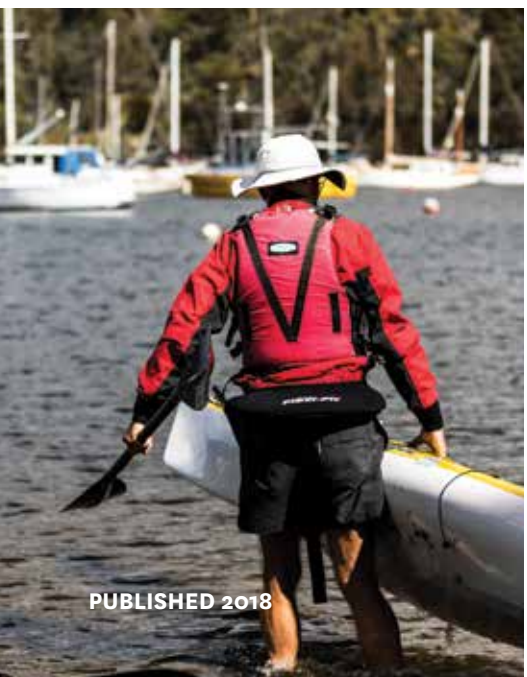
Clarence... a brighter place

Clarence Kayak Trail

With individual maps and information



PUBLISHED 2018



Welcome

Welcome to the eastern shore of the Derwent River estuary where there is 191kms of coastline to paddle and explore.

The coastline is very diverse with estuaries, salt marshes, tidal flats, ephemeral lagoons, surf beaches flanked by dunes, rocky headlands, urban and coastal living areas, as well as parts of the coast that are managed as protected areas and open spaces. There are important aquatic habitats including the Pitt Water Estuary, an internationally recognised wetland site. There are great views up and down the estuary including impressive vistas to kunanyi/Mt Wellington, Sullivans Cove, Alum Cliffs, Bruny Island, Iron Pot, Betsey Island, surf beaches, the Tasman Peninsula and Frederick Henry Bay.

Paddling a kayak is one of the best ways to explore and enjoy the coastline and its many features of interest. However to do so, you need to be prepared and mindful that the conditions on the river and open seas can change quickly.

The Clarence Kayak Trail provides information to help you plan for your kayak trip and make the best decision about where to go. It breaks the Clarence Kayak Trail into eight coastal sections and provides:

- a brief description of the coastline;
- where the launching points are;
- an estimate of the distance you might paddle;
- an indication of the grading or skill level for this section of the coastline;
- the hazards you need to be aware of;
- the facilities you can access off the Trail; and
- the key points of interest along the coastline.

This means you can choose the section that best suits your paddling skills, your available time and the type of recreational experience you are looking for.

⚠ All coastal waters can be dangerous at times and it is recommended that you read about the paddling conditions, the skill level proposed for sections of the Clarence Kayak Trail and go through the checklist before you decide where to go for a paddle.

Paddling Conditions

River and open water conditions can vary according to many factors such as:

- wind strength;
- direction and duration that the wind has been blowing;
- fetch (the distance over which the wind has blown);
- depth of water;
- physical characteristics of the shoreline;
- tide and currents; and
- air and water temperature.

You should access up-to-date weather and wind forecasts on the Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology: **www.bom.gov.au/australia/meteye/** or ring **Marine and Safety Tasmania** (MAST) marine weather on **6233 9955** before setting out to obtain the latest weather forecast.

MAST has a website for paddle craft users:
www.mast.tas.gov.au/recreational/paddle-safe-program/kayak-canoe/

You can also use **beachsafe.com.au** to obtain information about beach conditions and available facilities.

You should always consider having an alternative plan when planning your trip and know where you can get off the water if the weather conditions change.

When on the water keep a look out for:

- Changing weather conditions especially strengthening winds and off shore winds
- Other boats and users of the coastal waters
- Pylons, navigational buoys, rocks and any other hazards
- Avoid main navigation spans on the Derwent River

Skill Level

The suggested skill level for paddling sections of the coastal trail is based on the knowledge and insight of regular kayakers who know the local coastal locations and conditions. It is important that you assess if your kayak or paddle craft is suitable for the length of the trail and the conditions expected to be encountered.

Three skill levels have been identified below.

Basic

Basic skill if you have:

- limited previous paddling skills or experience
- the basic skills to manoeuvre your kayak forwards, backwards and sideways
- competent to paddle in 10km/hour winds
- practiced how to recover if you capsize
- the skills to land your kayak on a boat ramp or beach without breaking waves
- basic navigation and map reading skills
- can understand the Bureau of Meteorology marine weather forecasts and observe signs of changing weather conditions

Intermediate

Intermediate skill if you have:

- all the above listed for basic skills
- reasonable fitness to paddle longer distances
- competent to paddle in 20km/hour winds
- good navigation and map reading skills
- skills and experience to handle larger waves (up to 1 metre), swells and winds
- skills to land your kayak onto a rocky shore or beach with breaking waves

Advanced

Advanced skill if you have:

- all the above listed skills for intermediate skill level
- high level of fitness to cope with paddling longer distances and in more adverse coastal conditions
- competent to paddle in 25-30km/hour winds
- skills and experience to handle difficult sea conditions with big swells, waves and strong winds
- the skills and experience to enter or exit beaches through surf
- the knowledge to deal with emergency situations

The approximate distance for paddling the sections of the coastline are given in the notes. The time you should allow for paddling these sections will vary greatly depending on the weather conditions, the kayaks being used, your skills and your experience of the coastline.

