



**Jim's Plain & Robbins Island**  
Renewable Energy Parks

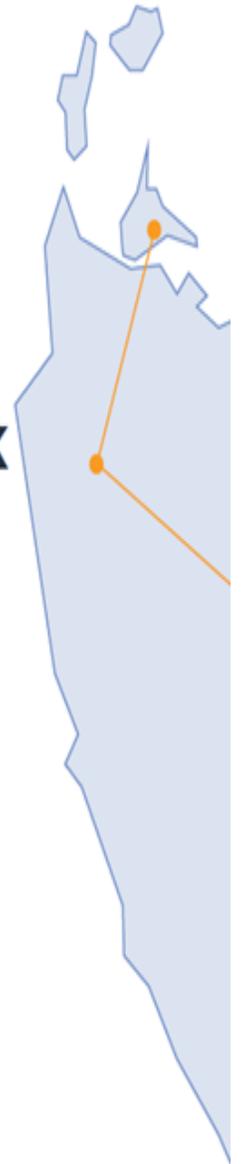
## **Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park**

### **Appendix X**

### **Historic Heritage Assessment**

*UPC Robbins Island Pty Ltd*

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Robbins Island Renewable Energy  
Park Project

Historic Heritage Assessment Report

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8.10.2020

CULTURAL  
HERITAGE  
MANAGEMENT  
AUSTRALIA

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## Executive Summary

### Project Details

UPC Renewables Australia (UPC) is seeking planning and environmental approval for the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park Project (the Project) The proposed Project is located on Robbins Island in far north-west Tasmania (see Figure 1).

The Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park is a wind farm proposal that involves installing up to 122 Wind Turbine generators (WTGs) on Robbins Island in north-west Tasmania, each with a generating capacity of up to 12 MW, dependant on the final WTG model selected for the Project.

The WTGs will be located within a defined area within the Project Site, referred to as the WTG Development Zone, with WTG footprints to be micro-sited in the Project's pre-construction phase.

In addition to the WTGs, the Project includes the following major infrastructure components:

- Electrical infrastructure including multiple substations, a network of underground cables connecting the WTGs to the substations, underground transmission lines from the substations with one main cable from the Project Site, using multiple transmission conduits through the bridge connecting the Project to mainland transmission infrastructure and between Robbins Island Road and Hampshire (forming a separate project).
- A network of roads across Robbins Island for construction and operational use. This will involve both the upgrade of existing tracks on the island and the construction of new roads. Roads will be of a width and grade suitable for accommodating large semi-trailers and oversized construction machinery. The Project also includes the upgrade of Robbins Island Road on mainland Tasmania.
- A bridge over Robbins Passage to enable vehicle access between Robbins Island and mainland Tasmania. This will be a piled structure with on ramps on either side of the passage to maintain the hydrodynamic regime and allow recreational boat access through the navigable sections of Robbins Passage.
- A wharf with roll on/roll off (RoRo) facilities to avoid the use of the public road network for oversize WTG equipment and other materials and equipment delivery during the construction phase. The wharf will be located on the east coast of Robbins Island.
- A Maintenance and Services (MAS) facility, wash-down bays and meteorological masts.

Figure 2 shows the extent of the proposed draft development footprint on Robbins Island.

CHMA Pty Ltd has been engaged by GHD (on behalf of UPC) to undertake an Historic heritage assessment for the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park Project. This report presents the findings of the assessment.

### **Results of the Field Survey**

A desktop search of the Tasmanian Heritage Register was undertaken on 07 August 2018 for Robbins Island, which returned no listings of historic sites. Desktop searches were also undertaken of the Australian Heritage Database, which includes all sites on the National Heritage List, the World Heritage List, the Commonwealth Heritage List, and the Register of the National Estate, which also returned no listings for Robbins Island.

No historic heritage sites were identified during the field survey assessment of the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park footprint (the study area). It should be noted that several historic residential buildings and the foundations of buildings and other structures were noted to be present on the Island. These were focused within the eastern portion of the Island, well outside the proposed development footprint. These features are not under any threat of impact from the development.

As described in section 3 of this report, there were some constraints in surface visibility experienced across the majority of the study area, with visibility averaging 30%. Given these visibility constraints, it can't be stated with absolute certainty that there are no undetected historic heritage sites or features present within the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park development footprint. However, surface visibility was sufficient to generate a basic impression of the historic sensitivity of the development footprint.

As described in section 4.7 of this report, there is a long record of historic activity on Robbins Island, extending back to the early 1800s. Much of this activity centres around farming and agricultural activity. This was primarily focused within the more fertile eastern portion of Robbins Island. This is still largely the case today. The Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park development footprint is primarily focused within the western portion of Robbins Island, where agricultural activity was historically very limited, due to the comparatively infertile soils that occur in this area. Today, the area is still largely covered by native vegetation. Given the limited extent of agricultural activity in the western portion of the Island, historic sites and features associated with this industry are very unlikely to occur within the development footprint.

Sealing is also thought to have been undertaken on Robbins Island in the early 1800s. There is the potential for heritage sites and features associated with this activity to still survive on the Island. These sites are most likely to be sited along the coast line, and in particular the north-east and south-east ends of the Island, where seals are known to come ashore on the rocky cobblestone beaches in this area. Once again, these areas are well outside the proposed development footprint, and

therefore such heritage features are very unlikely to occur in the development footprint.

Mutton birding is another industry that took place on the Island, albeit in a limited fashion. The two main mutton bird rookeries are situated at Guyton Point, on the north-east end of Robbins Island, and on Walkers Island. There may be remnant features (sheds etc) associated with the mutton bird harvesting in these areas. However, again these areas are well outside the development footprint, and there is no threat of impact.

On the basis of the negative survey findings, the absence of registered Historic sites and the low potential for undetected historic heritage sites to be present, the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park footprint is assessed as being of very low heritage sensitivity.

### **Heritage Management Plan and Impact Statement**

Heritage management options and recommendations provided in this report are made on the basis of the following criteria.

- The legal and procedural requirements as specified in section 6 of this report.
- The results of the investigation as documented in section 5 of this report.
- The results of the Historic heritage registers search as documented in section 5 of this report.

### ***Recommendation 1***

No historic heritage sites were identified during the field survey of the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park development footprint. A search of the various historic heritage registers (as listed in section 1.4 of this report) shows that there are no registered historic sites located within or in the immediate vicinity of the study area footprint. On this basis, it is advised that the proposed Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park Project will have no impacts on known Historic heritage sites, and therefore there are no Historic heritage constraints, or legal impediments to the project proceeding.

***Recommendation 2***

It is assessed that there is a very low potential for undetected Historic heritage sites to occur within the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park development footprint. However, if, during the course of the proposed works, previously undetected heritage sites or objects are located, the processes outlined in the Unanticipated Discovery Plan should be followed (see section 8).

## 1.0 Project Outline

### 1.1 Project Details

UPC Renewables Australia (UPC) is seeking planning and environmental approval for the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park Project (the Project) The proposed Project is located on Robbins Island in far north-west Tasmania (see Figure 1).

The Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park is a wind farm proposal that involves installing up to 122 Wind Turbine generators (WTGs) on Robbins Island in north-west Tasmania, each with a generating capacity of up to 12 MW, dependant on the final WTG model selected for the Project.

The WTGs will be located within a defined area within the Project Site, referred to as the WTG Development Zone, with WTG footprints to be micro-sited in the Project's pre-construction phase.

In addition to the WTGs, the Project includes the following major infrastructure components:

- Electrical infrastructure including multiple substations, a network of underground cables connecting the WTGs to the substations, underground transmission lines from the substations with one main cable from the Project Site, using multiple transmission conduits through the bridge connecting the Project to mainland transmission infrastructure and between Robbins Island Road and Hampshire (forming a separate project).
- A network of roads across Robbins Island for construction and operational use. This will involve both the upgrade of existing tracks on the island and the construction of new roads. Roads will be of a width and grade suitable for accommodating large semi-trailers and oversized construction machinery. The Project also includes the upgrade of Robbins Island Road on mainland Tasmania.
- A bridge over Robbins Passage to enable vehicle access between Robbins Island and mainland Tasmania. This will be a piled structure with on ramps on either side of the passage to maintain the hydrodynamic regime and allow recreational boat access through the navigable sections of Robbins Passage.
- A wharf with roll on/roll off (RoRo) facilities to avoid the use of the public road network for oversize WTG equipment and other materials and equipment delivery during the construction phase. The wharf will be located on the east coast of Robbins Island.
- A Maintenance and Services (MAS) facility, wash-down bays and meteorological masts.

Figure 2 shows the extent of the proposed draft development footprint on Robbins Island.

CHMA Pty Ltd has been engaged by GHD (on behalf of UPC) to undertake an Historic heritage assessment for the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park Project. This report presents the findings of the assessment.

## **1.2 Aims of the Investigation**

The principal aims of the present Historic heritage assessment are as follows.

- Complete an Historic Heritage Assessment for the proposed Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park Project (the study area). The assessment is to be compliant with both State and Commonwealth legislative regimes,
- To determine the extent of previously identified Historic heritage sites within and in the immediate vicinity of the study area.
- To locate and document Historic heritage sites that may be present within the identified bounds of the study area.
- To assess the archaeological sensitivity values of the study area.
- To assess the significance values of identified historic heritage sites.
- To develop a detailed set of management strategies which are aimed at minimising the impacts of the proposed Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park Project on historic heritage.

## **1.3 Project Limitations**

All archaeological investigations are subject to limitations that may affect the reliability of the results.

The main constraint to the present investigation was restricted surface visibility due primarily to vegetation cover. Surface visibility across the surveyed sections of Robbins Island was restricted to an estimated average of 30%, which is in the low to medium range. There were a number of graded farm vehicle tracks, stock tracks and erosion scalds across the Island that provided discrete locales and transects of improved visibility. In an effort to offset constraints in surface visibility, any areas of improved visibility were targeted during the field survey. The constraints in surface visibility limited the effectiveness of the survey assessment to some degree. This is discussed in more detail in Section 3 of this report.

It should also be noted, that at the time that the field survey assessments were undertaken, the Masterplan for the precise layout of the infrastructure associated with the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park was yet to be finalised. This meant that although the field survey program resulted in a combined total of 93km of survey transects being walked across the Robbins Island study area, a finalised development footprint has not been assessed.

## 1.4 Project Methodology

A three-stage project methodology was implemented for this assessment.

### ***Stage 1 (Pre-Fieldwork Background Work)***

Prior to fieldwork being undertaken, the following tasks were completed by CHMA staff.

#### *Heritage Register Searches*

A search was carried out of a number of historic registers and databases in order to determine the extent of historic sites and features in the vicinity of each of the study areas. Agency databases searched included:

- Australian National Heritage List (NHL)
- Australian Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL)
- The Australian Heritage Database (AHD)
- Tasmanian Heritage Register (THR)
- The Register of the National Estate (RNE)
- Australian Heritage Places Inventory (AHPI)
- The National Trust (NT)
- The Circular Head Interim Planning Scheme 2013 (CHIPS).

Detailed historical research was also undertaken to understand the historical context of the area, its growth and development from early pioneer settlement and previous investigations in the area. Resources were utilised from:

- National Library of Australia
- Trove online collections
- Tasmanian Archives
- LINC Tasmania
- Circular Head Heritage Centre

#### *The collation of relevant documentation for the Project*

The following documentation was collated for this project.

- Maps of the study areas;
- References to the land use history of the study area;
- GIS Information relating to landscape units present in the study area;
- Geotechnical information for the study area, including soil and geology data.

### ***Stage 2 (Field Work)*** 11 SEP 2018

Stage 2 entailed the preliminary field survey component of the assessment. The field survey was implemented in two phases.

Phase 1 of the field survey was undertaken over a period of three days (6-3-2018 to 8-3-2018) by Stuart Huys (CHMA archaeologist) and Vernon Graham (Aboriginal Heritage Officer). The field team walked a total of 44km of survey transects across parts of Robbins Island, with the average width of the transects being 10m. The transects were aligned to sample a range of landscape units across the Island, whilst at the same time targeting the main proposed infrastructure areas for the project.

