

Mt. Wellington cable car proponents look for a new route up Hobart's Mountain



[The debate about whether The debate about whether there should be any cable car up the Mountain continues as a search goes on for a route.](#)
(ABC News: Scott Ross)

Plans for a cable car up kunanyi/Mt Wellington behind Hobart hit a snag this week after the owners of the Cascade Brewery site ruled out selling or leasing land for the development.

What's out, and what's in, for a route up the Mountain?

Option 1 - Cascade Brewery, South Hobart

Leaving from the *Cascade Brewery* had long been the proponent's preferred location for the cable car base site, but is now apparently out.

The route would have taken the cable car over the 800-metre-wide cliff known as the *Organ Pipes*.



[The Hobart cable car debate is as old as the hills — why does the proposal cause such a reaction in Tasmania?](#)

Mount Wellington Cableway Company (MWCC) has previously said the "most optimal alignment from the Summit runs east towards South Hobart", making the Brewery site ideal from both logistical and visitor experience perspectives.

That plan was scuttled by *Carlton and United Breweries* (CUB) on Tuesday, when it announced:-

it would "not sell or lease any Cascade land to the Mount Wellington Cableway Company for its proposed cable car on kunanyi/Mount Wellington".

The proponent has preferred a route that travels over the *Organ Pipes*.

The MWCC website says that not only is it spectacular to see up close, the vertical drop of the pipes would "significantly reduce the number of towers needed for a cableway".

It says avoiding the *Organ Pipes* could require "dozens of towers and an upper terminal location sitting above the skyline".



Potential routes for the kunanyi/Mt Wellington cable car project. (MWCC/Google Earth)

Option 2 - Old Farm Road, South Hobart

The Mount Wellington Cableway Company has held meetings with Old Farm Road residents and shown them a map of its proposal for a base station on fire trails near the end of the road.

One of the challenges of that spot is that the end of Old Farm Road is surrounded by land owned by CUB, which says it will not lease or sell to the company.



[The proposed cable car terminal may be located on Old Farm Road. \(ABC News. Linda Hunt\)](#)

The Tasmanian Government could compulsorily acquire land from CUB to enable access, although Old Farm Road would be a challenging traverse for large volumes of traffic.

It is steep, winding and narrow and some of the houses sit almost on its verge.

The proposed base site is within the *Wellington Park* boundary on fire trails, which would have to be converted into proper roads.

Luke Martin from the *Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania* said the issue of unsuitable road access to the Mountain or a cable car base needed to be dealt with.

"Ultimately, where they do plant the terminal or the car park for people to access the Mountain is a serious infrastructure challenge," he said.

Option 3 - The Springs, Wellington Park

The MWCC website said *The Springs* was a frequently suggested alternative for the starting point.

"Our study concluded that *The Springs* route would require too many large towers across the face and on top of the Mountain," the report said.

It also said **it would financially struggle without "road use restrictions"**.



[View over Old Farm Road to Hobart. \(ABC News: Scott Ross\)](#)

Option 4 - Giblin Street, Lenah Valley

MWCC has looked at starting the cableway at Lenah Valley, as a way to avoid the *Organ Pipes*, but suggested that was not a feasible option.

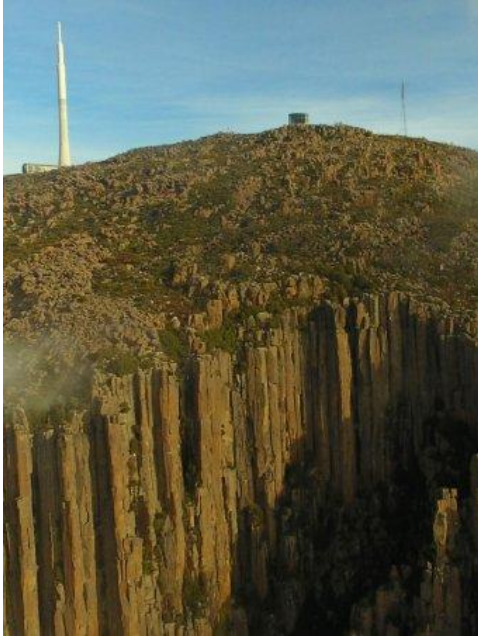
"34 towers are needed for an alignment to the quarry at the top end of Giblin Street," it said.

