

2015

Snapshot visitor profile for Wollumbin Summit Track: April 2014

Pascal Scherrer

Southern Cross University, pascal.scherrer@scu.edu.au

Publication details

Scherrer, P 2015, *Snapshot visitor profile for Wollumbin Summit Track: April 2014*, report to the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, School of Business and Tourism, Southern Cross University, Lismore, NSW.

Uploaded with permission from the author

ePublications@SCU is an electronic repository administered by Southern Cross University Library. Its goal is to capture and preserve the intellectual output of Southern Cross University authors and researchers, and to increase visibility and impact through open access to researchers around the world. For further information please contact epubs@scu.edu.au.

Snapshot Visitor Profile for Wollumbin Summit Track

- April 2014 -

Compiled by Pascal Scherrer, June 2015

BACKGROUND

Why study site visitors?

Protected area management is a constant balancing act between conservation of nature and/or culture and provision of recreational visitor opportunities. The Wollumbin / Mt Warning summit track is a key regional tourism attraction with an estimated 100,000 visitors a year. The mountain is a significant site to the Aboriginal Traditional Owners and cultural, physical, environmental and financial constraints affect management of the site. This study sought to understand current visitors and their motivations to inform appropriate site management strategies. It reports the profiles and motivations of current visitors and explores their perceptions of the significance of the site and level of agreement with selected management actions.

How was it done?

On-site surveys were conducted at the finish of the summit track over three days during April in 2014. Survey days included a regular Saturday and the Easter weekend. Every adult individual who had completed their visit to Wollumbin was invited to participate with the exception of peak periods when survey demand was too high for surveyors to approach every return visitor. Out of 1,548 adults recorded at Wollumbin national Park, a total of 804 surveys were collected yielding 794 usable surveys, representing 51.3% of adult park visitors. Reasons for non-participation by invited visitors included lack of time, tiredness, not having their glasses or not being interested. The snap-shot study recognises that sampling occurred during a peak visitor period and thus does not account for potential temporal variation in visitor types and visitor numbers across the year.

Number of park visitors and surveys completed at Wollumbin National Park

Survey Days	Total Visitors	Adults	Children ¹	Surveys (usable)	Refusals /unable
Saturday 11/04/14	435	371	64	205 (204)	166
Friday 18/04/14 ²	900	699	201	372 (366)	327
Saturday 19/04/14 ²	600	478	122	227 (224)	251
Total	1935	1548	387	804 (794)	744

¹ survey participation was restricted to adults (i.e. age 18 or older); ² Easter long-weekend

Who conducted the study

The study was conducted by a team of researchers from Southern Cross University:

- Ms Madeline Hill: survey design, data collection; data analysis
- Mr Filippo Tonelli: data collection
- Dr Pascal Scherrer: survey design; data analysis
- Dr Brent Moyle: survey design; data analysis
- Prof. Betty Weiler: survey design
- Dr Ben Farr-Wharton: data analysis

Image: Stuart Owen Fox; Destination NSW

FINDINGS

Who visited Wollumbin?

During the three days of surveying, a total of 1,935 visitors were recorded consisting of 80% adults and 20% children.

20% of site visitors were children/ under 18

Visitor demographics at Wollumbin National Park

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

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)		#	%	
Yes		478	60.2	
No		316	39.8	
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	
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	
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		

60% are repeat visitors

50% of repeat visitors visit at least once a year

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

Why did they visit the site?