Phase 2 of the field survey was undertaken over a period of four days (21-8-2018 to 24-8-2018) by Stuart Huys (CHMA archaeologist) and Vernon Graham (Aboriginal Heritage Officer). The field team walked a total of 49km of survey transects across Robbins Island, with the average width of the transects being 10m. These transects were more focused on areas of the development footprint for the Renewable Energy Park.

Section 3 provides further details as to the survey coverage achieved within the study area.

***Stage 3 (Report Production)***

Stage three of the project involves the production of a Draft and Final Report that includes an analysis of the data obtained from the field survey, an assessment of archaeological sensitivity and management recommendations. The report was prepared by Stuart Huys (CHMA).

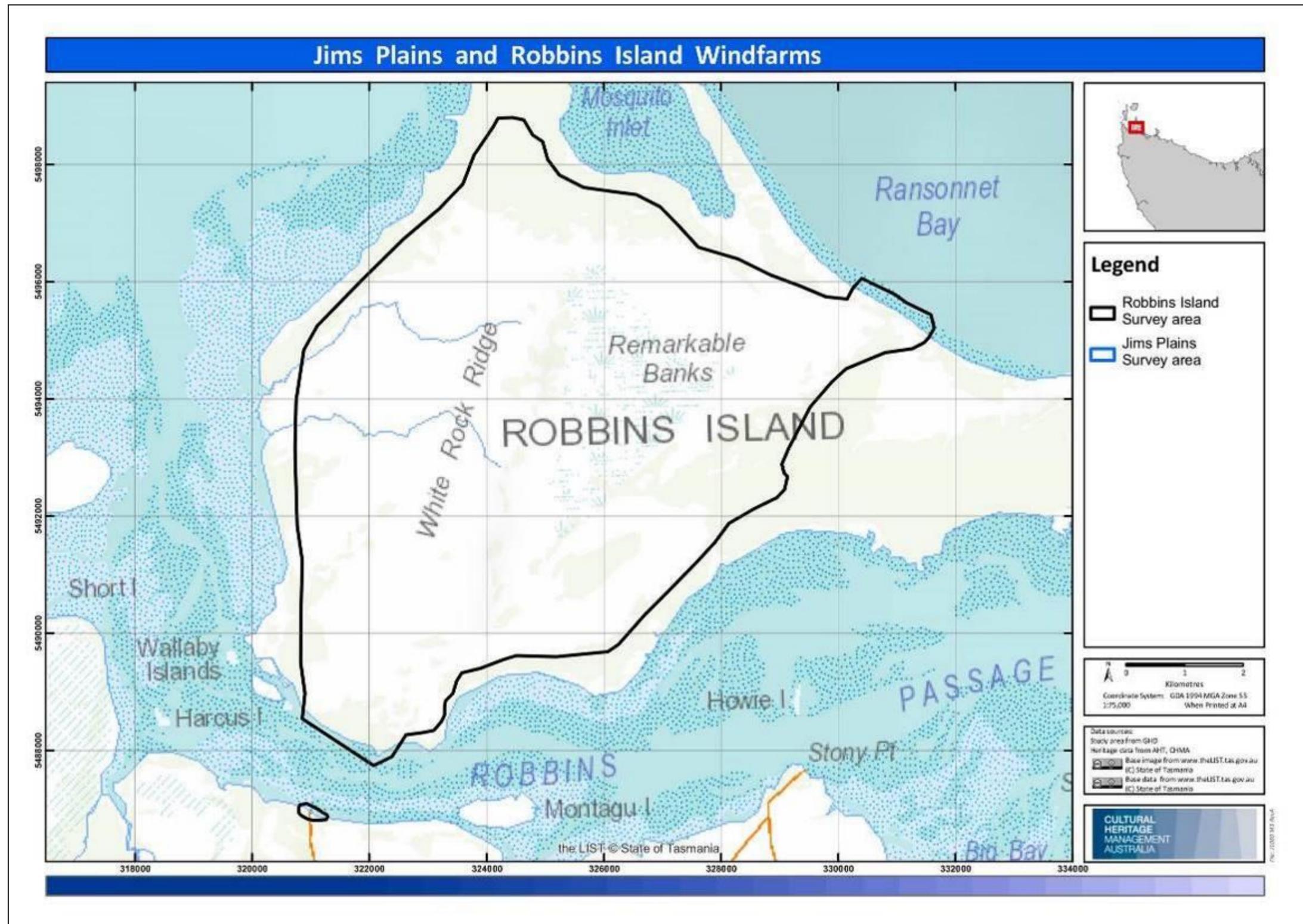


Figure 1: The location of Robbins Island in the North West Region of Tasmania

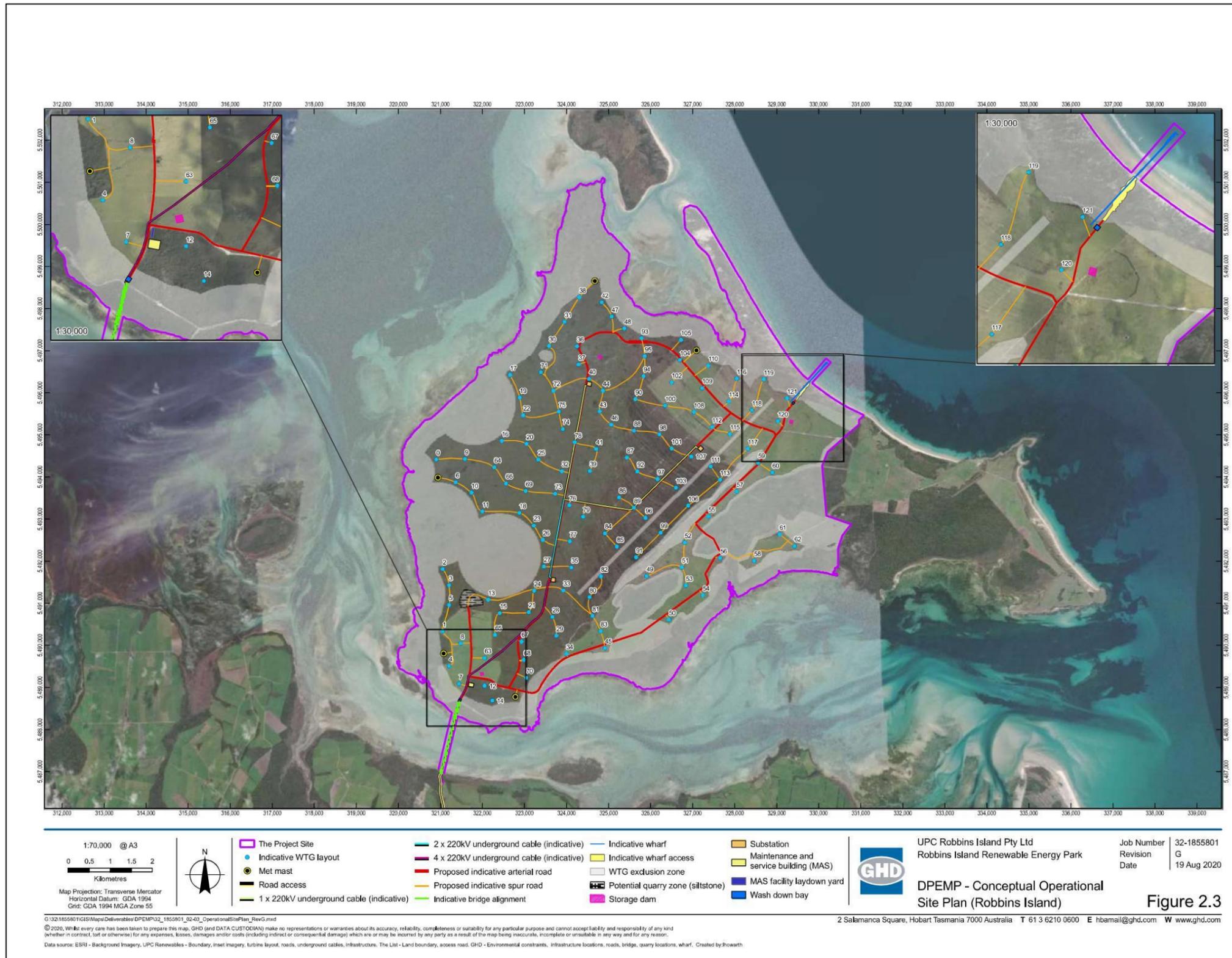


Figure 2: The proposed development footprint for the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park Project

## 2.0 Environmental Setting of the Study Area

### 2.1 Landscape Setting, Geology and Hydrology

Commencing in the late Mesozoic, at about the time of separation of Antarctica from Australia, rifting of the continental crust between Tasmania and Victoria resulted in down-warping and the commencement of sedimentation in Bass Basin, which now consists of a sedimentary pile more than 12 km thick at its depocentre. Bass Basin is bounded by ridges with outcropping basement to the east, between Flinders Island and Wilsons Promontory (Bassian Rise), and to the west between northwest Tasmania, King Island, and the Mornington Peninsula. During the Cainozoic, extensive basaltic volcanism occurred both in northwest Tasmania and Bass Basin. Repeated fluctuations in sea-level in the Quaternary (the last transgression commencing 17,000 years BP) caused the area to alternate between being land (the Bassian Plain), a lake, a marine embayment, and sea several times. Bass Strait today is mostly between 30m and 90m deep (Everard et al 1997).

Robbins Island is the largest of the archipelago of islands that make up the Hunter Island Group, which is located in Bass Strait, off the North West Coast of Tasmania (see Figure 3). Robbins Island is 9 860 hectares in size and is separated from mainland Tasmania by an intertidal passage (Robbins Passage). At low tide, the western section of Robbins Passage is shallow enough to allow vehicles and pedestrians to cross between the Island and the Tasmanian mainland.

There are two main geological units that underlie Robbins Island (see Figure 4). White Rock Ridge, which is an elevated ridgeline running north south across the western third of the island, comprises a quartzite sequence with intermediate slate of the Proterozoic Rocky Cape Group (see Plate 1). The eastern and western flats comprise Pleistocene coastal sand deposits and later Holocene sands and muds of littoral origin (Richley 1978). Recent sands and mud associated with the present estuarine environment surround the island and overlie the older geological formations (see Plate 2). The eastern elevated parts of Robbins Island are underlain by Tertiary basaltic rocks. Around Guyton Point, on the north-east end of the Island, and Cape Elie at the south-east end of the Island, there are extensive deposits of rounded basalt cobblestone boulders which fringe the coast. These extend into the inter-tidal zone, providing a habitat for a range of marine shell fish species (see Plate 3).

The terrain across Robbins Island is typically low relief with the elevations across the majority of the Island not exceeding 15m above sea level (ASL). The terrain is gently undulating, with slope gradients generally in the range of between 1-10°. The notable exception is White Rock Ridge. This ridge extends up to approximately 50m-70m above sea level (Pollington 2017:14). The spine of White Rock Ridge is flat to gently undulating, and ranges in width

The ridgeline dominantly drains to the west of the island, with a series of drainage lines and small tributaries draining into several creek lines discharging to the western coast. A small permanent water body is present on the central western coastline of

the island, known as Teal Lagoon. The western side of the island contains a large number of small depressions in the landscape where ephemeral pooling of water occurs. These pools create temporary wetland microhabitats throughout the island.

The Remarkable Banks on the eastern side of White Rock Ridge is comprised of a sequence of Pleistocene marine sand swales retreating from the ridgeline of former sea cliffs, which now make up White Rock Ridge. The sand ridge deposits extend in a south-west to north-east direction across the central portion of the Island, and range in width from 30m to 200m. They are elevated up to 10m above the surrounding landscape (see Plate 4).

Between the Remarkable Banks and White Rock Ridge is an extensive wetland area, which drains into Mosquito Inlet, at the northern end of the Island, via Eel Creek (see Plate 5).



