

Alternatives to Summiting Wollumbin

Research Findings & Implications



Australia's Green Cauldron workshop, 17 September 2015

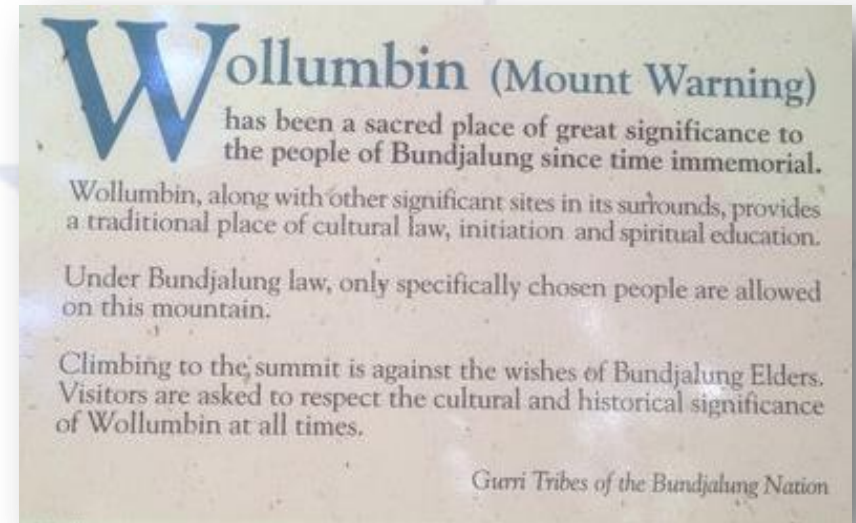
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Background to the Research

Wollumbin / Mt Warning

- **Iconic** destination
- Significant Aboriginal Place
- Cultural, environmental & physical site constraints
- Storm forced summit track closure in January 2013
- Track reopened in November 2013
- Opportunity and need to diversify nature-based visitor experiences



Research Aim and Objectives

To identify **visitor preferences** for **alternative experiences** to summiting **Wollumbin (Mt Warning)**



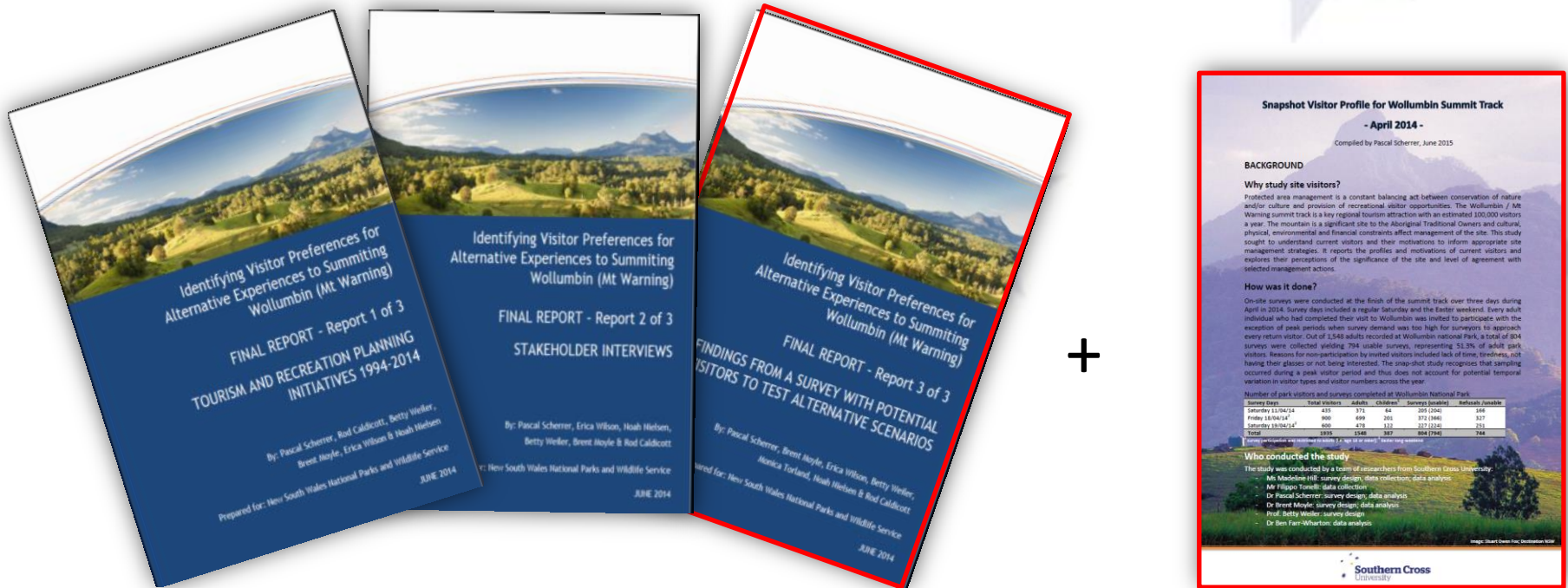
Why? > To inform potential diversion & diversification strategies
> To guide investment decisions (e.g. infrastructure)