As a rough rule of thumb, someone with basic skills may comfortably paddle about 3-4km in an hour in good coastal weather conditions. An intermediate may paddle about 4-5km in an hour. An advanced paddler should be able to maintain a cruising speed of 6kms an hour for long distances.

Paddlers with intermediate or advanced skills may choose to cross from the western shore of the Derwent River to link into the Clarence Kayak Trail when the river conditions are good. Launching sites include Cornelian Bay, the Hobart Regatta site, Marieville Esplanade, Nutgrove Beach, Long Beach and Taroona Beach.

For one way trips a car shuttle will need to be arranged to return to the start.



Paddler's Checklist

Before you go:

- Consider your fitness levels and the experience of you and other paddlers before choosing where you paddle. Know your personal limits.
- Never paddle alone. Paddle with friends. If you have basic paddling skills consider paddling with someone having intermediate or advanced skills.
- Familiarise yourself with the trail. Be aware of the launch point, distance, time it will take to complete, any safety hazards and the facilities available.
- Consult the most recent weather forecast and a tide chart as conditions may impact upon the route. Do not go paddling if there is thunder or lightning.
- Check all equipment is in good condition.
- Make sure your kayak or paddle craft is suitable for your trip.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to be back.
- Make yourself familiar with navigational rules, navigation lights and marks **(mast.tas.gov.au)**.

What to take:

- ☐ Wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD)
- ☐ Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) for advanced skill trips
- ☐ Paddle leash
- ☐ Mobile phone (keep in a water tight bag) in case of an emergency
- ☐ Weather-appropriate clothing to stay warm and visible
- ☐ Navigational lights if you intend to paddle in conditions of poor visibility or darkness (white strobe light or all round light with 360° visibility)
- ☐ Sun protection – sunscreen, hat and sunglasses
- ☐ Wetsuit boots, rubber shoes or sandals
- ☐ Wear high visibility clothing to ensure you are able to be seen by other watercraft
- ☐ All paddlers should consider wetsuits or clothing capable of keeping you warm when wet in the event of a capsize
- ☐ Plenty of food and drinking water
- ☐ Maps in a waterproof bag
- ☐ Bag to collect rubbish (e.g. food and drink containers)
- ☐ Flares if paddling outside of the Derwent River (e.g. kayak trails 6 & 7)

Map key

- Kayak trail
- Start/Finish (launching points)
- Basic skill level
- Intermediate skill level
- Advanced skill level
- Additional launching points
- Kayak sections
- Information
- Highlights along the trail
- Highlights marked on map
- Toilets
- Hazards
- Warning



Kayak Trail Overview

Paddling in Pitt Water

Pitt Water provides a large wetland of international significance, recognised as both a Tasmanian Nature Reserve and an international wetland site. Paddling provides the opportunity to view the coastline, tidal waters and Tasmanian shoreline birdlife. It is recommended that paddling in Pitt Water occurs outside of the breeding season (November - February). Parts of Pitt Water can be very shallow at low tides and can be exposed to strong winds, predominantly from the west and northwest.