That was compared with just eight on the *Cascade Brewery* route.

Option 5 - Tolosa Park, Glenorchy

The Glenorchy City Council has shown support for having the cable car start from its municipality.

Mayor, Kristie Johnston, said Glenorchy had the best view of *Mount Wellington* and offered easy access to *Wellington Park*.



The Organ Pipes on the way to the summit are a sensitive issue.

"I think it certainly would be a very stunning experience that people could enjoy coming from Glenorchy to the peak of Mount Wellington so we're very keen to talk to the proponents about that," she said.

Alderman Johnston said the likely site would be at the top of Tolosa Street, adjacent to *Tolosa Park*.

"We see there's significant opportunity to leverage off the activities already available in Tolosa Park, in particular," she said.

"It's the exit for the north-south mountain bike track as well, so it's already a heavily utilised area, it's where people gain access to Wellington Park as well."

The Council has not had any recent formal talks with the proponent.

In 2014, Adrian Bold MWCC said basing the cable car at *Tolosa Park* would be "technically difficult" because of prevailing westerly winds across the north face of the Mountain.

"Those westerly winds would be cross winds for the system, and that would mean we'd need a stronger system, more towers and more towers that would be on the ridge line," Mr. Bold said.

"And it's a longer route, it's just over 5 kilometres."

So what is happening now?

The Company declined to do an interview, but issued a statement to the ABC.

"For the past few months, MWCC has been working flat out on preparing a fully resolved project to submit for approval and remains committed to this project," it said.

"We ask people be patient a little longer."

The *Tourism Industry Council* believed tourists would want to visit the attraction regardless of where it started from.

Luke Martin says that *Cascade Brewery* would have been an ideal base for the cable car, but the development can thrive somewhere else.

"Ultimately it's the Mountain, and it's the experience of rising to the Mountain and spending more time engaging with the mountain," he said.

Hobart Alderman, Jeff Briscoe, thinks the CUB decision has sealed the project's fate.

"It leaves the Project, in my eyes, that the cable car company should kiss the project goodbye," he said.

Don't despair, another one will come along

If MWCC's vision of gondolas full of happy tourists gliding up and down the Mountain does not get off the ground, it will not be the first.



The idea of a cable-drawn system of passenger cabins to the Summit was first proposed in 1905, even before a road was built to the peak.

In 1931, another proposal to run a cable car to the top from *The Springs* fell over due to worsening global economic conditions following the Wall Street crash of 1929 and the ensuing *Great Depression*, the effects of which caused the Australian economy to collapse in 1932.

In the late 1980s, a plan by engineer, Tim Burbury, to ferry sightseers up the Mountain starting from a base at the *Cascade Brewery* site ran into fierce community opposition, with a revival of the proposal several years later also never being realised.

The torch was passed to Adrian Bold, who has spoken about showing his plans to Mr. Burbury before his death in 2010.



[Former politician and continuing conservationist Bob Brown at a cable car protest.](#) (Twitter: Bob Brown)

But it has been anything but a smooth ride for Mr. Bold's *Mount Wellington Cableway Company*, with a number of setbacks.

Apart from the logistical challenges, Mr. Bold and his MWCC team are also up against a determined group of local residents who have at their disposal the tools of the internet and social media to get their message of opposition out.



MWCC boss, Adrian Bold, is not perturbed about Cascade Brewery's refusal on land for the Project. (ABC News: Gregor Salmon.)

Add to that, MWCC has antagonised the Aboriginal community by registering a number of variations on the word kunanyi — the local Aboriginal name for the Mountain — for website addresses.

An Indigenous representative group has demanded the on-line rights to the name be relinquished. Local opponents have said they "don't think the MWCC will give up", adding "we're setting up for a long fight".

The MWCC website features a countdown clock to the Project's target opening, suggesting it will be up and running by April 2020.

That would be 115 years since the concept was first proposed.