Research Approach

1. Review of 36 existing regional planning/ strategy documents ➔ Tourism planning history
2. 22 interviews with key stakeholders ➔ Key issues & alternative scenarios
3. Online survey with 1300 **potential** visitors (991 usable surveys) ➔ Scenario preference of **potential** visitors
4. On-site survey with 804 **actual** visitors ➔ Understanding **current** visitors



Reporting of Findings



Report 1: Planning Initiatives
Report 2: Stakeholder Perspectives
Report 3: Testing Alternative Scenarios
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Snapshot Visitor Profile

1. What potential visitors want

2. What current visitors seek



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Findings: CURRENT Visitors



Who visited Wollumbin?

AGE (n = 774)		
	#	%
18-24 years	221	28.6
25-34 years	253	32.7
35-44 years	143	18.5
45-54 years	110	14.2
55-64 years	36	4.7
65+ years	11	1.4
GENDER (n = 777)		
Male	373	48
Female	404	52
PLACE OF RESIDENCE (n = 772)		
International	59	7.6
Australia	713	92.4
- Queensland	(473)	(72.2)
- New South Wales	(161)	(24.6)
- Other States/Territories	(21)	(3.2)
LEVEL OF EDUCATION (n = 763)		
Primary school	6	0.8
High school	174	22.8
Trade qualification	152	19.9
Undergraduate degree	248	32.5
Postgraduate degree	183	24.0
TRAVEL PARTY SIZE (n = 720)		
One	33	4.6
Two	181	25.1
Three or four	258	35.8
Five or more	248	34.4
TRAVEL PARTY TYPE (n = 746)		
Unaccompanied traveller	43	5.8
Adult couple	122	16.4
Family group – parent(s) & child(ren)	176	23.6
Friends &/or relatives travelling together	396	53.1
Business associates travelling together	9	1.2

**61% of adult visitors aged
18-34**

**72% of Australian visitors
from Queensland**

**Overall on day:
80% adults
20% children**

**70% of visitors in groups
of more than 3 people**

**53% of visitors travelling
with friends/relatives**

How often do they visit & what do they do?

Repeat visitation to Wollumbin (n = 794)

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	478	60.2
No	316	39.8



60% are repeat visitors

Frequency of repeat visitation (n = 175)

Very frequently (more than twice a year)	26	14.9
Frequently (1-2 times a year)	61	34.9
Occasionally (once every 2-3 years)	15	8.6
Rarely (less than once every 3 years)	73	41.7



50% of repeat visitors visit at least once a year

Participation in summit walk (n = 792)

Did not attempt summit walk	37	4.7
Started, but returned before reaching half-way marker	36	4.5
Half-way marker	16	2.0
Bottom of chains	17	2.1
Summit	686	86.6



95% of visitors attempt the summit walk, 87% complete it

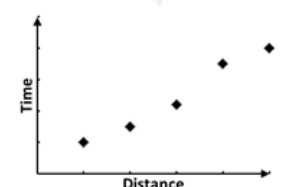
Participation in Lyrebird walk (n = 793)

Yes	99	12.5
No	694	87.5



Median time spent on-site

	Hours
Did not attempt summit walk (n = 31)	1.0
Returned before half-way (n = 28)	1.5
Half-way (n = 14)	2.2
Bottom of chains (n = 15)	3.5
Summit (n = 648)	4.0



Why did they visit the site?