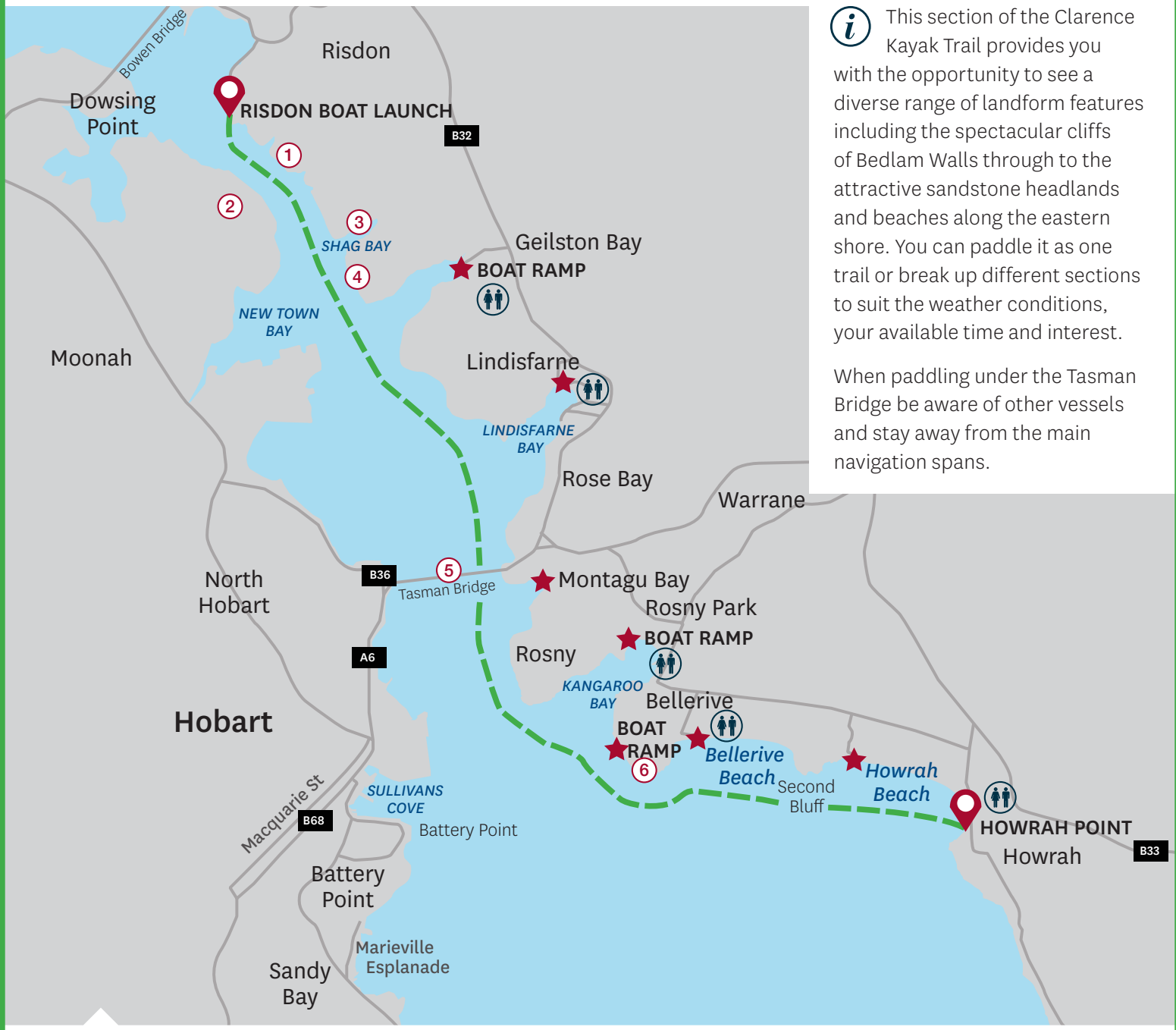
You will need to arrange a car shuttle if you do not make it a return trip.

DISCLAIMER: *Whilst all endeavours have been made to ensure that the information contained in the brochure is correct, the Clarence City Council (Council) makes no warranties as to the accuracy of the information and that users of the guide should not rely on the brochure and should make their own enquiries. There are specific risks in paddling the coastline (e.g. exposure to severe and changing weather conditions, injury, death, drowning, collision with other watercraft, etc) and users of the guide do so at their own risk. Trail users should exercise due care, skill and diligence in undertaking the activity and undertake appropriate weather checks with the Bureau of Meteorology and MAST beforehand and take appropriate safety measures. Paddlers should ensure they comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Council does not accept any liability in relation to the reliance on the brochure or activities undertaken by users of the Clarence Kayak Trail.*

1 Risdon to Little Howrah Beach

11-12 kms one way

Basic



This section of the Clarence Kayak Trail provides you with the opportunity to see a diverse range of landform features including the spectacular cliffs of Bedlam Walls through to the attractive sandstone headlands and beaches along the eastern shore. You can paddle it as one trail or break up different sections to suit the weather conditions, your available time and interest.

When paddling under the Tasman Bridge be aware of other vessels and stay away from the main navigation spans.

Highlights

- Spectacular cliffs at Bedlam Walls. (1)
- Views towards the 100 year old zinc smelter factory on the waterfront. (2)
- Sheltered waters of Shag Bay with significant historic and cultural values including Tasmanian Aboriginal sites, remains of the fertilizer factory, quarrying and past resting place for old historic boats. (3)
- Aboriginal rock shelter south of Shag Bay. (4)
- Paddle under the Tasman Bridge and view the span that was rebuilt after the Illawarra collision in 1976, which cut off vehicle access between the eastern and western shores. (5)
- Paddling into Geilston Bay, Lindisfarne Bay and Kangaroo Bay.
- Paddle past Kangaroo Bluff, a former gun emplacement in the 19th Century to help defend the early colony. (6)
- Option to paddle across to the western shore in favourable weather conditions on the river.

This section of the river can be exposed to strong winds from the northwest, west and southwest making paddling difficult into the wind and waves. Strong southerly and southwesterly sea breezes can occur in summer. A southwest swell can cause surf breaking on the beaches and make it difficult to land or launch.

