treat the Huon as a day-trip destination from Hobart. This brings little money to the area and puts an ever-increasing load on our roads without a return for that use.

Sewerage, water and power are to be supplied using existing infrastructure in existing towns. As the area develops steadily within town areas, the increased rate base will provide Council funding for upgrading of this infrastructure. Development would be in proportion to requirements and the capacity of the rate base without causing strain on Council finances. Tourism services such as accommodation and food outlets will be financed by existing and new private businesses.

4.3 Construction of natural trails

The segmented nature of *palawa lugganah* means it can be accessed from each town, making for simple construction. The Track has easily-workable terrain with multiple-access points along the way. Natural surface trails are cut and filled using materials from the site. The tracks are built with cross fall and undulating up and down designed to shed water evenly along the length. These economical tracks are buildable within budget at no cost to rate payers.

4.4 Public Transport

Palawa lugganah will be built in stages North to South and the associated tourism will drive and support the development of shuttle-bus routes from Cockle Creek to Huonville. Because tourists are riding from town to town, they will pay for buses to carry bags and to transport people back to Huonville. There is also a function for the shuttle bus in facilitating mixed groups doing different activities. One member can catch the bus to spend time in town and meet up with the group in the evening. The extra activity along the main road will make public transport viable.

4.5 Maintenance

For the best outcomes for stakeholders Palawa lugganah is being proposed as a free track with income flowing to the community as describes in section 2.5. With good design, maintenance in the first few years after construction will be minimal and it is advisable to close certain tracks for maintenance during the winter months in order to minimise damage to wet tracks.

Maintenance funding will income from a number of sources. Track maintenance would have a volunteer and training component. Locals who ride the trails will clear fallen sticks and do minor maintenance to maintain the smooth ride. Council rate base will increase due to economic activity. Following the method used for the Blue Derby tracks Huon Valley Council could use the increased rates to contribute to maintenance. Income direct from tourists through the booking website will contribute funds at the same time as reducing booking fees as compared to those charged by on line booking platforms. In consultation we are exploring the opportunities for SETAC to employ full time rangers to do maintenance and interpretation with a strong training component that may attract further sources of income. Depending on what the maintenance issue are follows that different maintenance tasks will be the responsibility of different providers. It would be inefficient to duplicate services such as existing road maintenance, rubbish collection or parking. It is equally feasible that some services would be provided in kind, some through external grants and some through tourism revenue.

5. *palawa lugganah* project partners

SETAC is the South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation. We exist to empower the Aboriginal people of South East Tasmania so that, through self-determination, we can make decisions that affect our lives, with full recognition of the ongoing enjoyment and development of our indigenous cultural heritage. We provide Health Services, Education Support, Aged Care services, Social and Community Programmes, Alcohol & Other Drugs Counselling, and visiting Legal & Financial Services.

SETAC have joined forces with HuonTrails.org, weetaoona and Pakana Services to develop the *palawa lugganah* project.

HuonTrails.org is a not for profit, volunteer group representing the general community. Our goals are to move the community into a post-carbon age by providing connectivity and alternative transport infrastructure. We see this infrastructure as a key activity in the Huon Valley to encourage tourism, generate economic benefit for the community through small businesses, and provide safe cycling, walking options for locals.

The **weetaoona** Aboriginal Corporation is a group of Tasmanian Aboriginal people from the Channel and Bruny Island who work toward 'reconciliation'. We manage Murrayfield fine wool station on Bruny Island and Aboriginal sites along its 18kms of ocean frontage. weetaoona protects land with cultural and heritage values, provides Aboriginal cultural experiences and promotes community by providing opportunities for Tasmanian Aboriginal people to come together to practice and celebrate our culture.

Pakana Services are a Tasmania wide Aboriginal land service organisation. We do brush cutting, weed control, fencing, tree planting, seed collection, track construction and maintenance, We are also a training and education provider.

The **palawa lugganah** collaboration combines:-

- the legitimacy of SETAC's 45,000 years of connection and stewardship of this place
- HuonTrails.org's design and community advocacy skills
- weetaoona's representation of Channel and Bruny Island Aboriginal connections
- Pakana Services land management skills, track making and management

For further enquiries please contact:-

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