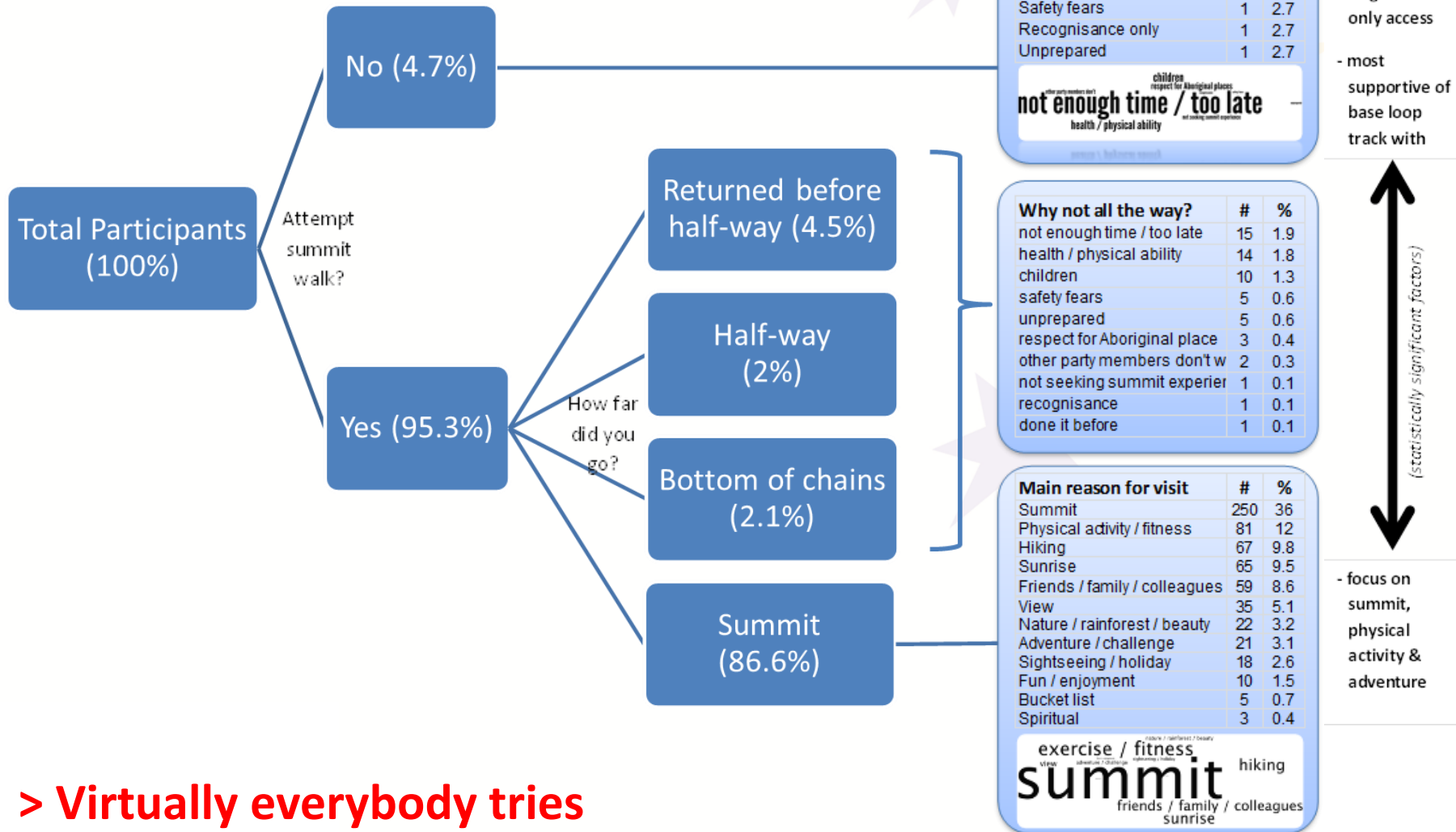
Reason	#	%
Summit	264	33.7
Physical activity / exercise / fitness	91	11.6
Hiking	79	10.1
Friends / family / colleagues	73	9.3
Sunrise	66	8.4
View	38	4.9
Nature / rainforest / beauty	38	4.9
Sightseeing / holiday	28	3.6
Adventure / challenge	22	2.8
Fun / enjoyment	11	1.4
Bucket list	5	0.6
Spiritual	5	0.6
Other (e.g. passing through; camping; team building)	63	8.0

