

## REGIONAL NRM STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

### CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSETS

#### 1. Overview of the asset within a region

Cultural heritage assets\* take two main forms: Aboriginal heritage and historic heritage. A further major subset of historic heritage assets are maritime heritage assets.

The Tasmanian Heritage Council under the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995* seeks to protect historic heritage assets of State or greater significance. This Act is pre-eminent in protecting historic heritage in the State. The Commonwealth *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1975*, serviced by the State, together with the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995* provide protection for shipwrecks in Tasmania.

Aboriginal heritage assets are protected under the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*. This Act is pre-eminent in protecting Aboriginal heritage in the State. The Commonwealth under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* can provide additional protection for Aboriginal heritage assets.

Other regulatory controls of relevance to the management of cultural heritage assets include a variety of Commonwealth Acts such as the *World Heritage Properties Conservation Act 1993* and *Australian Heritage Council Act 2002*. At the State level, the use of planning scheme provisions in the *Land Use and Planning Approvals Act 1993* and the provisions of the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994* are pivotal. Of particular note is the principal of 'sustainability' that underlies these Acts. Regulatory provisions under the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*, such as Management Plans, also impact on the management of a large suite of cultural heritage assets.

Tasmania has an extraordinary range of cultural heritage assets. This heritage is found throughout the State, from a weather board house in Stanley to an old metal boiler deep in the Southwest National Park, from a kilometre long west coast midden to the patchwork burning of button grass plains on the Central Plateau. Managing this heritage focuses on individuals and communities acquiring and maintaining a sense of place and identity through the things that have been constructed around them - their heritage - while at the same time advancing a sense of the heritage other people appreciate.

Aboriginal heritage places take a rich variety of forms, ranging from small nodes of scattered artefacts that speak of habitation, work such as skin preparation, hut building, spear making and ritual practices, to middens spanning thousands of years of food gathering and coastal living. Aboriginal places also include rock shelters with painted walls, hut depressions, dozens of rock carvings, all from the distant to recent past. Contemporary places of importance to today's Tasmanian Aboriginal community equally mark all areas of the State, reflecting present values and robust cultural practices. A focus on physical sites belies an appreciation of the entire island as one large Aboriginal heritage site.

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\* Cultural heritage assets should not be confused with cultural pursuits related to Arts and leisure.

Historic heritage places are more familiar to the majority of Tasmanians, although the stories arising from many particular places are often obscure. Historic places mark the many important events, activities and trends which shaped the very recent history of the State, including:

- convict sites - with high profile places such as Port Arthur and the Coal Mines of Tasman Peninsula, but also the many road stations and probation stations of the midlands and Derwent Valley;
- our terrestrial and sea-based maritime heritage - the *Sydney Cove* wreck, extraordinary examples of Victorian light stations, and a range of wharves, jetties and ports;
- places marking our timber, agricultural and mining industries - the gold and tin fields of the North-East, the unique sheep and cattle fields of the Central Highlands, and the Huon cutting fields deep in the Southwest National Park;
- the development of the Hydro Electricity projects in the twentieth century – the Mt Paris Dam, Waddamana, and Liawenee;
- our rich recreational and powerful artefacts of our natural heritage pursuits –our shack culture, World Heritage reserves and network of threatened species habitats.

Cultural landscapes are also very pronounced in Tasmania. The pattern of plains and forests are in many cases the result of fire-stick farming by Aborigines. More recent cultural landscapes figure prominently in the appreciation of Tasmania's heritage. Of particular historic interest are our convict and Georgian landscapes, but many other types of historic landscapes characterise the State's heritage, ranging from mining landscapes on the West Coast to our recreational landscapes formed around shack settlements.

The Department of Tourism, Parks, Heritage and the Arts (DTPHA) has responsibility for conserving and presenting this State's Aboriginal and historic heritage (including maritime heritage). The Department administers the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*, and supports the Tasmanian Heritage Council (THC) in the protection of historic heritage values throughout the State under the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*. The Tasmanian Heritage Council is the peak body in the State charged with protecting historic heritage values. The Department and Council work throughout Government and with private corporations and the public, to conserve cultural heritage places and values.

The Department is involved in a variety of activities, ranging from regulatory services, large-scale physical conservation works, to any number of promotional and interpretive tasks. The Department does this work with community groups whenever possible - as part of our social outlook and to spread understanding of the State's heritage. In looking after Aboriginal heritage, it is Department policy to work with the Aboriginal community, as the owners of their heritage, when undertaking activities related to Aboriginal heritage values.

