

Native Vegetation Condition Assessment & Habitat Appraisal

Fish's Quarry

Interlaken Road, Oatlands, Tasmania



Graham Green – June 2020

This vegetation condition assessment and habitat appraisal was undertaken for a very small remnant (0.75 hectares) of white gum dry grassy forest and woodland (TASVEG code DVG) situated at the eastern edge of the Fish's Quarry – a quarry leased by Southern Midlands Council on Interlaken Road 5km to the east of Oatlands.

Location of Fish's Quarry and the study site



Vegetation Condition

The vegetation remnant is situated within a large expanse of agricultural land used for grazing and cropping. The vegetation remnant has survived due to its proximity to the edge of the quarry face creating difficulty/hazards for developing the land for any other purpose.

The vegetation remnant contains a sparse overstory of trees from the white gum group *Eucalyptus dalrympleana* (mountain white gum), and *Eucalyptus rubida* (candlebark). The vegetation community is the higher altitude expression of the *Eucalyptus viminalis* (white gum) dry grassy forest and woodland community.

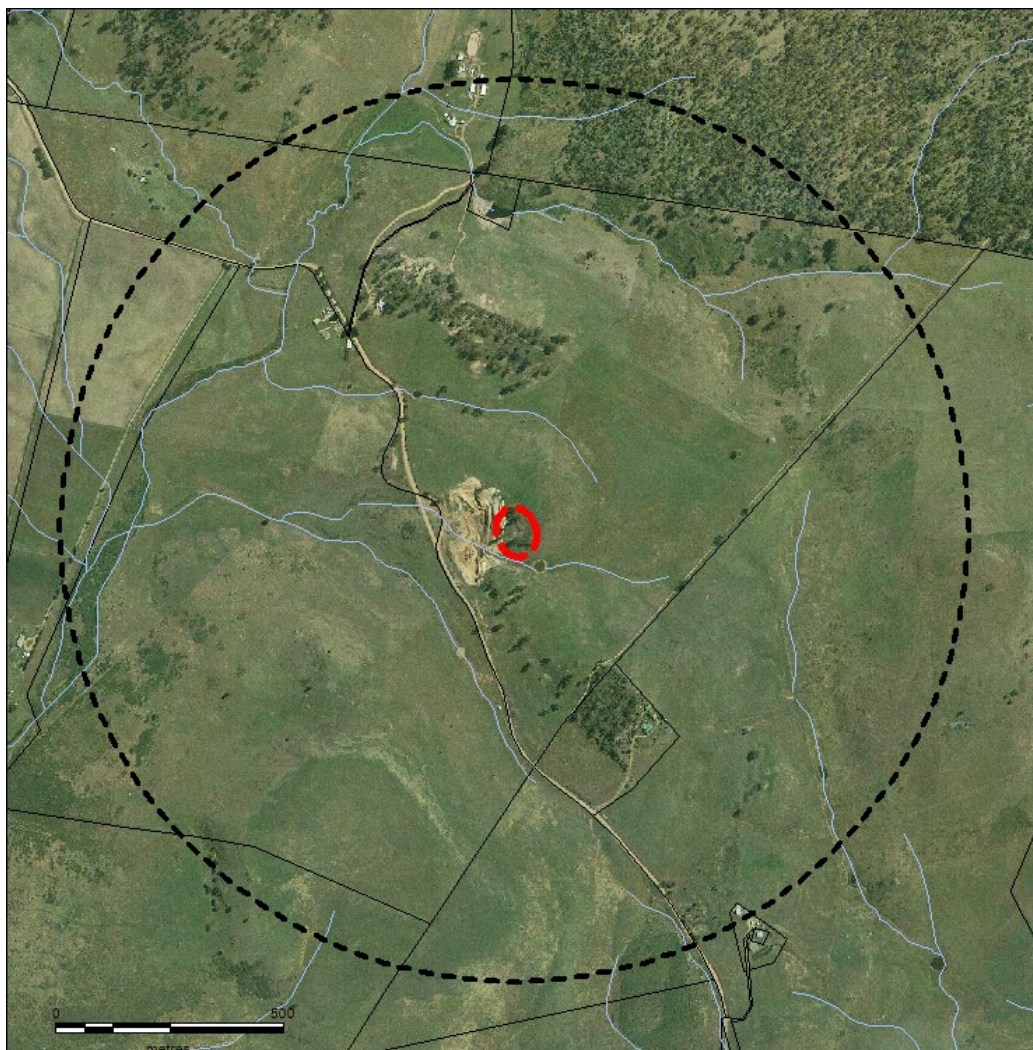
The ground-cover layer of the vegetation remnant is dominated by a dense cover of *Lomandra longifolia* (sagg). Other species present are: *Poa labillardierei* (silver tussock); *Poa rodwayi* (velvet tussock grass); *Scleranthus biflorus* (knawel); *Pteridium esculentum* (bracken); *Geranium potentilloides* (cranesbill); and *Acaena echinata* (sheep's burr).