Motivation	Mean
To walk to the summit	6.44
To see the views from the top	6.16
For sightseeing	5.91
To experience nature	5.91
For physical activity/exercise	5.9
To spend time with friends/family	5.84

1 = very strongly disagree
7 = very strongly agree

> It's all about the mountain top, views, exercise & friends/family

Who summits and who doesn't?



Personal importance/meaning of Wollumbin

Response (n=576)	#	%
No meaning	124	21.5
Nature	76	13.2
Beauty (nature, views, place)	62	10.8
Aboriginal site	44	7.6
Physical challenge	42	7.3
Landmark	26	4.5
First sunrise	20	3.5
Pilgrimage / Energy site	18	3.1
Walk / hike	18	3.1
Fun	16	2.8
Geology	15	2.6
Local mountain	15	2.6
Natural wonder	15	2.6
Memories	12	2.1
History (Captain Cook)	12	2.1
Tourist attraction	10	1.7
Mountain	10	1.7
Adventure	9	1.6
Views	9	1.6
Peace	7	1.2
Bucket list	6	1.0
Family time	6	1.0
Tradition	4	0.7

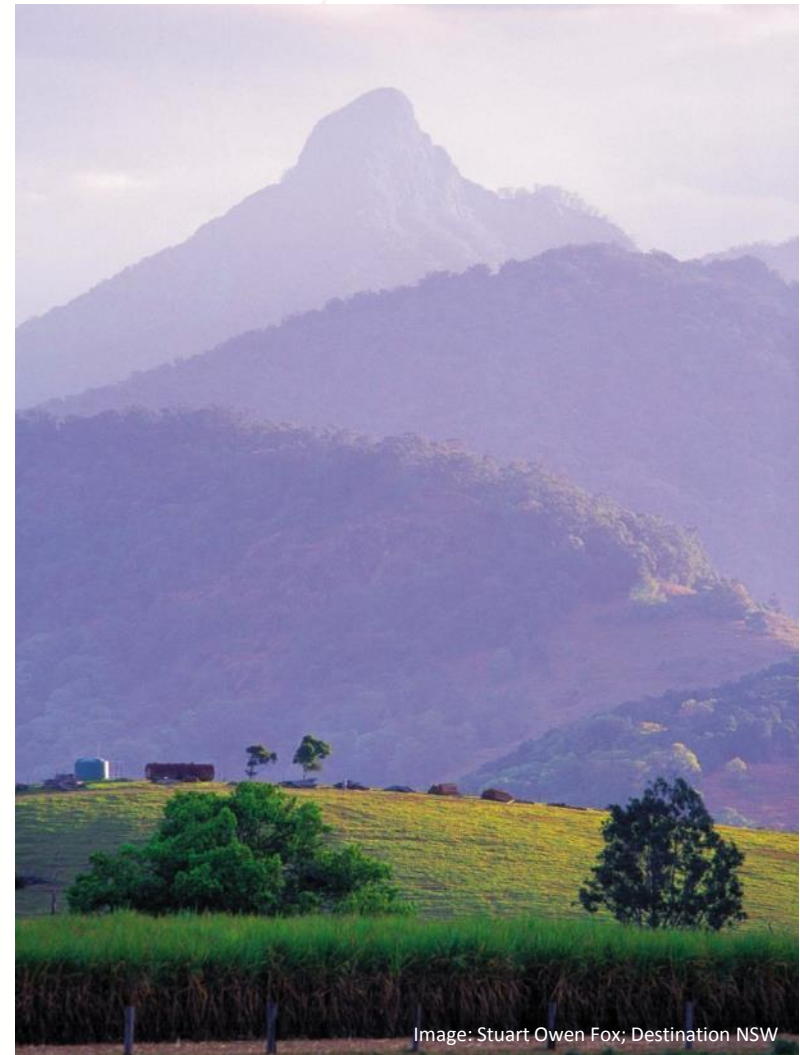
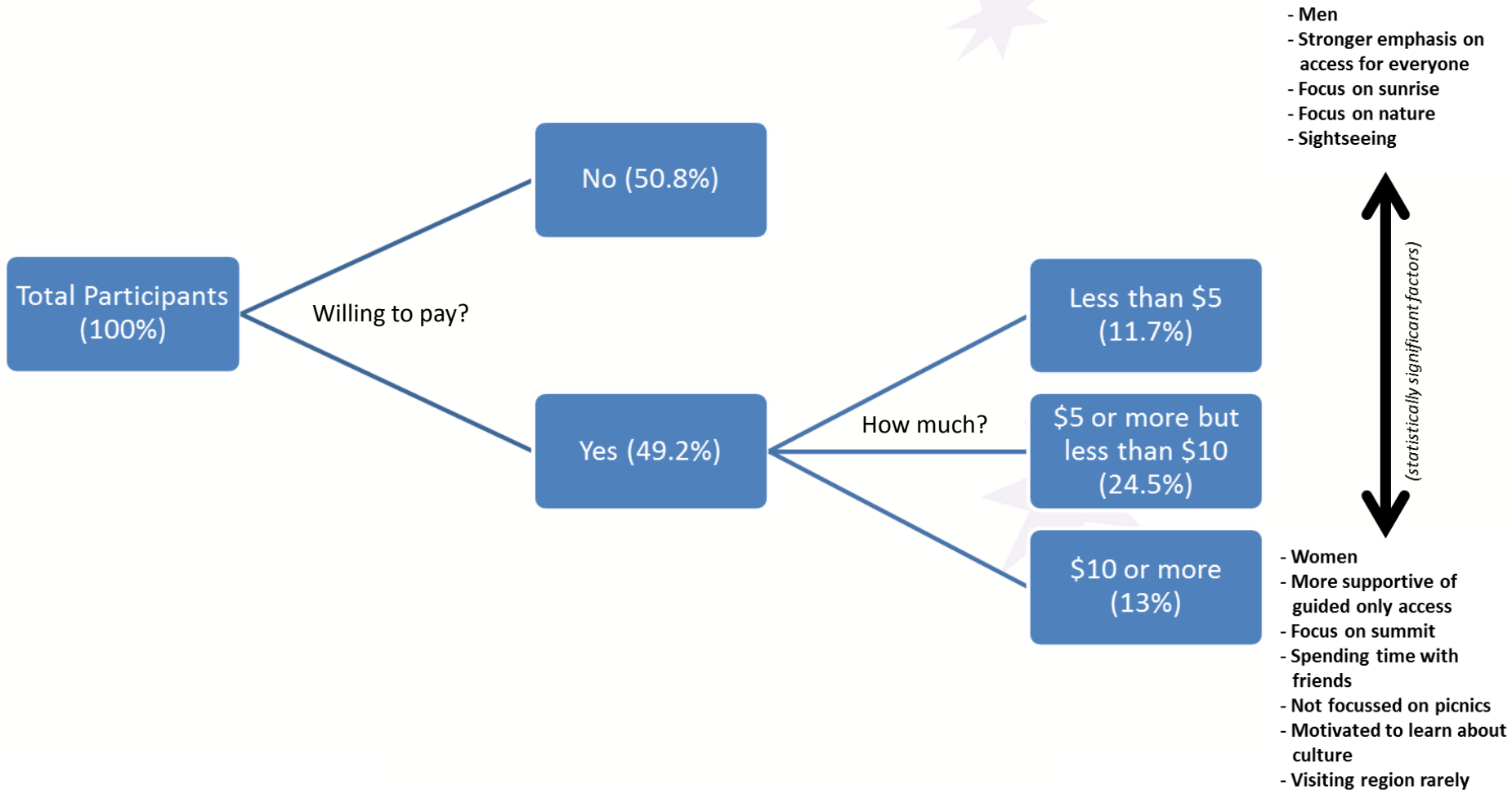