2 Little Howrah Beach to Rokeby Beach

7-8 kms one way

Intermediate



This section of the Clarence Kayak Trail can be undertaken as a return trip or provide you with the option to continue paddling on to the South Arm Peninsula or Ralphs Bay.

Highlights

- Whaling station at Trywork Point C 1818. (1)
- Chinaman's Beach – a good place to land. (2)
- Chipman family farm during 1820-1947 that produced vegetables, wool and wheat – some remnants of the farm buildings and plantings remain. (3)
- Droughty Point is a prominent regional landmark in the vistas from the waterfront. (4)
- Large number of Aboriginal sites of significance that are listed on the Register of the National Estate.
- Great views to the city, South Arm and Ralphs Bay.

This section of the river can be exposed to strong winds from the northwest, west and southwest making paddling difficult into the wind and waves. In summer, strong southerly and southwesterly sea breezes can occur. A southwest swell can make it difficult to land or launch along the foreshore from Howrah Point to Droughty Point. Northeast winds can make it difficult to paddle from Droughty Point to Rokeby.

Low rocky foreshore with limited landing spots. Reefs may be exposed at low tide.

3 Rokeby Beach to Gorringes Beach /Eastern Bezzants Road

11 kms to Gorringes Beach
+ 6 kms to Bezzants Road

Intermediate



This section of the Clarence Kayak Trail provides you with the option to explore the coastline around Ralphs Bay featuring low cliffs, rocky platforms, tidal flats and many sandy beaches.

Highlights

- Views of the scenic coastline with various route options to traverse the bay.
- Lauderdale Canal (accessible at mid to high tides) to then give access to Lauderdale Beach and Frederick Henry Bay. (1)
- Remoteness around the western side of Ralphs Bay to Gellibrand Point with a series of bluffs.
- Several isolated beaches including Richardsons Beach, Huxleys Beach, Musk Beach and Shelly Beach.
- Option of a paddle from Bezzants Road around to Opossum Bay or South Arm Beach.

Northeast winds can make it difficult to paddle from Droughty Point to Rokeby. Strong southerly and southeasterly sea breezes can occur in summer.

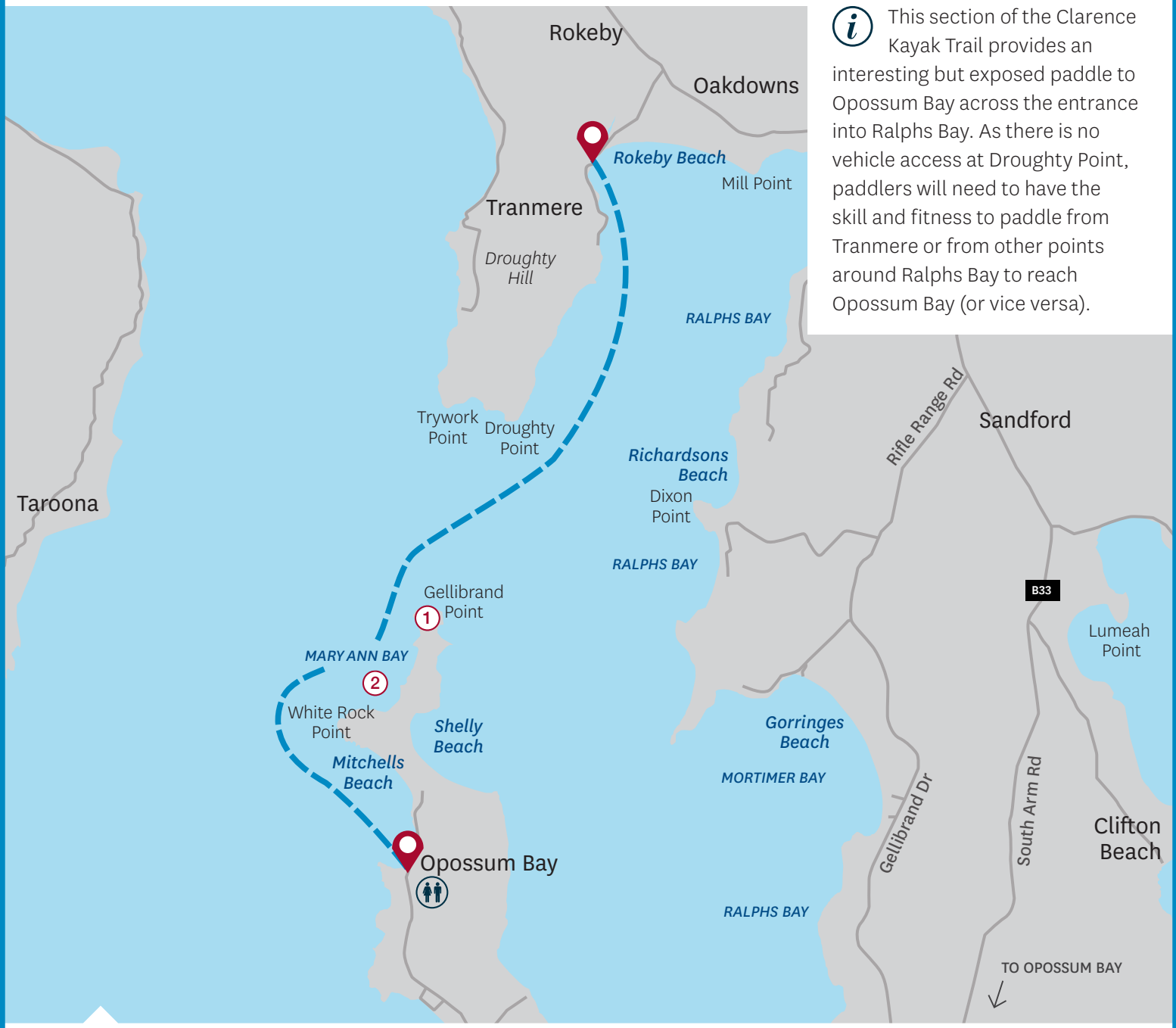
Shallow waters and mudflats occur around much of Ralphs Bay at low tide, especially towards the South Arm Neck.