**Figure 3: The topographic setting of the Robbins Island study area**

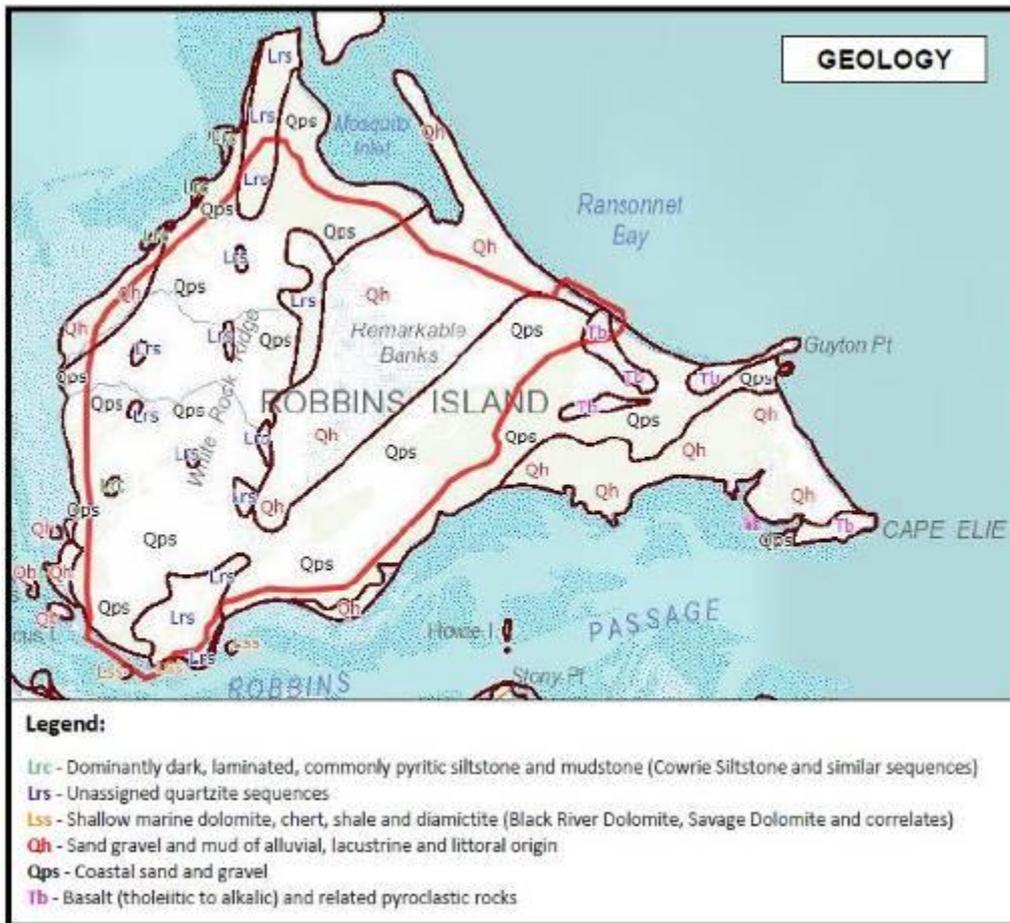


Figure 4: Geology underlying the study area. Image modified from TheList (Geological Polygons 1:250k) accessed 17 October 2017



Plate 1: View west across to White Rocks Ridge, showing quartzite outcrops



Plate 2: View north along the western coastline of Robbins Island, showing the intertidal sand and mud flats



Plate 3: View north-east at the basalt cobblestone beaches at Guyton Point on the north-east end of Robbins Island



Plate 4: View north-east along the sand ridge associated with the Remarkable Banks, which runs through the central portion of Robbins Island



Plate 5: View north-west at the extensive wetland area on the eastern side of White Rocks Ridge

## 2.2 Vegetation and Land Use

The eastern portion of Robbins Island has been significantly cleared for agricultural use, and replanted with introduced grasses. In contrast, the western part of the Island remains for the most part undisturbed, with the exception of a cleared agricultural area to the south-west.

The western half is dominated by a low-lying wet/dry coastal heath, interspersed with occasional quartzite outcrops associated with changes in vegetation composition. Dominant heath species include banksia (*Banksia marginata*), soft-fruited tea tree (*Leptospermum glaucescens*) and she-oak (*Allocasuarina monilifera*). The wet heath, which dominates the lesser drained areas, is dominated by a dense scrub component including manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*), scented paperbark (*Melaleuca squarrosa*), purple honey myrtle (*Melaleuca squamea*), banksia (*B. marginata*), pink swamp-heath (*Sprengelia incarnata*), smooth parrot pea (*Dillwynia glaberrima*) and woolly-style heath (*Epacris lanuginosa*). Buttongrass (*Gymnoschoenus sphaerocephalus*) also occurs across the wet heath areas. There are also occasional areas of woodland and scrub associated with the quartzite outcrops are rich heathy vegetation communities, not seen elsewhere on the island. Collectively this vegetation type has been classed as *Eucalyptus nitida* forest/woodland during a previous flora and vegetation assessment. Other less common communities identified during previous assessments on the western side of the island included dry scrub (TASVEG code SDU), *Eucalyptus obliqua* dry forest and woodland (DOB), *Melaleuca squarrosa* scrub (SMR), coastal scrub (SSC) and *Eucalyptus brookeriana* wet forest (WBR). Figure 5 shows the vegetation communities that occur across the Island.

There are a network of vehicle tracks that extend across Robbins Island. Some of these are formed tracks that have been constructed on a base of introduced gravels. However, the majority are simply graded tracks, or slashed tracks. The gravels that have been used to build the formed tracks on the Island have been obtained from small quarries on the island.

There are a number of dwellings that are located in the eastern portion of the Island, mainly around Guyton Point and Cape Elie. There are also a series of stockyards, sheds that are scattered across the east portion of the Island.

## 2.3 Climate

The North West Coast (including Robbins Island) has a cool temperate climate. The coastal location and high levels of rainfall mean that temperatures seldom freeze, although the maximum summer temperatures are only 20 degrees Celsius. Mean annual rainfall calculated at Marrawah is 1085mm, with the highest rainfall occurring over winter, from May through to September (BOM 2018). The mean maximum temperature occurs in February, 20.9 degrees Celsius. January, February and March tend to be the warmest months of the year. The coolest month of the year is July, with a mean minimum temperature of 6.7 degrees (BOM 2018).

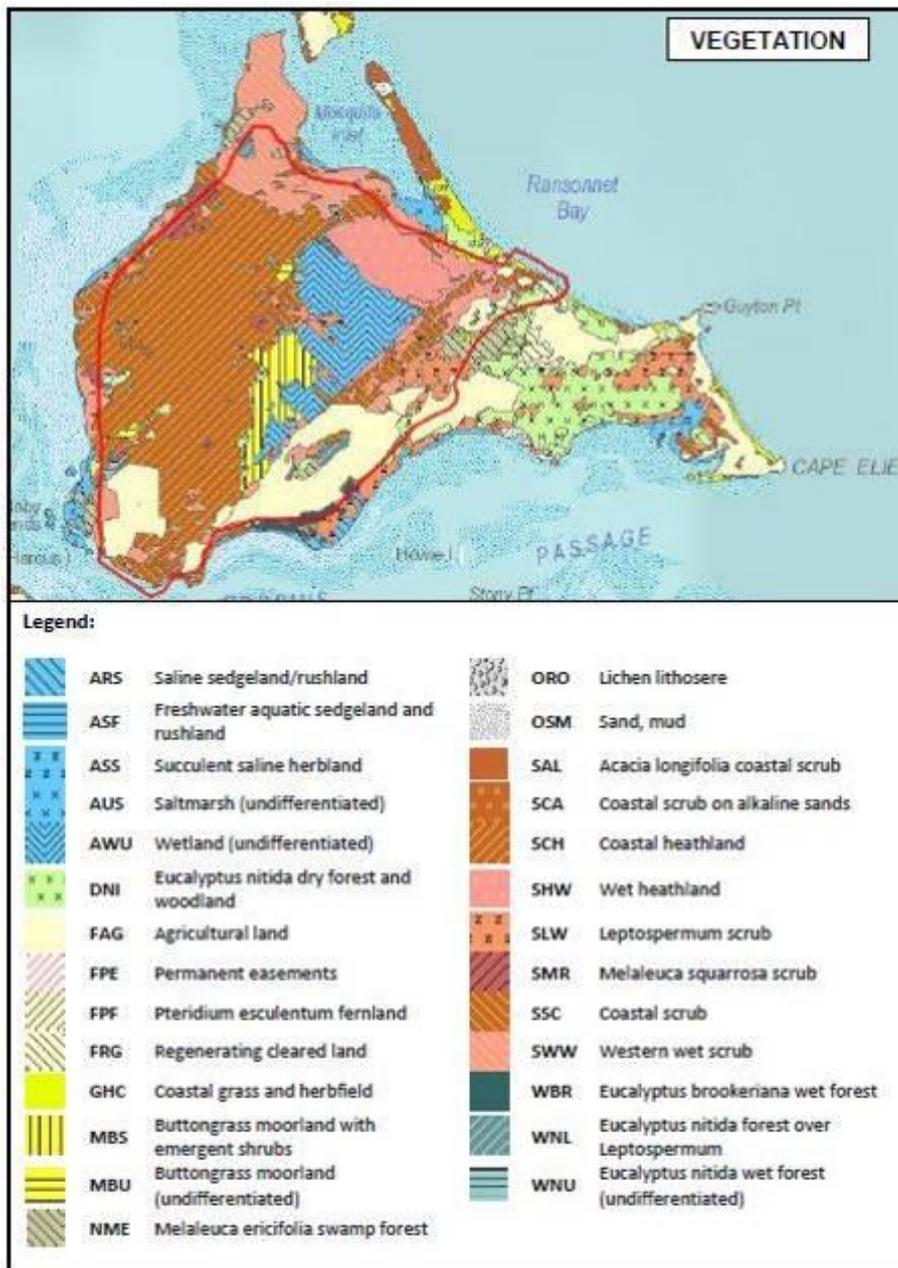


Figure 5: Vegetation across study area. Image modified from TheList (TASVEG 3.0) accessed 17 October 2017



Plate 6: View north across White Rock Ridge, in the west portion of the Island showing intact native coastal heathland vegetation



Plate 7: View west along the north coast of Robbins Island showing coastal grasses on dune systems



Plate 8: View west across cleared farm land in the eastern portion of Robbins Island



Plate 9: Cleared and ploughed farmland in the east portion of the Island



Plate 10: View north-east along of numerous graded vehicle tracks that run across Robbins Island



Plate 11: View north along of numerous slashed vehicle tracks that run across Robbins Island

### **3.0 Survey Coverage of the Study Area**

#### **Survey Coverage**

Survey coverage refers to the estimated portion of a study area that has actually been visually inspected during a field survey. The field survey program for this project was undertaken in two phases.

Phase 1 of the field survey was undertaken over a period of three days (6-3-2018 to 8-3-2018) by Stuart Huys (CHMA archaeologist) and Vernon Graham (Aboriginal Heritage Officer). The field team walked a total of 44km of survey transects across parts of Robbins Island, with the average width of the transects being 10m. The transects were aligned to sample a range of landscape units across the Island, whilst at the same time targeting the main proposed infrastructure areas for the project.

Phase 2 of the field survey was undertaken over a period of four days (21-8-2018 to 24-8-2018) by Stuart Huys (CHMA archaeologist) and Vernon Graham (Aboriginal Heritage Officer). The field team walked a total of 49km of survey transects across Robbins Island, with the average width of the transects being 10m. These transects were more focused on areas of the development footprint for the Renewable Energy Park. This included the proposed causeway route alignment across Robbins Passage, between the Island and Mainland Tasmania.

Specific attention was paid to the existing network of graded vehicle tracks that occur across Robbins Island. This was for two reasons; the first being that these tracks provided transects of improved surface visibility, and helped offset constrained visibility resulting from vegetation cover; the second reason is that it is intended that most of these tracks will be regraded in the future, and as such there is the potential to impact heritage sites.