Image: Stuart Owen Fox; Destination NSW

Willingness to pay (WTP) to access summit track



Visitor preference for suggested management options

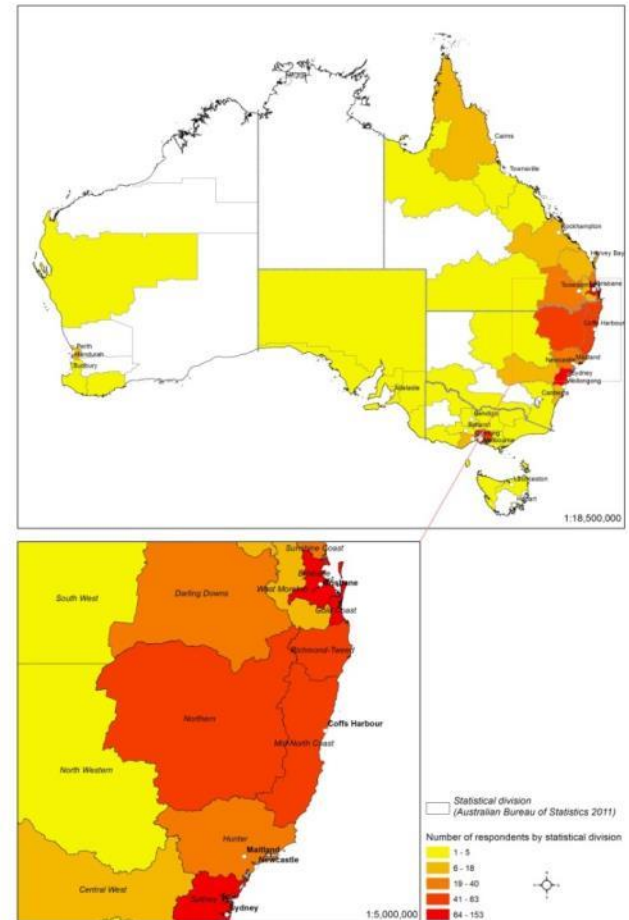
Management Preference	Mean	Stand. Dev.	VSD ← → VSA (1) (7)	% Disagree	% Agree
Access to the mountain should remain open to any visitors	6.25	1.37		5.3	87.0
Finishing the summit walk at a viewing platform below the summit would satisfy my experience of the mountain	3.75	2.40		48.2	39.4
I would prefer a loop track around the foot of Wollumbin with viewing points of the mountain instead of the summit walk	2.74	1.91		66.1	17.3
Access to the mountain should only occur when guided by a local traditional owner	2.40	1.81		74.7	14.4
The Parks Service should invest their resources into providing alternative visitor experiences rather than this site	2.53	1.78		69.3	13.0

