

Restoring Kunanyi / Mt Wellington's Great Short Walk, Hobart, Tasmania

A Clark¹

¹City of Hobart, Hobart, TAS

Over the last 2 years the City of Hobart has restored the historic Organ Pipes and Pinnacle Tracks on kunanyi / Mount Wellington, Tasmania. As Tasmanian's premier Great Short Walk within 30 mins of Hobart's CBD, the tracks are well used by the local community and visitors, providing spectacular views of Hobart, the Organ Pipes and the Derwent Estuary. Originally built in the early 1900's, the tracks provide a 2-3 hour walk suitable for people with some bushwalking experience and average fitness, along an historic track in a sub-alpine environment.

Since original construction water, snow and mass movement had eroded the track surface and collapsed embankment walls. Installation of a telecommunications cable in the 1960's caused extensive damage to the Pinnacle track. Walkers were presented with a degraded asset that was difficult and at times unsafe to navigate.

Challenges involved in the project included balancing environmental, heritage and safety issues, addressing multiple stakeholder perspectives, and construction in an alpine conservation environment across boulder fields using helicopters for materials transport. Planning meetings with multiple stakeholders established the desired outcome for restoration. Honouring the track's historic heritage values, works were designed using the same style, techniques and materials as the original works. Threatened species were mapped and avoided, disturbed areas rehabilitated and finished works carefully blended in with the surrounding environment.

Crossing boulder and talus fields involved hand winching of rocks up to 10 tonnes. Geo-technical assessments prior to works provided guidance on critical hazards. In 22 fly-days, helicopters transported 900 tonnes of rock and gravel onto the track. As Wellington Park is heavily used by visitors, helicopter operations required extensive planning and close management. Overall, the restoration works have improved the walking experience and provided a public asset that will endure for another 100 years.