Some parts of Ralphs Bay would suit basic paddlers in favourable weather conditions e.g. Mortimers Bay, western side of Ralphs Bay (South Arm) and near Lauderdale.

4 Rokeby Beach to Opossum Bay

12 kms one way

Intermediate



This section of the Clarence Kayak Trail provides an interesting but exposed paddle to Opossum Bay across the entrance into Ralphs Bay. As there is no vehicle access at Droughty Point, paddlers will need to have the skill and fitness to paddle from Tranmere or from other points around Ralphs Bay to reach Opossum Bay (or vice versa).

Highlights

- Historic grave at Gellibrand Point. (1)
- Beautiful Mary Ann Bay is a popular destination for sailing and motor cruise boats. (2)
- Great views back to the city, Alum Cliffs, Tinderbox and Bruny Island.
- Option for experienced paddlers to paddle across the river route between Taroona to Droughty Point and Gellibrand Point but is susceptible to wind and waves in adverse weather.

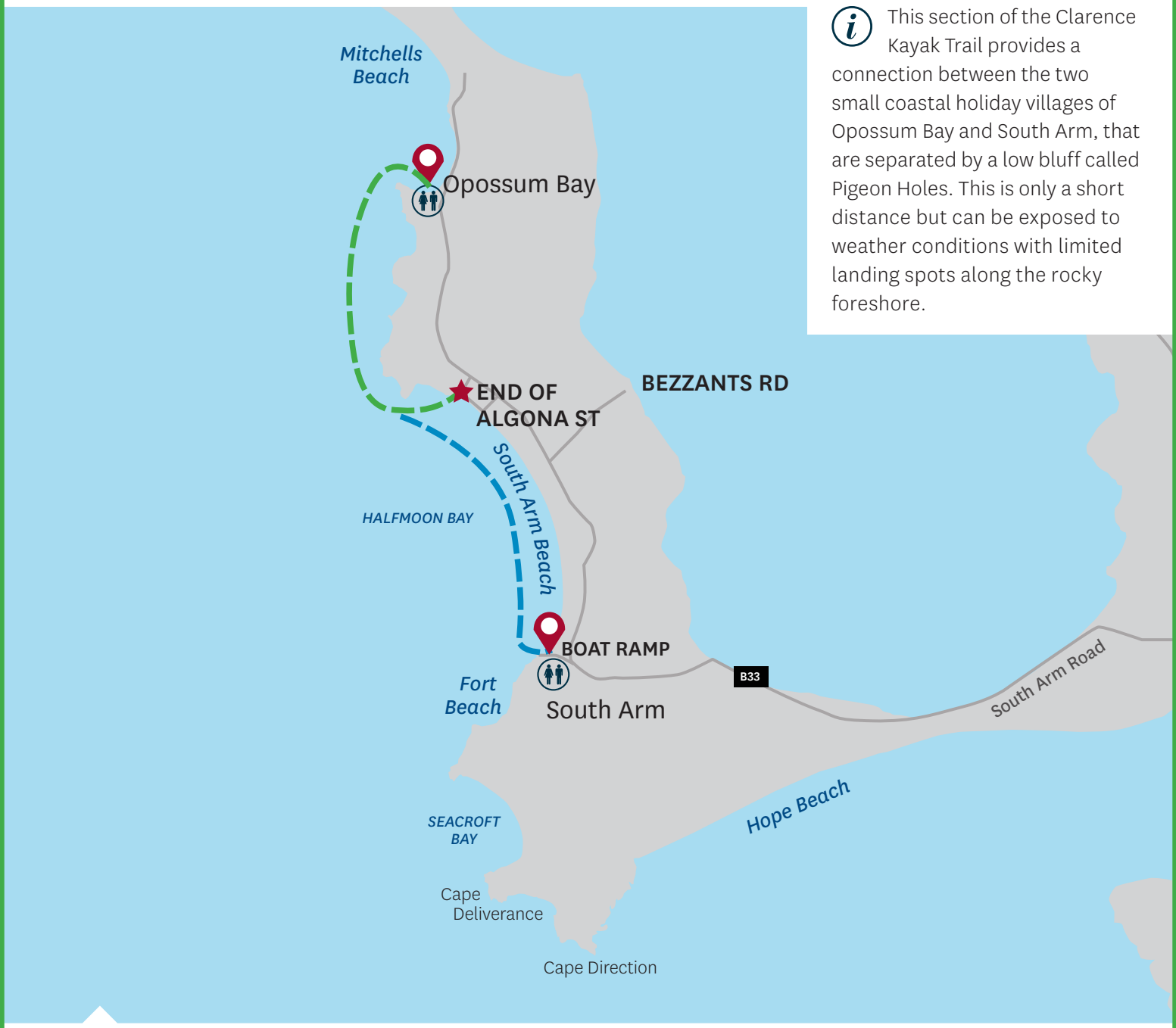
Open coastal water (2.5kms) between Droughty Point and Gellibrand Point can be exposed to strong winds from most directions. Strong southerly and southeasterly sea breezes can occur in summer. This can create bigger swell and waves given the fetch on the river.