VSD = very strongly disagree; VSA = very strongly agree

> It's all about reaching the top of this mountain

Findings: POTENTIAL Visitors

Survey Population



> Surveyed representative sample of the general population

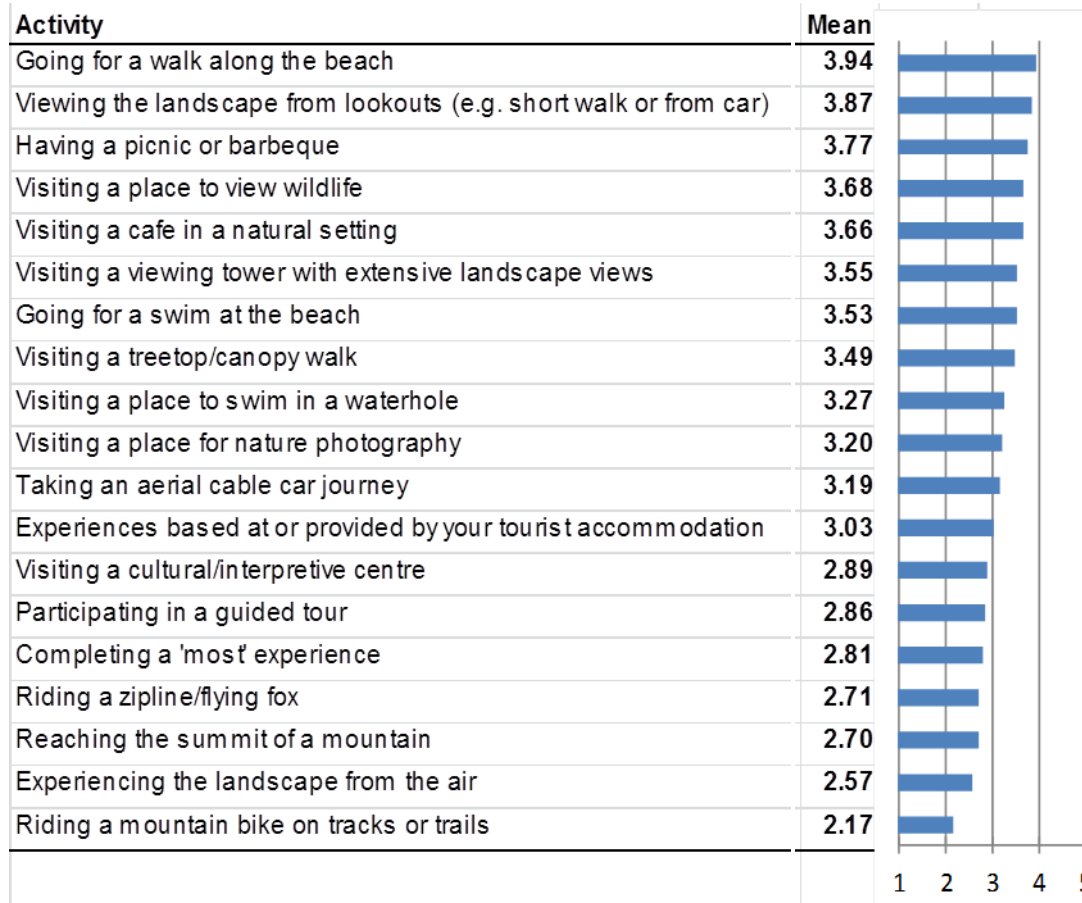
Key Findings from Surveys to Test Alternative Scenarios

9 Scenarios

Scenario	Proposed Location
1 - Summiting Wollumbin	Wollumbin
2 - Cliff walk & views	Blackbutt, Border Ranges NP
3 - Waterfall, picnic, views & walks	Minyon Falls, Nightcap NP
4 - Scenic drive	Rainforest Way, Border Ranges
5 - Culture & adventure precinct	Mt Nullum
6 - Treetop walk	Various
7 - Section of multi-day walk	Nightcap & Mt Jerusalem NP
8 - Rainforest loop-walk	Wollumbin - Extended Lyrebird walk
9 - Wollumbin ascent to viewing platform	Wollumbin

Key Findings from Surveys to Test Alternative Scenarios

Nature-based activities



> Favouring passive experiences in nature

Key Findings from Surveys to Test Alternative Scenarios

Comparison of scenario rankings across the different measuring techniques

Scenario	Proposed Location	Comparative Rank of Scenarios			
		Forced Binary Choice	Choice on Five-Point Scale	Ranking	Individual on Five-Point Scale
1 - Summiting Wollumbin	Wollumbin	N/A	N/A	9	8
2 - Cliff walk & views	Blackbutt, Border Ranges NP	4	4	4	3
3 - Waterfall, picnic, views & walks	Minyon Falls, Nightcap NP	1	1	1	1
4 - Scenic drive	Rainforest Way, Border Ranges	5	2	5	4
5 - Culture & adventure precinct	Mt Nullum	6	6	6	5
6 - Treetop walk	Various	3	3	2	2
7 - Section of multi-day walk	Nightcap & Mt Jerusalem NP	7	7	7	7
8 - Rainforest loop-walk	Wollumbin - Extended Lyrebird walk	2	5	3	6
9 - Wollumbin ascent to viewing platform	Wollumbin	8	8	8	9

*1=most preferred, 9=least preferred

- Alternative experiences preferred
- Summiting Wollumbin, and variation thereof, consistently lowest