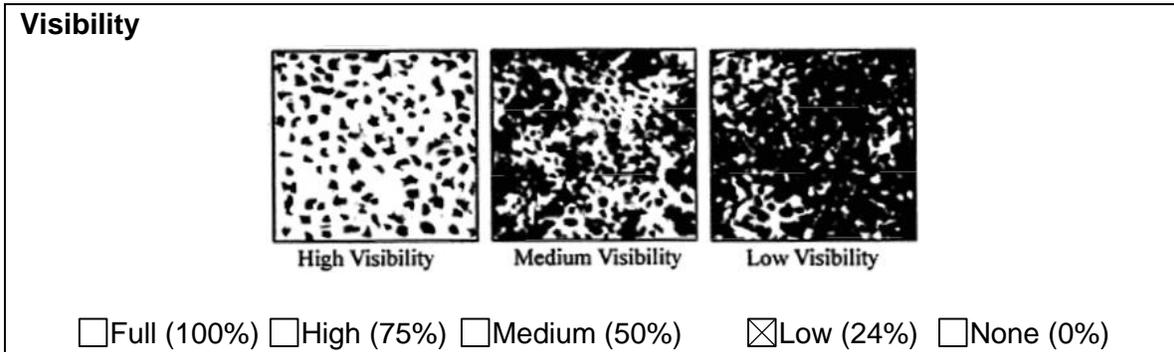
Figure 7 shows the alignment of the survey transects walked by the field team.

#### **Surface Visibility**

Surface Visibility refers to the extent to which the actual soils of the ground surface are available for inspection. There are a number of factors that can affect surface visibility, including vegetation cover, surface water and the presence of introduced gravels or materials.

Surface visibility across the lease hold portion of Hunter Island was restricted to an estimated average of 30%, which is in the low to medium range (see Figure 6 for guidelines to surface visibility). The main constraint to surface visibility was dense vegetation cover (see Plates 12-13-14). There were a number of graded farm vehicle tracks, stock tracks and erosion scalds across the Island that provided discrete locales and transects of improved visibility (see Plates 15-16-17). In an effort to offset

constraints in surface visibility, any areas of improved visibility were targeted during the field survey.



**Figure 6: Guidelines for the estimation of surface visibility**

**Effective coverage**

Variations in both survey coverage and surface visibility have a direct bearing on the ability of a field team to detect subtle historic heritage sites. The combination of survey coverage and surface visibility is referred to as effective survey coverage. The combination of survey coverage and surface visibility is referred to as effective survey coverage.

Table 1 presents the effective survey coverage achieved during the course of the survey assessment of the Robbins Island study area, which is estimated to have been 279 000m<sup>2</sup>. This level of effective coverage is assessed as being adequate for the purpose of generating an impression as to the likely extent and distribution of historic heritage sites across Robbins Island, and in particular, the Renewable Energy Park footprint.

**Table 1: Effective Survey Coverage achieved across the Robbins Island Study Area**

Area	Survey Coverage	Estimated Average Surface Visibility	Effective Survey Coverage
Phase 1 transects	44 000m x 10m = 440 000m <sup>2</sup>	30%	132 000 m <sup>2</sup>
Phase 2 transects	49 000m x 10m = 490 000m <sup>2</sup>	30%	147 000 m <sup>2</sup>
TOTAL	93 000m x 10m = 930 000m <sup>2</sup>	30%	279 000 m <sup>2</sup>



Plate 12: View north towards Teal Lagoon on the west side of the Island, showing dense vegetation cover restricting surface visibility



Plate 13: View west across dense coastal scrub on the western foreshores of the Island, restricting surface visibility



Plate 14: View north at thick coastal heathland in the central portion of the Island, restricting surface visibility



Plate 15: View east along one of several graded tracks on the Island, providing a transect of improved surface visibility



Plate 16: View north along one of several graded tracks on White Rock Ridge, providing a transect of improved surface visibility



Plate 17: View north-east along stock tracks providing improved visibility



**Figure 7: Survey transects walked by the field team as part of the Phase 1 and 2 survey program for the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park**

## 4.0 Historic Context for the Study Region

### 4.1 The Founding of Circular Head: Exploration and Early Settlement

The exploration and settlement of the North West by Europeans came relatively late in Tasmania's history. Its coast was first sighted during the Bass and Flinders voyage of 1798-99, and Captain James Kelly is said to have stopped at Circular Head on his first circumnavigation of Tasmania in 1815-1816 (Kelly et al., 1986). However, it was not until the 1820s when, prompted by the lack of arable land elsewhere in the colony, Lieutenant-Governor Sorell commissioned a small range of expeditions to the region:

- In 1823 Lieutenant Charles Browne Hardwicke, set out to explore the northwest coast by boat (Kelly et al., 1986: 39-40). When sighting Circular Head, he reported "a very large proportion of land of the first quality, free from timber; but that there is sufficient quantity of good wood within the circumference...". Despite limited water sources, he further observed that, "nature had done everything in variegating this place with hill and dale, and with making it the most picturesque and best adapted soil for cultivation, on the north coast of this island" (Kelly et al., 1986: 40).
- In the following year, Captain John Rolland's failed twice at finding an overland route from the Westbury District to the North West coast (but ended up naming his final destination as Mt. Rolland (at Kentish ~80 km to the southwest).
- The third exploration attempt was made by Lieutenant James Hobbs as part of his circumnavigation of Tasmania in 1824. Like Hardwicke, he was impressed with Circular Head, but also like his earlier counterpart, he concluded that the quantity of good land expected in the north was not to be found (Kelly et al., 1986: 19-24, Pink 2003: 2-3).

Despite, or even because of the negative results, Hobb's report was sufficient to encourage the Government to redirect Van Diemen's Land Company (VDL Co) to the region.

- The company, recently formed in London (in 1824), had set a goal of acquiring 500,000 acres (202,345 ha) of colonial land for the production of fine sheep wool (Sterling 2009, Pink and Ebdon 1992). Backed by powerful shareholders, it also had access to Sorrell's advice after his return to London (Von Stieglitz 1998: 19). With Sorrell's recommendation, the company appointed a former Hobart businessman, Edward Curr, as the VDL's chief agent for the colony. And in 1826, he and his assistant, Stephen Adey, arrived back in Van Diemen's Land to bring about the company's business of land acquisition.

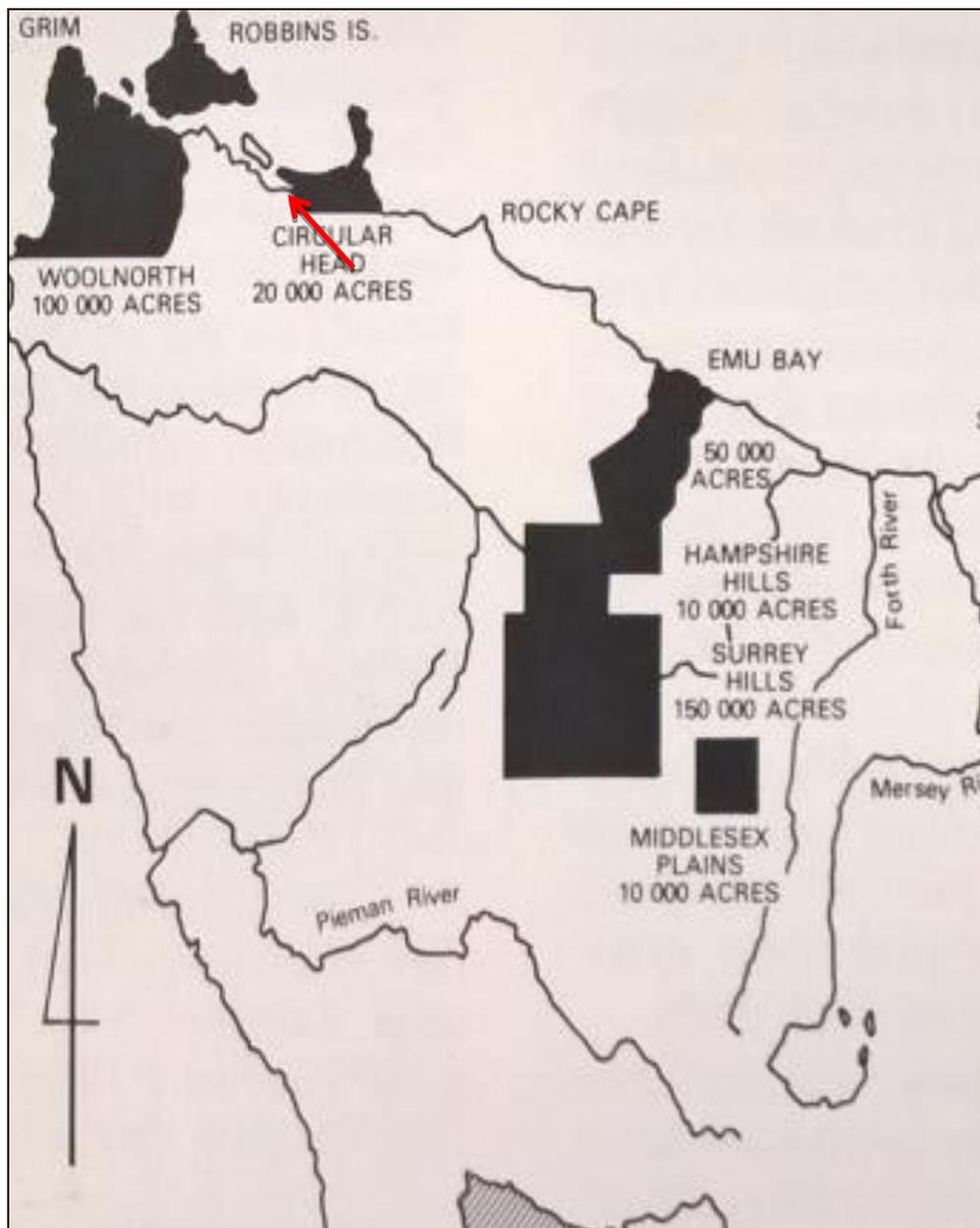
Curr and Adey initially hoped to acquire land at North Downs, on the Mersey, but this request was refused by the new Lieutenant-General, George Arthur. Arthur, fearing a VDL take-over, sought to keep the VDL Co. company lands at minimum, in step with - but ostensibly - away from settled districts (Von Stieglitz 1998: 19). Backed by the Hobbs report, the focus turned towards the North West Coast (Binks 1980: 39).

Over the next few years, the VDL Co. surveyors, Henry Hellyer, Joseph Fossey and Peter Lorymer, along with the agriculturalist Alexander Goldie, completed a range of well-documented journeys throughout the northwest (Kelly et al 1986, Binks 1980). In 1826 Hellyer, crossed the eastern side of Circular Head Harbour and Black River, reaching Emu Bay (now Burnie) and its hinterland, as far as the Hampshire Hills. Alexander Goldie crossed Circular Head from the west, and journeyed across Cape Grimm, Mt Norfolk and the supposed course of Arthur River in its south. At Circular Head he noted that the soil is “*all of the best quality*” (Binks 1980: 41), but that water is scarce. On a separate expedition (29 November 1826), Goldie and Fossey sent a boat to the river south of Robinson’s Passage, north of Smithton. Goldie named the watercourse, Duck River “*as it was heavily laden and deep in the water*” (Binks 1980:43). Stephen Adey and Richard Frederick later reached the location of Montagu, Duck River and Duck Bay (28<sup>th</sup> September 1826 in Kelly et al., 1986).

While it was possible to follow tracks established by Aboriginal people (Robinson and Plomley 2008: 644), exploration of the hinterland was difficult. Lorymer, for example, lost his life while crossing the Duck River whilst on an expedition from Pieman River to the Central Plateau (Pink and Ebdon 1992: 69, Jorgenson 1827 in Kelly et al., 1986: 54). Yet while deterred by the inland swamps and heathy plains (Binks 1980: 53), settlement at Circular Head commenced following the arrival of the brig *Tranmere* (27 October 1826); with Curr, a small number of VDL settlers, convicts, sheep, and supplies on board.