This is graded as mostly intermediate but appropriate for someone with basic skill close to Opossum Bay.

5 Opossum Bay to South Arm

5-6 kms one way

Basic and Intermediate



This section of the Clarence Kayak Trail provides a connection between the two small coastal holiday villages of Opossum Bay and South Arm, that are separated by a low bluff called Pigeon Holes. This is only a short distance but can be exposed to weather conditions with limited landing spots along the rocky foreshore.

Highlights

- South Arm Beach.
- Great views back to the city, Alum Cliffs, Tinderbox and Bruny Island.

Note: This is graded for mostly someone with basic skill level in Halfmoon Bay but would suit intermediate skill level between Opossum Bay to the northern end of South Arm Beach if exposed to strong winds conditions.

Can be exposure to strong winds from the south, southwest, west and north. Strong southerly and southeasterly sea breezes can occur in summer. This can create bigger swell and waves given the fetch on the river.

Rocky foreshore and platforms between Opossum Bay to northern end of South Arm Beach limit coming ashore.

6 South Arm to Cremorne

24 kms one way

Advanced

This section of the Clarence Kayak Trail offers a rugged yet spectacular coastline which requires paddlers to have considerable experience and advanced skills in open coastal seas. It is a relatively long paddle with very limited safe options to land other than at the start and end points, unless you have the skills to land on beaches that often have swell and surf.



Highlights

- Spectacular coastline with prominent headlands (Cape Direction, Cape Contrariety and Cape Deslacs) and surf beaches.
- Iron Pot lighthouse. (1)
- Betsey Island. (2)
- Long distance views to Bruny Island, Tasman Peninsula and across Frederick Henry Bay.
- Pipeclay Lagoon. (3)

The coastline is exposed to strong winds (onshore and offshore) and big swells. Strong southerly and southeasterly sea breezes can occur in summer.

This can create bigger swell and waves given the open coastal waters. The entry into Pipeclay Lagoon at Cremorne can be difficult when there is a northerly breeze and the ebb tide is at maximum.

The coastline cliffs and surf beaches create high difficulty for finding safe access and landings. Very difficult to land on Betsey Island given rocky exposed foreshore.

7 Cremorne to Lauderdale

8 kms one way

Intermediate and Basic



This section of the Clarence Kayak Trail provides relatively good paddling conditions when prevailing westerly winds affect the Derwent River. Interesting natural coastline with rocky foreshore between Cremorne to Mays Beach.

Highlights

- Cremorne Beach, Mays Beach and Lauderdale Beach.
- Remoteness of the coastline between Cremorne and Mays Beach.
- Option to paddle in Pipeclay Lagoon and Lauderdale Canal for basic paddlers.
- Long distance views to Tasman Peninsula and across Frederick Henry Bay.

Can be exposure to strong winds from the north, north east, east and west (from Mays Point to Lauderdale). Strong sea breezes can occur in summer which can create bigger southerly swell and waves given the fetch on Frederick Henry Bay. The entry into Pipeclay Lagoon at Cremorne can be difficult when there is a northerly breeze and the ebb tide is at maximum.