The Tasmanian Heritage Office (THO) of DTPHA provides secretariat services for the Tasmanian Heritage Council, to assist that body in the protection of historic heritage. The THO is also involved in issues of policy, procedures, program management, and application of heritage standards. The THO undertakes field conservation works and development of information products for clients and the general public, including the Parks and Wildlife Service. The Historic Heritage Services section of the THO provides

regulatory services for the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*. The Aboriginal Heritage Section of the THO provides regulatory services for the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*. In Aboriginal heritage management, some of these tasks are linked to the activities of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council, as a representative agency of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. The Historic Heritage Projects section provides advice to government in relation to heritage projects, with a particularly focus on the Parks and Wildlife Service.

All Divisions of the Department are involved directly or indirectly in managing Aboriginal and historic heritage places and values. The Parks and Wildlife Service has substantial responsibility for many aspects of cultural heritage management - including site planning, interpretation and education, tourism, development and maintenance of visitor facilities. The Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority manages that national and internationally significant convict heritage site.

Non-government bodies involved in the management of heritage assets include the National Trust of Australia (Tasmanian), the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council.

## **2. Current asset condition**

Despite a growing recognition of the value of Aboriginal and historic heritage assets, lack of diligence, lack of care and lack of information are wearing away the rich legacy of thirty-five millennia of occupation of Tasmania. Whether on a local or state scale, everyone that frequents the cities, towns, countryside and bush of Tasmania can point to places where open space, river banks, houses, stores, tracks, forests, sheds, hedges and the like have now disappeared. The Midlands has witnessed the loss of innumerable farm buildings and traces of past farming practices. On the East Coast, middens fronting State beaches have been lost. The majority of Aboriginal and historic heritage resources are not permanent: our reserves, set up to protect the environment, are home to slowly dissipating huts, mines, and middens.

The *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995* provides a contemporary legislative response to the protection of historic heritage assets.

The *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1975* and *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995* provide contemporary legislative protection for shipwrecks in federal and state waters. This subset of historic heritage assets is now very well defined within the State.

The Government has committed to review the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975* to ensure that it adequately reflects the needs of the people of Tasmania, particularly the Aboriginal community.

### 3. Issues associated with, or threats to the asset

The Tasmanian Heritage Office Strategic Plan 2002 – 2005 notes a number of principle threats and issues affecting cultural heritage assets, including current management practices. The list is indicative of the types of threats and actions confronting the cultural heritage sector.

- a) **The continued degradation of cultural heritage places and values over time resulting in:**
  - The need to identify and register sites
  - The need to promote the intrinsic, social and economic values of cultural heritage
  - A need to broaden the role of research
  
  - **An increasing focus on Aboriginal heritage issues,** The need to maintain close liaison with the Aboriginal community
- b) **Political pressures and choices resulting from changes to Federal government legislation and increasing development pressures from commercial interests resulting in:**
  - The increasing political importance of heritage tourism, with tourism driving political decisions on conservation issues
  - Increasing pressure to privatise cultural heritage site management
  - Increasing need to forge relationships with developers
- c) **Responsiveness to changing community expectations as a basis for community support resulting in:**
  - A need to better understand the growing attachment of community groups and individuals to cultural heritage, including to places of local heritage significance
  - A need to include the voice of the community in management decisions
  - A need to increase the role of interpretation and education, and develop flexible and broadly-based community educational programs
- d) **An increased focus on tourism, including on heritage-based tourism, influencing the development of places and funding, resulting in:**
  - An increasing pressure on heritage places due to increased visitation
  - An increasing need to provide a diverse range of information (including multi-lingual signs and publications)
  - A need to forge local, state, national, and international partnerships with heritage tourism stakeholders
- e) **Greater competition for limited funds and resources both within the community at large and within Government resulting in:**

- A need to increase efficiency and prioritise limited resources
- f) **Changing demographics including in the age, mix and distribution of people with an interest in cultural heritage characterised by:**
- An ageing community with retirement leisure time and considerable experience and expertise in heritage-related matters
  - An increasingly multi-cultural society
  - A rural-urban drift and ‘sea-change’ pressures on coastal environments

Focussing on historic heritage, the *Heritage Review 2000* defines a number of key principles framing the recommendations flowing from the report. These principles include:

- The Government has a responsibility to ensure resources available for heritage conservation are allocated efficiently and economically, the public receive an effective service, and that the highest levels of probity are maintained.
- A key factor in achieving heritage conservation in the State is to attain a high level of public awareness and understanding of the contribution that heritage makes to social and economic wellbeing.
- Often the most important factor in securing the conservation of a heritage place is finding an appropriate, on-going use for that place.
- The Government has a responsibility to recognise the social and economic value of the State’s cultural heritage, including its tourism potential.