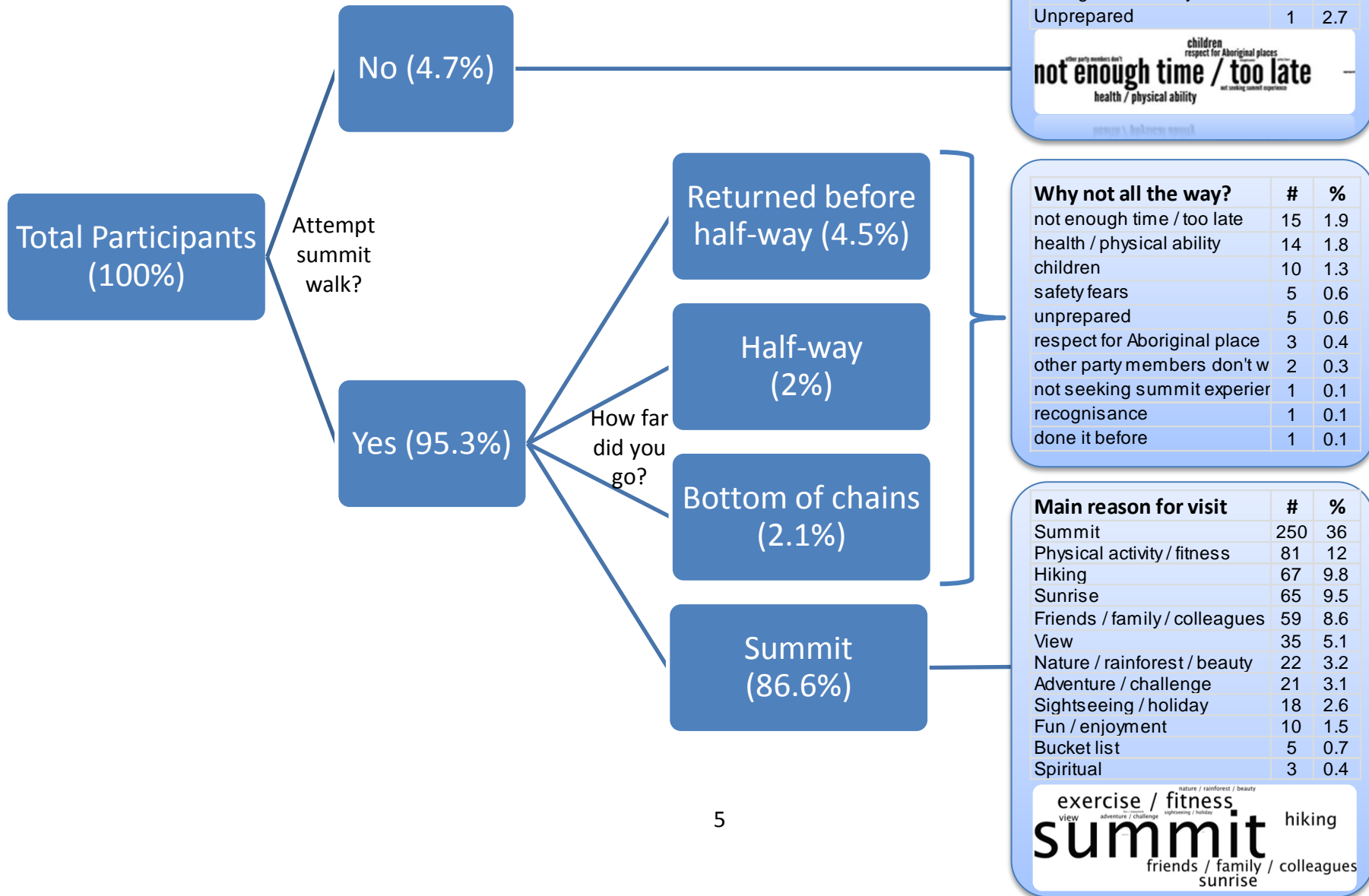
Reason	#	%
Summit	264	33.7
Physical activity / exercise / fitness	91	11.6
Hiking	79	10.1
Friends / family / colleagues	73	9.3
Sunrise	66	8.4
View	38	4.9
Nature / rainforest / beauty	38	4.9
Sightseeing / holiday	28	3.6
Adventure / challenge	22	2.8
Fun / enjoyment	11	1.4
Bucket list	5	0.6
Spiritual	5	0.6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

Visitors primarily come for the summit or experiences associated with climbing the mountain

Rank	Motivation	Mean	Stand. Dev.	VSD (1)	← → VSA (7)	% Disagree	% Agree
1	To walk to the summit	6.44	1.5			7	91
2	To see the views from the top	6.16	1.68			9	87
3	For sightseeing	5.91	1.56			9	84
4	To experience nature	5.91	1.48			7	84
5	For physical activity/exercise	5.9	1.56			8	84
6	To spend time with friends/family	5.84	1.71			10	83
7	For adventure	5.74	1.6			9	80
8	For photography	4.2	2.22			38	47
9	To learn about culture	3.15	1.96			60	25
10	To see the sunrise	3.06	2.59			64	31
11	For a picnic	2.46	2			73	18
12	To walk the Lyrebird track	2.05	1.85			80	11

VSD = very strongly disagree; VSA = very strongly agree

Who summits and who doesn't?