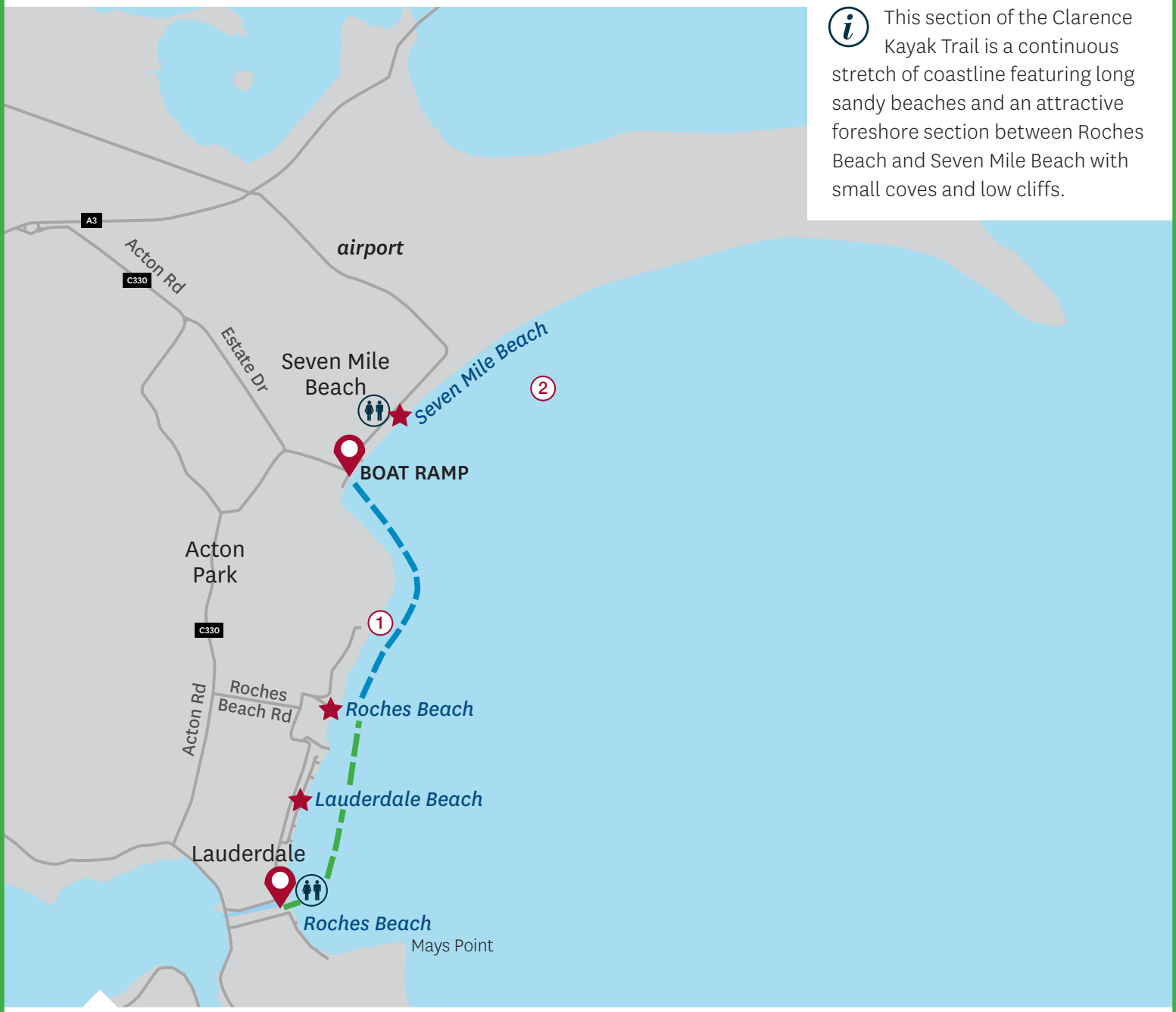
Rocky foreshore limits landing locations between Cremorne and Mays Beach. There are tidal currents at the entrance into Pipe Clay Lagoon.

8 Lauderdale to Seven Mile Beach and Sandy Point

10-11 kms one way

Basic and Intermediate

This section of the Clarence Kayak Trail is a continuous stretch of coastline featuring long sandy beaches and an attractive foreshore section between Roches Beach and Seven Mile Beach with small coves and low cliffs.



Highlights

- Long sandy beaches.
- Attractive rocky foreshore, small beaches and low cliffs between Roches Beach and Seven Mile Beach. (1)
- Planes flying in and out of Hobart Airport over Frederick Henry Bay. (2)

Note: Suitable for basic paddlers along Lauderdale Beach to Roches Beach and near Seven Mile Beach.

Roches Beach to Seven Mile Beach is reasonably protected from westerly winds but can be exposed to northeast, east and southeast winds.

Swells and rocky cliffs can sometimes make it difficult to land on the foreshore between Roches Beach and Seven Mile Beach.