Settlement continued to be encouraged by Henry Hellyer’s efforts elsewhere. He continued to explore the coast and hinterland of Emu Bay (now Burnie), eventually leading to the establishment of a VDL depot on the coast and outposts at Hampshire and Surrey Hills (Trethewie 1952: 11). As early as 1827, he also began cutting the track from the coast from Whalebone Creek (now Oakleigh Park) inland through to Hampshire Hills. On his way he found thousands of acres of lightly timbered land surrounding St Valentine’s Peak and, comparing these to the Midlands, marked the area optimistically as excellent grazing land.

Acting largely on this advice, the VDL Co. settled on a much reduced 250,000 acres of land in five blocks of the North West (Binks, 1980: 40-41; 58): including 20,000 acres at Circular Head. The rest was distributed between Woolnorth, at Cape Grimm, to the west, the Hampshire, Surrey Hills and Middlesex Plains to the east and land at Emu Bay (Figure 8). Walker, Robbins and the Trefoil Island were also eventually granted.



**Figure 8: Showing VDL Co's original grants in the northwest.  
Rick Ferguson from Pink 1998: 4**

#### **4.2 The Circular Head Block**

By 1831, the 20,000 acres selected by the VDL Co. at Circular Head included a few huts, outbuildings that were later to become Curr's home, Highfield Cottage. Circular Head also became the chief establishment for VDL Co. in the colony (Von Stieglitz 1998: 20). By 1831, eighty one people, convicts and VDL employees, lived in the area. 37 other people also settled at Woolnorth, at Cape Grimm, to the east. By 1834, the number of people in the District overall, had increased to around 400 people; half of which were convicts (Sterling 2009: 60).

As early as 1826, the sheep flock was increased via 1500 ewes purchased from Thomas Archer of Woolmers, Longford. The following year another 940 imported Saxon merinos, were imported. By 1830, the company had spent £30,000 to build its

flock to 6000 sheep. A successful crop of wheat, barley, oats, turnips, potatoes and hay shipped to Sydney in 1828 had briefly raised the hopes of both the settlers and the company directors, but by 1830 it was also becoming evident that the company's ambitions of building a flock of half a million fine-wool sheep were misguided (Trethewie 1952: 30).

Curr appears to have understood well that the Circular Head land was not sufficiently good for sheep grazing, allowing one hundred acres to be broken up within six months of settlement, in order to house tenant farmers. As assigned convict labour was withdrawn in 1840, the company tried to cut costs further by providing seven year leases for tenants (Plomely 1992: 874). It diversified into horse breeding, cattle grazing and deer farming, expanding to hinterland pastures at Green Hills, Marrawah and Mowbray Swamp and improving the island's stock (Pink 1998).

In 1841, and unhappy with his progress, the VDL Co. replaced Curr with James Alexander Gibson, who set about sub-dividing the Circular Head Block. Coloured areas of an 1848 map showing the Tenantry Population of the Circular Head Estate, indicate that 29 tenants occupied the main section of the land with 4 on the peninsula, totalling 307 people (Figure 9). 1169 acres appear to have been cleared, and areas in red suggest that the land had been sold (although this may be a later addendum).

Overall, the VDL foray into Circular Head did not seem a success. In the 23 years between 1829 and 1852, the VDL Company achieved only £20,000 from the sale of wool. Apart from the small profits made from stock breeding in the late 1830s, "*the company's record was of operating losses and repeated calls on shareholders to prop it up financially*" (Trethewie 1952: 30). In February 1851, it was decided to wind up the company's farming operations and lease or sell its land. A part-time agent in Launceston was appointed to collect any rent (Sterling 2009: 60-61).

The final proposed subdivision of Circular Head was mapped in 1852, and by 1855 most VDL Co. farmlands in the northwest were leased, including the town lots at Stanley and Burnie. The first independent landholders at Circular Head included Thomas and Johnathan House (Pink and Ebdon 1991: 37-38). William Lucas was also one of the first settlers (Trethewie 1952: 17) as was a former VDL employee, Frederick Wilbraham Ford.

Ford, who worked for the VDL Co. from the 1840s, was to become the richest landowner in the area and was able to lease Highfield from the company by 1857. Two years later, his son purchased the property, and with the sale, the VDL company involvement in the Circular Head area was relatively complete<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The VDL Co. presence in the northwest did not completely cease. Farming operations recommenced at Woolnorth in the late 1870s, and the company diversified into setting up brickworks and sawmills, and ran the Mt Bischoff railway south of Burnie (the operations ceased as late as 1965, when the Woolnorth/VDL interests were privately sold, Sterling 2009: 61, for the history of Mt Bischoff see N. Haygarth 2004).

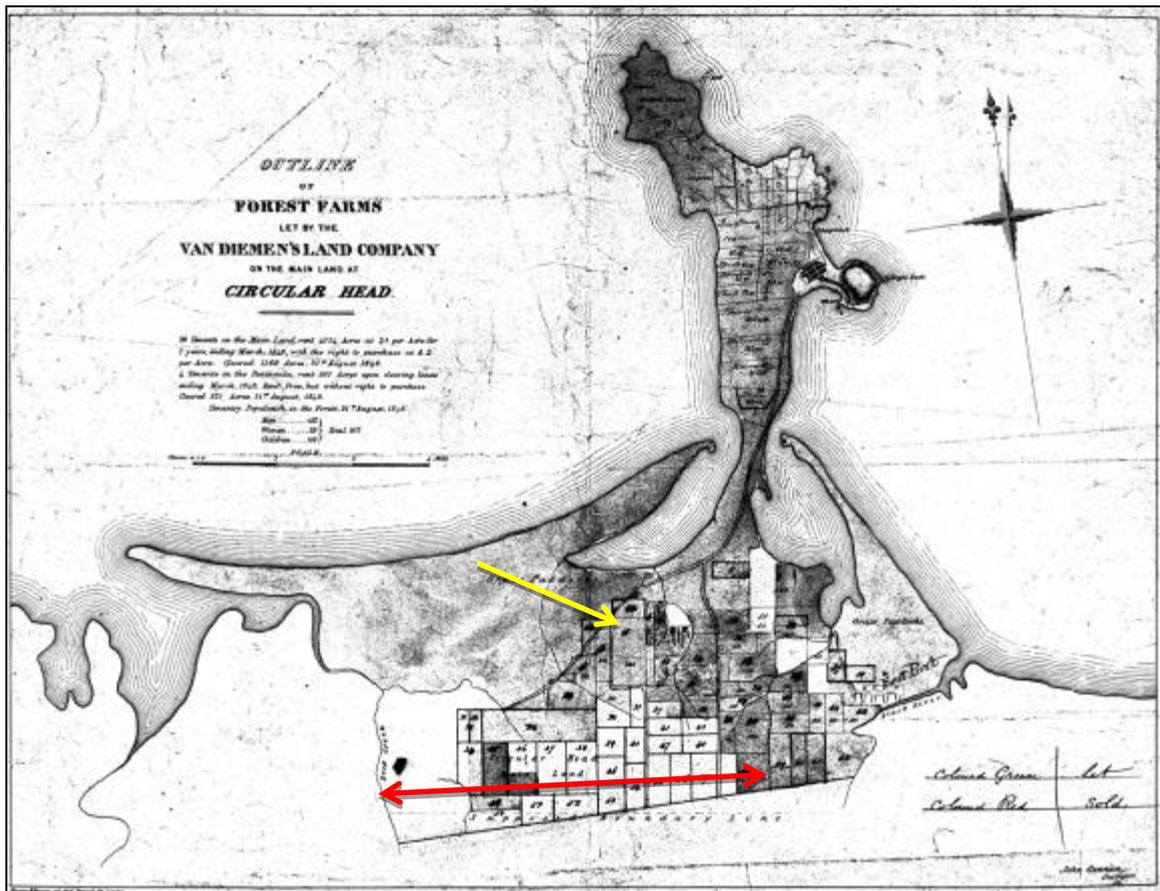


Figure 9: Map shows 29 tenants on main land at end of 1848 on the VDL Co block. AB713\_1\_11844.jpg

### 4.3 Townships

According to the municipal profile, the years that followed the initial settlement of Circular Head by the VDL Co. were characterised by the increasing importance of root crops, dairying and timber milling to the region (Circular Head Profile 2015: 97-98; [http://www.circularhead.tas.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/Section\\_18\\_-\\_History.pdf](http://www.circularhead.tas.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/Section_18_-_History.pdf), sourced 2017). The industries contributed to the growth of several major townships and eventually, the establishment of strong links to the rest of colony:

- In 1845 the first post office was established at Stanley and in the 1850s the first settlers came to Smithton, which was then a shipping centre for potatoes.
- By 1868 the population of Stanley was around 500. A flourmill and brewery, along with bacon, cheese and butter factories, were in operation.
- By 1870 the first wharf had been built at Smithton and in 1884 the first steps were taken to establish the timber milling industry. By 1904 the Duck River Butter Factory commenced operations in Smithton; in 1950 its production exceeded 1,000 tonnes.
- In 1905 Smithton was proclaimed a town and the drainage of the first swamp, Mowbray, was commenced. This brought into use some of the richest dairying country in the state. The Government continued draining swamplands. Today, more than 100 years later, the municipality of Circular

Head remains the largest dairying area of Tasmania with more than 30% of the State's dairy farms.

- In 1908 the first meeting of the Circular Head Municipal Council was held at Stanley and in 1911 the Stanley Town Hall was built.
- In 1920 the Council Chambers were moved to Smithton; by 1935 Britton's Swamp had been drained by the Government and became available for settlement.
- Smithton High School was opened in 1937 and in 1948 the re-aligning and sealing of the Bass Highway between Boat Harbour and Wiltshire Junction was commenced by the Department of Public Works.
- In 1951 a Kindergarten and Public Hospital were opened in Smithton, and the town began to flourish.

#### **4.4 Transport**

Early land routes generally involved steep bridle tracks, travel on horseback, dangerous ad-hoc river crossings, occasionally made easier by following established Aboriginal routes (Robinson and Plomley 1992: 664). The establishment of overland routes to the rest of the colony was a priority almost as soon as the first settlers arrived however (Kelly et al., 1986, Binks 1980), even if geographic constraints continued to push the main access along the coast. Shipping continued to be the most reliable form of transport until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Some changes to road networks probably occurred from the 1850s, and the introduction of the local Road Trusts; first the Horton Trust and later including the Mowbray, Marrawah and Stanley Road Trusts. Trustees imposed rates for the construction and maintenance of roads, a responsibility taken over by the local council and their Public Works Department, via the Local Government Act in 1906. Over time, building of roads and bridges improved and horse-drawn coaching services became regular. In 1952, Trethewie boasted that the Circular Head Council controlled 432 miles of metalled gravelled and formed road (Trethewie 1952: 52). With this came modest, but necessary improvement to safety at river crossings, on both private land - in the form of small levees to weirs – to more substantial bridges. Owing to their timber construction, early bridges were prone to flooding and fire, and it is unlikely that many had survived. Most bridges that stand today are likely to date to the later 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The advent of the car ultimately changed the way people were transported around the District and beyond (Trethewie 1952: 52). By the 1920s, the rail service also reached Circular Head, commencing with the Stanley-Trowutta (Irishtown) Line (c. 1919) and followed by the Smithton to Irishtown link (opened in 1921). By 1922 the railway link from Myalla to Wiltshire Junction was completed, thus joining the railways in the municipality to the state system (Trethewie 1952: 52). The private Marrawah Tramway (see Timber Industry section below) was taken over by the Government in 1929 and all the lines were decommissioned in the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century ([http://www.railtasmania.com/lines/farwestern\\_line.htm](http://www.railtasmania.com/lines/farwestern_line.htm), sourced 2017).