Although remaining trees within the vegetation remnant are mature and appear healthy, the community itself must be described as being in poor condition. There is no understory layer of trees and shrubs. Ordinarily, *Bursaria spinosa* (prickly box) and *Acacia dealbata* (silver wattle) would be common in the understory of this community. Additionally, no regeneration of eucalypts has occurred for a long time. The remaining mature eucalypts range from approximately 70 to 150 years in age. Without over-story and mid-story regeneration, the vegetation remnant has no long term viability. It is quite possible that within 50 years, as a natural succession, the remnant will transition to lowland grassland complex (GCL) devoid of living trees and shrubs. This transition is to be expected due to: small patch size, edge exposure effects, browsing pressure and localised drying climate.

The vegetation remnant has marginal importance in terms of its context within the immediate landscape. As mentioned, the patch size is very small, surrounding country is largely farmland, and there is no 'linkage' to other natural vegetation remnants – refer to the figure below which shows the extent of farmland and native woodland within a 1 km radius of the quarry (2010 imagery).

A 'Natural Values Atlas' data search showed that there are no threatened plant species records, or important vegetation communities within 1 km of the Fish's quarry site.

Context - landscape within 1 km radius of Fish's Quarry



Habitat Value

An appraisal is provided below of the habitat potential provided by the vegetation remnant for threatened fauna that have been recorded nearby, and are potentially in the area.

1. Ptunarra brown butterfly (*Oreixenica ptunarra*)

State Schedule – vulnerable

Requires silver tussock for habitat and breeding. Although silver tussock is present at the site, the extent is considered too minimal to be of significance for this butterfly.

2. Spotted-tail quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus subsp. maculatus*)

State Schedule – rare

National Schedule – vulnerable

The thick ground layer of saggis potentially provides cover for this species. There were no hollow logs present, hence no potential denning habitat.

3. Eastern quoll (*Dasyurus viverrinus*)

National Schedule – endangered

The thick ground layer of saggis potentially provides cover for this species. There were no hollow logs present, hence no potential denning habitat.

4. Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisi*)

State Schedule – endangered National Schedule – endangered

The thick ground layer of saggis potentially provides cover for this species. There were no hollow logs present, hence no potential denning habitat.

5. Tasmanian masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae subsp. castanops*)

State Schedule – endangered National Schedule – vulnerable

The trees present in the remnant are not yet old enough to have hollows, hence there is no nesting habitat present for the masked owl.

6. Eastern barred bandicoot (*Perameles gunni*)

National Schedule – vulnerable

The thick ground layer of saggis potentially provides cover for this species.

7. Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle (*Aquila audax subsp. fleayi*) e EN

State Schedule – endangered National Schedule – endangered

The wedge-tailed eagle is commonly observed in the area. The trees present in the remnant are not suitable for eagles to nest in due to their exposure to wind and proximity to disturbance by human activity. The trees may occasionally be used by eagles for temporary roosting.