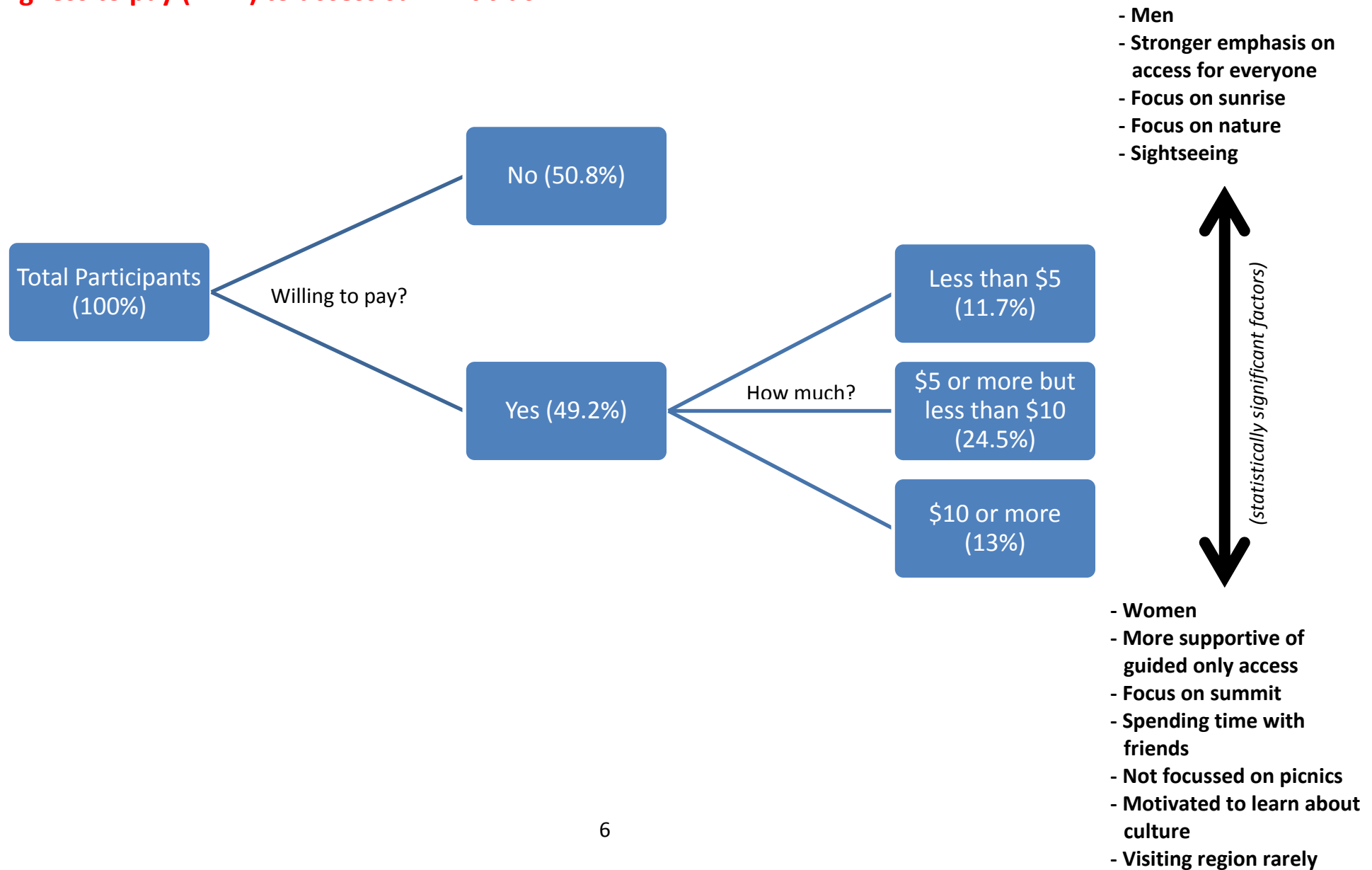


- older
- less opposed to guided only access
- most supportive of base loop track with viewing points



- focus on summit, physical activity & adventure
- younger






Willingness to pay (WTP) to access summit track



Personal importance/meaning of Wollumbin (Mt Warning)

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

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

SEEKING FURTHER INFORMATION?

Please contact Dr Pascal Scherrer via email at pascal.scherrer@scu.edu.au.