#### 4.5 Agriculture and Dairying

Following the early and unsuccessful forays into sheep breeding by the VDL Co. and subsequent reliance on root crops such as potatoes, the district's foray into dairying at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century proved to be much more successful in the long term. Dairying had after all, always been an important part of the local farm economy, but aside from the short-lived diversification into cattle grazing by the VDL Co. in the 1830s, most dairy production was small and family run (Trethewie 1952: 31). The establishment of the Co-Operative enterprise in 1904, and its subsequent purchase of the North West Dairy Company in 1937, allowed for large-scale commercial production of dairy products. This in turn contributed to the development of agricultural infrastructure. Despite organisational changes, this type of industry still continues to thrive.

A number of other 20<sup>th</sup> century agricultural initiatives, largely set up by the State Government, were less effective. These included attempts at the agistment of young cattle in the hinterland of the Arthur River, as well as vegetable growing; the latter aided by the establishment of the Smithton Cannery in the 1950s. Wheat growing in the district was abandoned quickly, because millers found the grains to be too soft (Trethewie 1952: 30). Hops and malting barley had also been grown in the district, but on a small scale and for local needs.

#### 4.6 Timber Industry

The history of timber getting in Circular Head, and of its heritage places, has been described relatively rigorously in a range of prior heritage assessment (Scripps 1990, Bird 1991, Kostoglou and Pearson 1997). The more recent of these is Parry Kostoglou and Michael Pearson's 1997 report on the *Historic Timber Getting*. The project was completed for the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement Environment & Heritage Technical Committee and Joint Commonwealth and Tasmania Regional Forest Agreement Steering Committee. It was aimed at expanding on the contemporary knowledge of the historic timber industry in Tasmania (initially focusing on blackwood, but expanded to include the hardwood industry), to assess identified sites against the National Estate criteria and to identify places eligible for the National Estate.

While constrained by time and access, the study was able to combine information from local community sources, including interviews, background research (see for example, *Railways and Tramways of the Circular Head District*, 1951) and limited archaeological survey, to provide a relatively comprehensive overview of the timber industry in the District.

According to Kostoglou and Pearson (1997: 5) the first timber harvesting activities in the North West appear to have been undertaken by ex-convicts from Launceston, who were employed in Port Sorrell area during the 1820s and 1830s. At Circular Head, Hardwick, Hellyer and Goldie, all reported on the abundant timber sources in its hinterland (Kelly et al., 1986) and Hellyer recorded sawyers cutting near Brickmaker's Bay. In his dispatches to London, Edward Curr, praised the quality of the swamp grown blackwood ("*similar to mahogany, but more like rosewood*" – Kostoglou and Pearson 1997: 5) and by 1832, 200 blackwood logs were ordered for

a dispatch to London (but they were probably not shipped - Kostoglou and Pearson 1997: 5).

The biggest demand was for hardwood in the form of palings and shingles, and this spread westward, as riverside timber in the Leven and Forth areas was exhausted. The demand for blackwood was for its use in blackwood stoves for the colonial whaling industry, and this reached a peak in the 1830s. The pelagic industry, however, sustained a lesser demand for blackwood over another 20 years (Kostoglou and Pearson 1995: 5). In contrast, specialty timbers for use in furniture were not a success (i.e. Cummings and Raymond on the Don, in Kostoglou and Pearson 1997: 5).

In the 1850s and 1860, the Victorian Gold Rush provided an immense impetus for timber getting throughout Tasmania, with the forest of the North West being especially suitable and close to mainland markets (Pink and Ebdon 1992: 192). The boom corresponded to innovations in mechanised sawmilling technology and a move away from cutting trees individually in custom dug sawpits (Kostoglou and Pearson 1995:5).

Perhaps due to its remoteness, the change to mechanisation at Circular Head appears to have been slow. Sawpits are the only type of timber milling related structure visible in 1850s plans of Smithton (Grey 1997: 13-14). In 1864, a Duck River miller, John Hughes, corresponded that milling was still a tough individual pursuit (Grey 1997: 12). At the same time, paling splitting was also a profitable undertaking for individuals (25s per 100, see *Circular Head Chronicle* 21 March 1917 in Grey 1997: 15, also Pink and Ebdon 1992: 192).

Modern timber milling did not begin in the region until the arrival of James Samuel Lee in 1884 and the subsequent construction of his first mill, the wharves, the jetty and the tramline to the forests in the southwest (the Marrawah Tramway, Figure 8). Lee and Sons later established several steam driven mills in the District, including at Fourteen Mile, Trowutta and Christmas Hills (Figure 10). Blackwood was the first timber sawn by the company, initially shipped for its use in carriages for the Victorian Government Railways, and later for general purposes. The company was also widely known for introducing the "Tongue and Groove" flooring into the District (Trethewie 1952: 34).



**Figure 10: The location of the J. S. Lee Sawmill at Christmas Hills, Tasmania in 1904; the man standing is identified as George Lee [http://eheritage.statelibrary.tas.gov.au/resources/detail4836.html?ID=CHH\\_0053](http://eheritage.statelibrary.tas.gov.au/resources/detail4836.html?ID=CHH_0053), sourced 2017)**

The local timber industry that followed Lee's efforts has been described as unique in its specialisation (Kostoglou and Pearson 1997: 14). Bors at Smithton (c. 1915) made barrel stoves from blackwood. Hardwoods Pty Ltd were known for kiln-dried timber (Trethewie 1952: 34), owning a substantial amount of land west of Edith Creek. E.H Fenton (c.1920) and Circular Head Amalgamated Timbers Pty Ltd worked to produce pre-dried plant timber at Stanley. By the late 1950s, at least eleven mills were operating in the District, including those working with Tasmanian oak, blackwood and celery top pine (Kostoglou and Pearson 1997: 14).

Varied timbers were sourced seasonally, with swamp grown blackwood accessed generally during the dry season from January to April, and other hardwoods during the rest of the year. Timber, for staves used in the manufacture of barrels for example, was sourced regularly from Crown Lands and Timber Reserves, and less so from private lands. Bullock teams were initially used for hauling, and Lee and Sons were the first company in the Commonwealth to supplant this by using winding gear (Trethewie 1952: 33-34). Reflecting the "frenetic" nature of blackwood sawmilling, many haul tracks or tramways, were hurriedly built (Kostoglou and Pearson 1997: 18). Flooding and falling timber made the process dangerous. Construction generally took place along the top of a creek on small logs or stingers above the water, or comprised bearers with sleepers and close decking on top of carry rails. A horse track often accompanied the tramway (Kostoglou and Pearson 1997: 18-19).

A wide variety of vehicles were employed along tramways. In the 1880s, Lee purchased a steam locomotive, and built a travelling steam crane known as 'The Coffee Pot'; so named because of its vertical boiler and still in use in the 1950s. E.H. Fenton's engine 'Fantail', formerly used on the Marrawah Tramway, had a Ford lorry chassis and motor, while Brittons took custody of 'Spider', an overhauled 1890

Marawah Tramway locomotive, to work the tramline from the Montagu Swamp in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century (Britton Timbers 2015: 12). Not all engines were recycled. According to Kostoglou and Pearson (1997), World War II technology “*also made a significant impact on the timber industry, bringing refinements to tracked and all-terrain wheeled vehicles, and smaller, more reliable internal combustion engines. Surplus ex-military vehicles and engines also became available*” (in Britton Timbers 2015: 13).

Illegal timber cutting in the district was common, by both small players and large (Mesibov 2014)

<https://stors.tas.gov.au/webarchive/20150129032212/http://www.circularheadhistory.info/forests/mackay.html>, sourced 2017). In the 1920s, the blackwood market collapsed due to the presence of cheap Scandinavian softwoods and new timbers from Asia. Consequent lobbying from the timber industry led to the amalgamation in the Australian Timber Industries and the establishment of *The Timber Industries Encouragement Act 1927*

<https://stors.tas.gov.au/webarchive/20150129032231/http://www.circularheadhistory.info/forests/sarthur1.html>, sourced 11/11/2015). By the 1950s, many of the original family-owned businesses, including that of J.S. Lee and Sons, Dunkley Brothers Pty Ltd and E.H. Fenton Pty Ltd, “*that had struggled mightily with isolation and market forces, had been devoured by a rash of mergers*” (Kostoglou and Pearson 1991: 7).

With access to fewer resources, the timber industry of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century became more centralised and while a few independent firms continued by improving their operations (i.e. Britton Timbers 2015: 13), the relics of the original timber-getting period appear to have been progressively altered and/or dismantled.

#### **4.7 European History of Robbins Island**

Early 18<sup>th</sup> century voyages (eg. Baudin 1803; Flinders 1801, 1814) to the Bass Strait recorded the large remote islands of King and Flinders as being devoid of human inhabitants (Sim 1991:1). In 1801, Matthew Flinders noted that while there were constant Aboriginal ‘smokes’ being sighted around Tasmania, there was ‘none upon the islands’ (Flinders cited in Sim 1991:1).

In December 1798, Flinders anchored off Three Hummock Island and went ashore. There he reported fire places and shell middens (Bowdler 1977:4). Flinders was perplexed at how they had arrived there, as he did not believe Aboriginal people used watercraft. The archipelago was named the Hunter Isles in honour of the Governor. In December 1802 Louis-Claude de Freycinet, in the *Casuarina*, surveyed the Hunter Islands and erroneously mapped Robbins and Walker Islands as being connected to the Tasmanian mainland (Plomley 1983:102).

Robbins Island was named after Royal Navy officer, Charles Robbins. Robbins notably presented French explorer Nicolas Baudin with a letter from Governor King which informed the French of King’s intention to establish a settlement in Storm Bay, D’Entrecasteaux Channel. In 1804 Robbins, accompanied by a surveyor Mr J. Oxley, landed for the first time on Robbin’s Island (Buckby 1988:23). While the charts were

retained, all of Robbins's journals were lost (Buckby 1988:24). In June 1805, Robbins and his crew disappeared while on route for Chile.

Sealing and whaling was carried out across Bass Strait, including on Robbins Island, 'and little thought was given to the ecology of the mammals' (McFarlane 2007:37). By 1838 marked declines in seal populations across Bass Strait meant the industry was 'practically over' (UTAS 2018: Sealing). A whaling station was established on Robbins Island to hunt the Right Whale but this was abandoned.

In 1825 the VDL Company was established in the northwest of Tasmania with a grant of 250 000 acres. The company was founded by a group of London wool merchants who planned to provide wool to the British textile industry. Edward Curr was employed to assist in the procurement of land. Robbins Island was ceded to the company in 1830-1831 as part of an additional grant of 100 000 acres 'after years of argument' (Buckby 1988:26).

The expanding operations of the VDLC (alongside the expansion of European settlements in the area generally) in the northwest contributed to increasing conflicts with the local Aboriginal nations, both incidentally through rival interests in the same land and deliberately through the Company's policies and actions, including by VDLC chief agent, Edward Curr (Johnson and McFarlane 2015: 173-200). Ryan (2018: 27) reports that between December 1827 and February 1828, VDLC employees had massacred forty-two Aboriginal people in two separate incidents; one of these incidents in February 1828 was the notorious Cape Grim Massacre. Through to the 1840s, violence and conflict between Aboriginal people and the settlers continued until the final members of the north-west Aboriginal nations were exiled to the missions.

Besides these open conflicts, the VDLC faced other difficulties in the northwest in terms of the quality of land they were granted. It was reported in the Mercury in 1895 that "the Company took up some of the most worthless land that could be secured, and a very small proportion of good land" on the northwest coast. Robbins Island appears to have been part of a block that had "moderate results" and was reported to have been "let to the same family for many years at a low rental".

The settlement of Robbin's Island has been documented by Pauline Buckby (1988), in her book: Robbins Island Saga. The VDL Company took over island when Mrs Howie left (Buckby 1988:50). Recluse Hugh Donald Maclaine was granted a nine year lease in 1870 but he died in 1871 (Buckby 1988 50-51). Dr Allan Smith took over the lease from 1872 until 1879 (Buckby 1988:52). In the late 1870s James Henry Reid jnr came to the island and was purported to have leased the island for the next forty-three years (Buckby 1988:53).