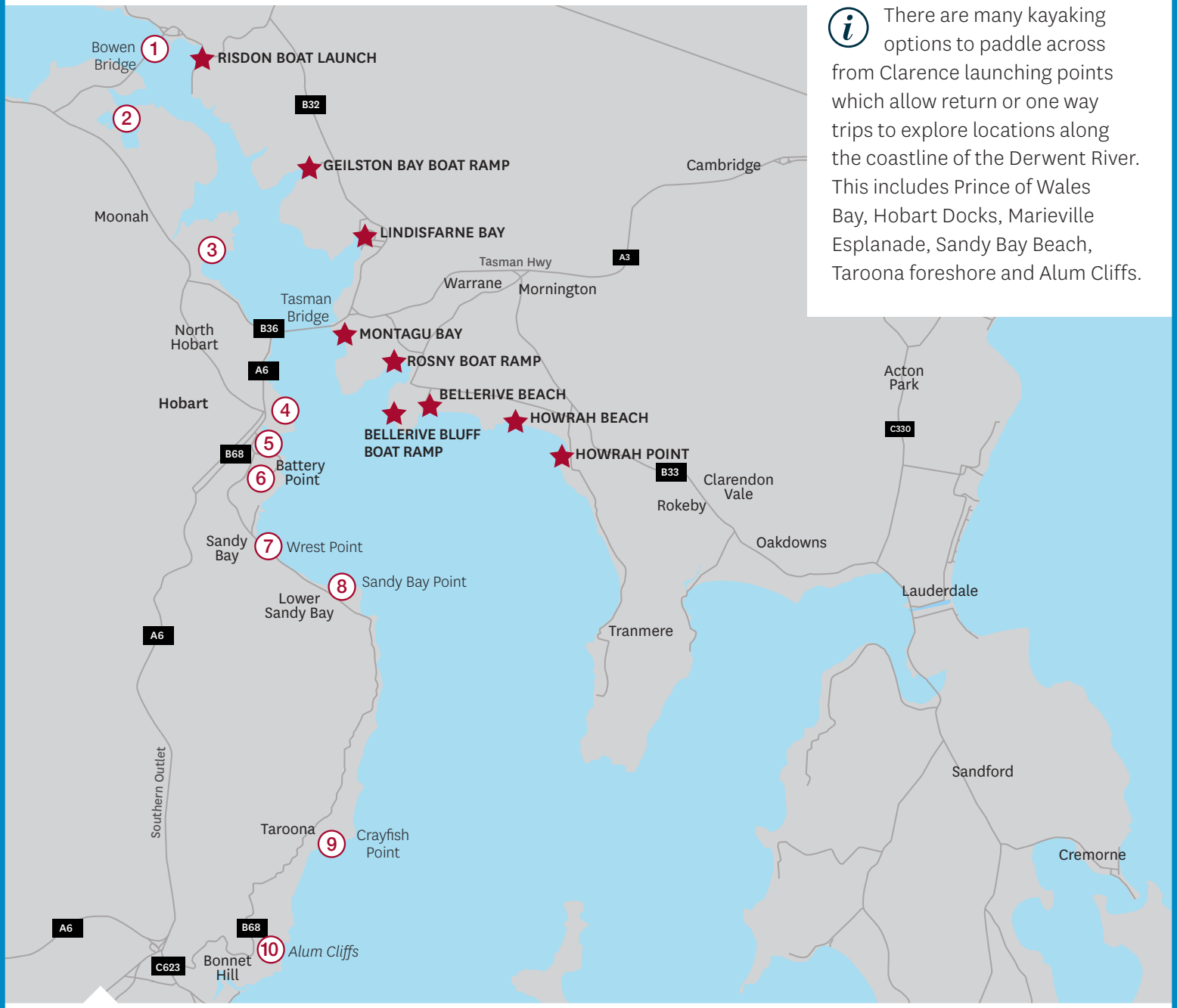
Strong sea breezes can occur in summer which can create bigger southern and southeast swells and waves given the fetch on Frederick Henry Bay.

Westerly winds become offshore along Seven Mile Beach.

9 Eastern Shore to Western Shore of Derwent Estuary

Varying distances

Intermediate



There are many kayaking options to paddle across from Clarence launching points which allow return or one way trips to explore locations along the coastline of the Derwent River. This includes Prince of Wales Bay, Hobart Docks, Marieville Esplanade, Sandy Bay Beach, Taroona foreshore and Alum Cliffs.

Highlights

Bowen Bridge (1)
Prince of Wales Marina (2)
Cornelian Bay (3)
Hobart Regatta Grounds (4)
Hobart Docks (5)
Battery Point (6)
Wrest Point Casino (7)
Sandy Bay Beach and parklands (8)
Taroona beaches (9)
Spectacular Alum Cliffs (10)

Can be exposure to strong winds from the north, north east, east and west. Strong sea breezes can occur in summer which can create bigger southerly swell and waves. There are many landing sites on the western shore which can be researched prior to paddling across the river.

At all times, we urge you to be mindful of boats and other water craft on the Derwent River.