Implications

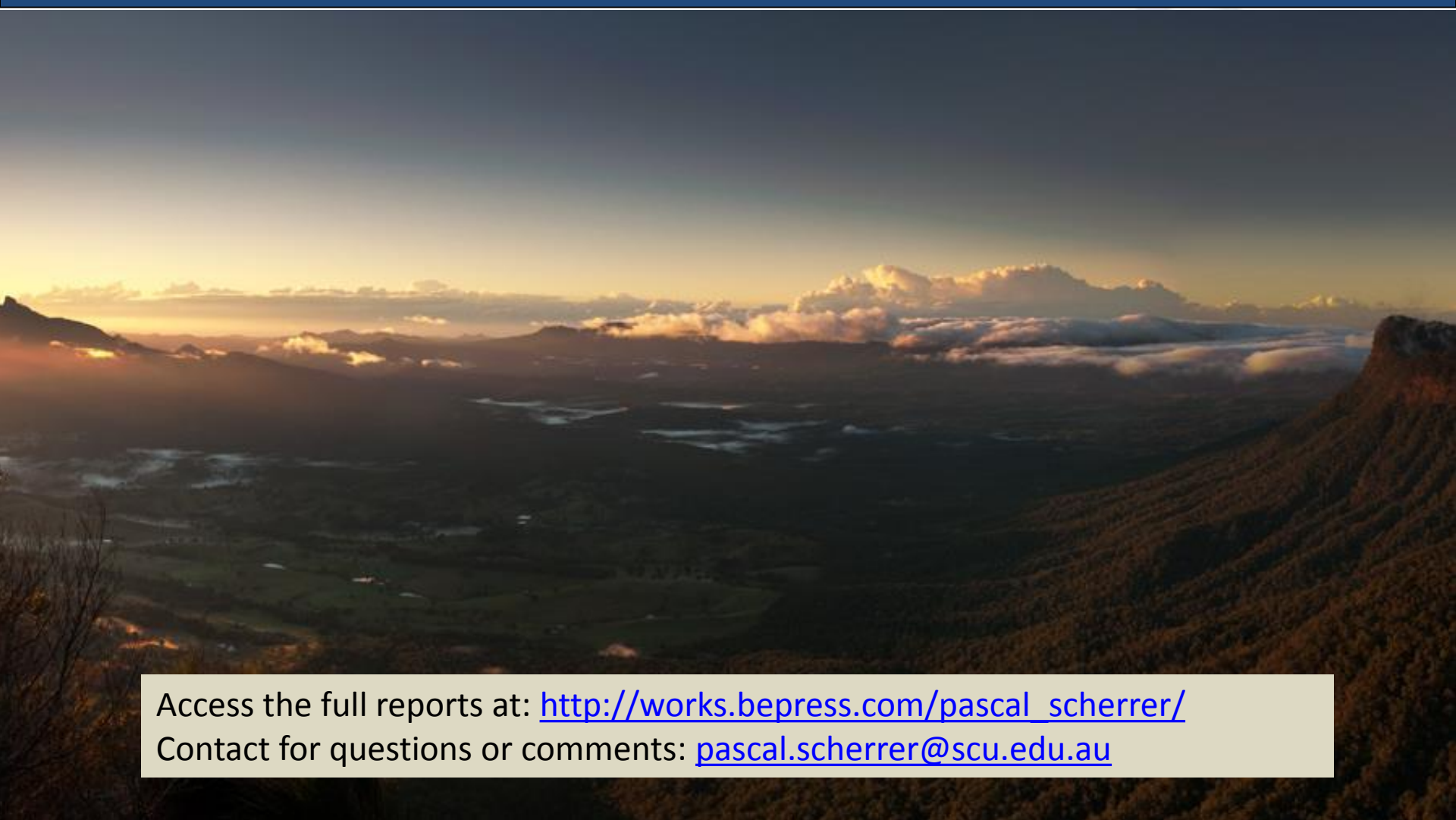
- Points towards huge opportunity to diversify and expand:
 - Current visitors represent small specialised segment
 - General population interest much broader & more passive experiences
 - Road surface matters (low hanging fruit?)
- Investment choices: view rather than climb Wollumbin

Applications of the Research

- Funding allocations based on evidence
- Data & rationale to support funding applications
- Increasing regional resilience through diversification
- Future approach to regional tourism planning? – watch this space
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Questions, Comments & Discussion



Access the full reports at: http://works.bepress.com/pascal_scherrer/
Contact for questions or comments: pascal.scherrer@scu.edu.au