Records show that Reid constantly complained to the VDL Company of the high rents. The family farmed the arable land with crops, such as potatoes, peas, oats and

hay, and ran both sheep and cattle (Buckby 1988:57). Additional resources were raised by the family selling wallaby skins, whaling and harvesting mutton birds:

*James and his brothers have been credited with the early foundation of the mutton bird industry. They worked rookies on surrounding islands such as Steep Head, Trefoil and Walker, as well as Robbins Island. Birds were then packed in brine and shipped to the mainland. (Buckby 1988:57)*

During their time on the island, the Reids had constructed a homestead along with numerous other farm buildings and at least one slab hut. William Reid, James's oldest son, built a number of boats on the eastern end of the island (Buckby 1988:57). In 1903, Reid retired from the island while his children stayed on (Buckby 1988:62).

In 1916, the VDL Company offered the island for sale, the Reid family declined, and the Holyman Bros. bought the island for £6185 (Buckby 1988:62). The Holyman Bros. business was originally focussed on transportation, by sea, air and road, and then extended into grazing, timber and hospitality (UTAS 2018: Holyman Family). Robbins Island was acquired for grazing stock.

The Holyman family were well known in this region of Tasmania from the late 1800s, with Captain William Holyman Snr establishing the William Holyman and Sons Pty. Ltd. Company, which was primarily a pioneering coastal trading company in Bass Strait (Daily Telegraph 1919). Throughout their history, the Holyman Company's business activities expanded to include aerial services, the motor vehicle industry, timber interests as well as pastoral activities. In the early 1900s, the Holymans' purchased several islands in the Bass Strait as grazing properties; Waterhouse and Twenty Day islands in 1907 or 1908 and Robbins, Walker and Trefoil islands in 1916 (Warden 1983; Holyman 2006).

The Holyman Company's pastoral activities at Robbins Island were initially managed by William Snr's son, Captain James Holyman (Daily Commercial News and Shipping List 1944) who together with his brothers Thomas Henry and William Jnr took over the family business after the death of their father in 1919. William Jnr later took over management of the family's enterprise on the island in the 1930s through to the late 1950s (State Library Tasmania n.d.).

During the Holyman period, agricultural production on the island flourished. Robbins Island was reportedly well watered with springs, wooden troughs, and windmills and was ideal for supporting both cattle and sheep. In 1922, the Circular Head Chronicle reported that Robbins Island was carrying '600 head cattle and 2000 sheep'.

According to Buckby (1988:64), the Holyman Bros.:

*... were successful in this new venture because, as a family, they worked together. Island farming was not the problem to them as it may have been to others. Company ships were available to cart their supplies and produce, which naturally proved a great asset.*

Dairy production was a central aspect of the Holyman's activities on Robbins Island. In 1933, the Examiner reported that the Holyman's were milking 150 cows on Robbins Island and that between 30 and 40 men were employed at the dairy. The dairy herd on Robbins Island appears to increase significantly over the proceeding decade, and by the late 1940s, a new cheese factory was planned, which was reportedly to deal with milk production from some 800 cows (Advocate 1947).

In 1954, the Advocate reported that a phone link between Robbins Island and Stanley was established, with a telephone office opened for island residents in December that year. In 2016, descendants of James Holyman stated that at the peak of the Holyman period (i.e. the 1930s to 1950s) Robbins Island had a vibrant population of around 70 people (Landline 2016), which even had a school to accommodate this population (Advocate 1937).

In 1934 the first school teacher was appointed, previously children had studied via correspondence (Buckby 1988:99). The school closed in the early 1950s (Buckby 1988:16). In 1932 an airstrip was established (Buckby 1988:90). A new cheese factory was built in 1932 and cheese was flown off the island. A number of houses on the island remain, including Montagu and Bluff House.

Reportedly, the Holyman Brothers Company continued to operate on Robbins Island until 1958. In the late 1950s, 'The American', Captain Herbert Eugene (Gene) Hammond purchased Robbins Island from the Holymans. Hammond had married Keith Holyman's daughter Mary, and together, in 1959, the couple moved their growing family to the island (Buckby 1988:168). Correspondence by Hammond described how hard the conditions of the island were and how much time and money was necessary to keep the island running (Buckby 1988:176-77). The island families moved off and Hammond employed single men, changing the island's demographics (Buckby 1988:178). Between 1965 and 1980 the Hammond family lived in Oklahoma, USA, and only returned to the island periodically (Buckby 1988:179). Gene and Mary had three sons, Keith, John and Chauncey (Buckby 1988:180). In the 1980s, the three brothers decided to run the island together:

*when they came back to the island it was in quite a mess; many items of machinery were missing. There was only one fence line which ran north and south... (Buckby 1988:184).*

Since the 1980s, the current generations of Hammonds (John and Keith, great-grandsons of Captain James Holyman, and now their descendants) have run their cattle operations across Robbins and Walker Islands and the mainland at Montague (Circular Head Chronicle 2016). In the 1990s, the Hammonds introduced Wagyu cattle to the region, which remains the primary agricultural activity on Robbins Island today (Landline 2016). Today the island is still owned by the Hammond family and Wagyu beef is farmed.

## 5.0 Register Searches and Survey Results

A desktop search of the Tasmanian Heritage Register was undertaken on 07 August 2018 for Robbins Island, which returned no listings of historic sites. Desktop searches were also undertaken of the Australian Heritage Database, which includes all sites on the National Heritage List, the World Heritage List, the Commonwealth Heritage List, and the Register of the National Estate, which also returned no listings for Robbins Island.

No historic heritage sites were identified during the field survey assessment of the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park footprint (the study area). It should be noted that several historic residential buildings and the foundations of buildings and other structures were noted to be present on the Island. These were focused within the eastern portion of the Island, well outside the proposed development footprint. These features are not under any threat of impact from the development.

As described in section 3 of this report, there were some constraints in surface visibility experienced across the majority of the study area, with visibility averaging 30%. Given these visibility constraints, it can't be stated with absolute certainty that there are no undetected historic heritage sites or features present within the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park development footprint. However, surface visibility was sufficient to generate a basic impression of the historic sensitivity of the development footprint.

As described in section 4.7 of this report, there is a long record of historic activity on Robbins Island, extending back to the early 1800s. Much of this activity centres around farming and agricultural activity. This was primarily focused within the more fertile eastern portion of Robbins Island. This is still largely the case today. The Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park development footprint is primarily focused within the western portion of Robbins Island, where agricultural activity was historically very limited, due to the comparatively infertile soils that occur in this area. Today, the area is still largely covered by native vegetation. Given the limited extent of agricultural activity in the western portion of the Island, historic sites and features associated with this industry are very unlikely to occur within the development footprint.

Sealing is also thought to have been undertaken on Robbins Island in the early 1800s. There is the potential for heritage sites and features associated with this activity to still survive on the Island. These sites are most likely to be sited along the coast line, and in particular the north-east and south-east ends of the Island, where seals are known to come ashore on the rocky cobblestone beaches in this area. Once again, these areas are well outside the proposed development footprint, and therefore such heritage features are very unlikely to occur in the development footprint.

Mutton birding is another industry that took place on the Island, albeit in a limited fashion. The two main mutton bird rookeries are situated at Guyton Point, on the north-east end of Robbins Island, and on Walkers Island. There may be remnant features (sheds etc) associated with the mutton bird harvesting in these areas. However, again these areas are well outside the development footprint, and there is no threat of impact.

On the basis of the negative survey findings, the absence of registered Historic sites and the low potential for undetected historic heritage sites to be present, the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park footprint is assessed as being of very low heritage sensitivity.

## **6.0 Statutory Controls and Legislative Requirements**

The following provides a summary overview of the various legislative instruments and statutory requirements relating to historic heritage in Tasmania. The review is presented in order to provide the proponent with a basic understanding of the statutory frameworks and procedures relating to heritage in Tasmania.

### **6.1 National Conventions**

#### *Council of Australian Governments Agreement 1997*

In 1997, COAG reached an agreement on Commonwealth, State and local government roles and responsibilities for heritage management. Local government, through the Australian Local Government Association, and the Tasmanian Government were both signatories to this Agreement. The Agreement resulted in the following outcomes:

- Acceptance of a tiered model of heritage management, with the definition of places as being of either, world, national, state or of local heritage significance;
- Nominations of Australian places for the World Heritage List and management of Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention would be carried out by the Commonwealth Government;
- A new National Heritage System on one was created in January 2004, comprising the Australian Heritage Council (AHC), National Heritage List (NHL) and Commonwealth Heritage List (CHL);
- The Commonwealth Government, through the Australian Heritage Council would be responsible for listing, protecting and managing heritage places of national significance;
- State and Territory Governments would be responsible for listing, protecting and managing heritage places of state significance; and
- Local government would be responsible for listing, protecting and managing heritage places of local significance.

#### *Environment Protection and Heritage Council of the Australian and State/Territory Governments 1998*

In 1998, the National Heritage Convention proposed a set of common criteria to be used in order to better assess, understand and manage the heritage values of places.

The Environment Protection and Heritage Council of the Australian and State/Territory Governments adopted this as a national set of desirable common criteria (known as the HERCON criteria). The adoption of these criteria by Heritage Tasmania has not yet been formalised. These criteria are also based upon the Burra Charter values. The Common Criteria (HERCON Criteria) adopted in April 2008 are summarised below:

- a) *Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history.*
- b) *Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history.*

- c) *Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history.*
- d) *Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments.*
- e) *Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics*
- f) *Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.*
- g) *Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.*
- h) *Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.*

These criteria have been endorsed by the Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand (HCOANZ) in the Supporting Local Government Project document, "Protecting Local Heritage Places: A National Guide for Local Government and Communities" (March 2009).

#### *Burra Charter 1999*

Australia ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) is the peak body of professionals working in heritage conservation in Australia. The Burra Charter was adopted by Australia ICOMOS in 1979 in Burra, South Australia based on other international conventions. Further revisions were adopted in 1981, 1988 and 1999 to ensure the Charter continues to reflect best practice in heritage and conservation management. The current version of the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter 1999 is the only version that should be used.

The Burra Charter provides guidance for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance (cultural heritage places), and is based on the knowledge and experience of Australian ICOMOS members. The Charter sets a standard of practice for those who provide advice, make decisions about, or undertake works to places of cultural significance, including owners, managers and custodians.

The Charter recognises the need to involve people in the decision-making process, particularly those that have strong associations with a place. It also advocates a cautious approach to changing heritage places: do as much as necessary to care for the place and to make it useable, but otherwise change it as little as possible so that its cultural significance is retained.

## **6.2 Commonwealth Legislation**

### *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) provides for the listing of natural, historic or indigenous places that are of outstanding

national heritage value to the Australian nation as well as heritage places on Commonwealth lands and waters under Australian Government control.

Once a heritage place is listed under the EPBC Act, special requirements come into force to ensure that the values of the place will be protected and conserved for future generations. The following heritage lists are established through the EPBC Act:

- *National Heritage List* - a list of places of natural, historic and indigenous places that are of outstanding national heritage value to the Australian nation
- *Commonwealth Heritage List* - a list of natural, historic and indigenous places of significance owned or controlled by the Australian Government.
- *List of Overseas Places of Historic Significance to Australia* – this list recognises symbolically sites of outstanding historic significance to Australia but not under Australian jurisdiction.

#### *Australian Heritage Council Act 2003*

The Australian Heritage Council is a body of heritage experts that has replaced the Australian Heritage Commission as the Australian Government's independent expert advisory body on heritage matters when the new Commonwealth Heritage System was introduced in 2004 under amendments to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity and Conservation Act 1999.

The Council plays a key role in assessment, advice and policy formulation and support of major heritage programs. Its main responsibilities are to assess and nominate places for the National Heritage List and the Commonwealth Heritage List, promote the identification, assessment, conservation and monitoring of heritage; and advise the Minister on various heritage matters.

#### *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986*

The PMCH Act regulates the export of cultural heritage objects from Australia. The purpose of the Act is to protect, for the benefit of the nation, objects which if exported would significantly diminish Australia's cultural heritage. Some Australian protected objects of Aboriginal, military heritage and historical significance cannot be granted a permit for export. Other Australian protected objects may be exported provided a permit or certificate has been obtained.

### **6.3 State Legislation**

#### *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*

This Act (LUPA) is the cornerstone of the State Resource Management and Planning System (RMPS). It establishes the legitimacy of local planning schemes and regulates land use planning and development across Tasmania. With regard to historic heritage, LUPAA requires that planning authorities will work to conserve those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value" [Schedule 1 Part 2(g)].

*Resource Planning and Development Commission Act 1997*

The Resource Planning and Development Commission (now referred to as the Tasmanian Planning Commission) is responsible for overseeing Tasmania's planning system, approving planning schemes and amendments to schemes and assessing Projects of State Significance. In terms of heritage management, the TPC will consider the establishment of heritage overlays, precincts or areas as part of the creation of planning schemes.

*Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal Act 1993*

The Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal determine planning appeals and enforce the Acts within the RMPS. The Tribunal plays an important role in the management of heritage places through its determinations on proposed development on, or near to, places of heritage significance.

*Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*

The *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995* (HCH Act) is the key piece of Tasmanian legislation for the identification, assessment and management of historic cultural heritage places. The stated purpose of the HCH Act is to promote the identification, assessment, protection and conservation of places having historic cultural heritage significance and to establish the Tasmanian Heritage Council". The HCH Act also includes the requirements to:

- establish and maintain the Tasmanian Heritage Register (THR);
- provide for a system for a system of approvals for work on places on the Register;
- provide for Heritage Agreements and assistance to property owners;
- provide for protection of shipwrecks;
- provide for control mechanisms and penalties for breaches of the Act.

Under the HCH Act, "conservation" in relation to a place is defined as

- the retention of the historic cultural heritage significance of the place; and
- any maintenance, preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaption of the place.

The definition of "place" under the HCH Act includes:

- a site, precinct or parcel of land;
- any building or part of a building;
- any shipwreck;
- any item in or on, or historically or physically associated or connected with, a site precinct or parcel of land where the primary importance of the item derives in part from its association with that site, precinct or parcel of land; and
- any equipment, furniture, fittings, and articles in or on, or historically or physically associated or connected with any building or item.

The Act created the Tasmanian Heritage Council (THC), which came into existence in 1997 and operates within the State RMPS. The THC is a statutory body, separate

from government, which is responsible for the administration of the HCH Act and the establishment of the Tasmanian Heritage Register (THR), which lists all places assessed as having heritage values of state significance. The THC also assesses works that may affect the heritage significance of places and provides advice to state and local government on heritage matters. The primary task of the THC is as a resource management and planning body, which is focused on heritage conservation issues. Any development on heritage-listed places requires the approval of the THC before works can commence.

Heritage Tasmania (HT), which is part of the Department of Primary Industry, Parks, Water and the Environment, also plays a key role in fulfilling statutory responsibilities under the HCH Act.

HT has three core roles:

- coordinating historic heritage strategy and activity for the State Government;
- supporting the Tasmanian Heritage Council to implement the HCH Act; and
- facilitating the development of the historic heritage register.

In 2013, *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995* was amended, with the primary goal of streamlining the approvals process and better align the Heritage Act with the Planning Act. Under the Amendment applicants need only lodge a single Development Application (DA) (as opposed to both a Works Application and DA), which will be referred to the Heritage Council by the local planning authority. Heritage Council then has the opportunity to advise the planning authority whether or not it has an interest in the DA and may request further information under s57 of the LUPAA. If the Heritage Council does not have an interest in the DA, it reverts to the status it has under the Scheme or Planning Act. Where Heritage Council does have an interest in the DA, the Council decision must be incorporated into the final permit (or refusal) issued by the local planning authority.

Also included in the amendments is the incorporation of the HERCON significance criteria for assessing the significance of heritage sites. The Heritage Council may enter a place in the Heritage Register if it satisfied that the place has historic cultural heritage significance by meeting threshold values for one or more of eight individual criteria. Aesthetic characteristics of a place now forms the eighth criterion against which heritage significance may be assessed.

Works to places included in the THR require approval, either through a Certificate of Exemption for works which will have no or negligible impact, or through a discretionary permit for those works which may impact on the significance of the place.

Discretionary permit applications are lodged with the relevant local planning authority. On receipt, the application is sent to the Heritage Council, which will firstly decide whether they have an interest in determining the application. If the Heritage Council

has no interest in the matter, the local planning authority will determine the application.

If the Heritage Council has an interest in determining the application, a number of matters may be relevant to its decision. This includes the likely impact of the works on the significance of the place; any representations; and any regulations and works guidelines issued under the HCH Act. The Heritage Council may also consult with the planning authority when making a decision.

In making a decision, the Heritage Council will exercise one of three options: consent to the discretionary permit being granted; consent to the discretionary permit being granted subject to certain conditions; or advise the planning authority that the discretionary permit should be refused. The Heritage Council's decision is then forwarded to the planning authority, which will incorporate the decision into any planning permit

#### *Works Guidelines for Historic Heritage Places*

The Tasmanian Heritage Council and Heritage Tasmania have issued Works Guidelines for Historic Heritage Places. The guidelines provide a general reference for the types of works, which may be exempt, or those where a permit will be required. They also define appropriate outcomes for a range of different works and development scenarios. Although specifically designed for places included in the THR, the guidelines provide useful advice for the management of heritage places generally.

#### **6.4 Local Planning Schemes**

In accordance with the requirements of the *Land Use Planning and Approvals ACT 1993* (LUPAA), Local Planning Schemes have been established throughout Tasmania in accordance with regional divisions of the state.

The Robbins Island Study Area falls within the local government area of the Circular Head Council with the requirements of use or development of land within the area governed by the *Circular Head Interim Planning Scheme 2013 (CHIPS)*.

Section E5 of the Scheme deals specifically with the Local Heritage Code, designed to protect and conserve the historic cultural heritage significance and integrity of local places and precincts (E5).

Section E5.1 explains the purpose of the code, as being to:

- a) conserve buildings, areas, and other places identified by this Code to have scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historic interest or otherwise of special cultural value; and
- b) support adaptive re-use of conserved buildings, areas, or other places

According to Section E5.1, the code applies:

- a) (i) if a building, area or other place is identified in the Table to this Code; and

- (ii) if a site adjoins the site of a building or place identified in the Table to this Code; or
- (iii) if a site is within a conservation area identified in the Table to this Code

b) A permit is required for use or development if this Code applies.

(refer to

[http://iplan.tas.gov.au/pages/plan/book.aspx?exhibit=cirips&hid=38139&s=heritage\\_sourced\\_2017](http://iplan.tas.gov.au/pages/plan/book.aspx?exhibit=cirips&hid=38139&s=heritage_sourced_2017)).

Section E5.1 of the Code provides the Table to the Local Heritage Code, Section E5.3 provides the Definition of Terms for the Code and Section E5.4 provides the Use or Development Exempt from this Code.

Please note:

- There is no reference to archaeological places in the Interim Scheme.
- The Code does not apply for a building or place that is included on the Tasmanian State Heritage Register under the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*, or that is the subject of a Preservation Order made in accordance with Part 8 Division 1 *Local Government (Building and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993*. Such buildings, places or areas are not regulated under a planning scheme.  
([http://iplan.tas.gov.au/pages/plan/book.aspx?exhibit=cirips&hid=38139&s=heritage\\_sourced\\_2017](http://iplan.tas.gov.au/pages/plan/book.aspx?exhibit=cirips&hid=38139&s=heritage_sourced_2017)).

Where any trees or vegetation require to be removed on listed properties, this will trigger a discretionary permit application under clause E13.6.12 of the Interim Planning Scheme.

## **7.0 Heritage Management Plan and Impact Statement**

Heritage management options and recommendations provided in this report are made on the basis of the following criteria.

- The legal and procedural requirements as specified in section 6 of this report.
- The results of the investigation as documented in section 5 of this report.
- The results of the Historic heritage registers search as documented in section 5 of this report.

### ***Recommendation 1***

No historic heritage sites were identified during the field survey of the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park development footprint. A search of the various historic heritage registers (as listed in section 1.4 of this report) shows that there are no registered historic sites located within or in the immediate vicinity of the study area footprint. On this basis, it is advised that the proposed Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park Project will have no impacts on known Historic heritage sites, and therefore there are no Historic heritage constraints, or legal impediments to the project proceeding.

### ***Recommendation 2***

It is assessed that there is a very low potential for undetected Historic heritage sites to occur within the Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park development footprint. However, if, during the course of the proposed works, previously undetected heritage sites or objects are located, the processes outlined in the Unanticipated Discovery Plan should be followed (see section 8).

## 8.0 Unanticipated Discovery Plan

The following text describes the proposed method for dealing with unanticipated discoveries of heritage features or objects during the proposed construction of the SIS Pipeline and related infrastructure. The plan provides guidance to project personnel so that they may meet their obligations with respect to heritage legislation.

Please Note: There are two different processes presented for the mitigation of these unanticipated discoveries. The first process applies for the discovery of all cultural heritage objects or features, with the exception of skeletal remains (burials). The second process applies exclusively to the discovery of skeletal remains (burials).

### Discovery of Heritage Objects or Features

#### *Step 1*

If any person believes that they have discovered or uncovered a heritage object or feature, the individual should notify any machinery operators that are working in the general vicinity of the area that earth disturbance works should stop immediately.

#### *Step 2*

A buffer protection zone of 5m x 5m should be established around the suspected heritage find. No unauthorised entry or earth disturbance will be allowed within this 'archaeological zone' until such time as the suspected heritage find has been assessed, and appropriate mitigation measures have been carried out.

#### *Step 3*

A qualified heritage practitioner should be engaged to assess the suspected heritage find.

If the heritage find is a movable object, then the find should be recorded, photographed and a decision should be made as to whether the object should be re-located to a designated Keeping Place.

If the find is an unmovable heritage object or feature, then the find should be recorded and photographed and a HIA and HMP developed for the feature. This should be then submitted to Heritage Tasmania (HT) for review and advice.

### Discovery of Skeletal Material

#### *Step 1*

Under no circumstances should the suspected skeletal remains be touched or disturbed. If these are human remains, then this area potentially is a crime scene. Tampering with a crime scene is a criminal offence.

#### *Step 2*

Any person discovering suspected skeletal remains should notify machinery operators that are working in the general vicinity of the area that earth disturbing

works should stop immediately. Remember health and safety requirements when approaching machinery operators.

*Step 3*

A buffer protection zone of 50m x 50m should be established around the suspected skeletal remains. No unauthorised entry or earth disturbance will be allowed with this buffer zone until such time as the suspected skeletal remains have been assessed.

*Step 4*

The relevant authorities (police) will be contacted and informed of the discovery.

*Step 5*

Should the skeletal remains be suspected to be of Aboriginal origin, then Section 23 of the Coroners Act 1995 will apply. This is as follows:

- 1) The Attorney General may approve an Aboriginal organisation for the purposes of this section.
- 2) If, at any stage after a death is reported under section 19(1), a coroner suspects that any human remains relating to that death may be Aboriginal remains, the coroner must refer the matter to an Aboriginal organisation approved by the Attorney General (In this instance TALSC).
- 3) If a coroner refers a matter to an Aboriginal organisation approved by the Attorney-General –
  - (a) The coroner must not carry out any investigations or perform any duties or functions under this Act in respect of the remains; and
  - (b) The Aboriginal organisation must, as soon as practicable after the matter is referred to it, investigate the remains and prepare a report for the coroner.
- 4) If the Aboriginal organisation in its report to the coroner advises that the remains are Aboriginal remains, the jurisdiction of the coroner under this Act in respect of the remains ceases and this Act does not apply to the remains. In this instance the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1975* will apply, and relevant Permits will need to be obtained before any further actions can be taken.
- 5) If the Aboriginal organisation in its report to the coroner advises that the remains are not Aboriginal remains, the coroner may resume the investigation in respect of the remains.

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