#### 4. Current responses to issues and threats

Legislative responses are contained in the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*, *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*, and *Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976* (with additional responses potentially flowing from the Acts noted in section 1 above).

The *Heritage Review 2000* report to Government has established some new framework and policy initiatives relevant to historic heritage assets, including:

- The establishment of a Tasmanian Heritage Office, situated within the Department of Tourism, Parks, Heritage and the Arts, comprising an amalgamation of the Cultural Heritage Branch and Tasmanian Heritage Council Secretariat.
- Expanding cooperative work and sharing of expertise with the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority.
- Promotion of the World Heritage Area convict Sites serial listing.
- Transfer of some land management responsibilities for historic sites on the Tasman Peninsula to the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority.
- Focussing of National Trust effort on education and public advocacy.
- Renewed focus on education as a medium for protection of historic values.
- Support for a limited number of house museums in the State.
- Greater coordination of Government Agency heritage place management, with a focus on asset management responsibilities.
- Rural and Church property initiatives.

- A number of planning scheme initiatives to create synchronisation with planning provisions, enhance the level of advice afforded to owners of heritage properties, and enhance protection of landscapes and streetscapes.
- An audit of heritage tourism places and development of demonstration models for heritage tourism.
- Establishment of a Government policy on movable heritage.
- Linking of heritage databases and establishment of Internet access.

Strategic planning and review of Aboriginal heritage management in the State is less well advanced; however, it is generally recognised that new Aboriginal heritage legislation and accredited training for people employed within the sector are key needs.

The Commonwealth has established the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the *Australian Heritage Council Act 2002* and the *Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Act 2002*, that propose Commonwealth involvement in decision making on heritage places on the National List. (Yet to be developed).

## **5. Productive use and other opportunities in relation to the asset**

A key factor in achieving heritage conservation in the State is to attain a high level of public awareness and understanding of the contribution that heritage makes to the social and economic wellbeing of Tasmanians. For historic heritage assets, often the most important factor in securing the protection of a heritage place is finding an appropriate, on-going use for that place. Productive use and other opportunities for Aboriginal heritage assets are tied to the social aspirations and empowerment of the Aboriginal community..

## **6. Available data and its usefulness**

The main source of identified historic heritage assets is the Tasmanian Heritage Register, maintained by the Tasmanian Heritage Council under the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*. Over 5000 historic heritage sites are presently identified on the register. The Tasmanian Heritage Council considers completion of this register over the next few years to be a major priority. This register is subject to strict registration criteria and processes.

Historic shipwrecks are identified in the Shipwrecks database held by the Department of Tourism, Parks, Heritage and the Arts, under the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1975* and *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*. Supplementary lists of historic heritage assets of regional or local significance may be contained in local government planning schemes, or through Management Plans under the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* or other forms of government listings (eg. the Tasmanian Historic Places Index held by the Department of Tourism, Parks, Heritage and the Arts). These listings are not subject to the same rigorous registration criteria and processes as required under the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*.

The main source of identified Aboriginal heritage assets is the Tasmanian Aboriginal Sites Index, maintained by the Department of Tourism, Parks, Heritage and the Arts. Over 9000 Aboriginal heritage sites are identified on the Index. All Aboriginal heritage places are protected under the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*. Identification of places of

spiritual or non-material significance to the Aboriginal community rests with Tasmanian Aboriginal community organisations. Places of spiritual or non-material significance may be identified and protected under the Commonwealth's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984*.

## **7. Information gaps and actions required to fill these gaps**

The main registers for Aboriginal and historic heritage assets are incomplete, and not necessarily representative of the suite of cultural heritage assets present across Tasmania. Many regulatory and procedural controls also need to be established or updated. Heritage management practices need to be maintained at a high standard.

The four main actions needed to help secure the health of the cultural heritage sector, as identified by the relevant peak bodies, are:

- development of educational, interpretive and promotional programs for cultural heritage assets,
- completion of the Tasmanian Heritage Register,
- establishment of new Aboriginal heritage legislation, and
- creation of accredited training schemes within the Aboriginal heritage sector, particularly for Aboriginal community members.

## **8. Current Aspirational, Resource Condition, and Management Action targets for asset (at the national, state, and/or regional level) and any data on progress towards targets**

There is a number of underlying principals involved in heritage management. These principals form the foundations of cultural heritage management globally and nationally – in Australia they include, most notably:

- *The ICOMOS Guidelines for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance* (The Burra Charter),
- the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the *Australian Heritage Council Bill 2002* and the *Environment and Heritage Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2002*,
- *Ask First, a guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values* (Australian Heritage Commission 2002),
- *UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage*,

A thorough understanding and rigorous application of the Burra Charter remains a lynchpin in the management of historic heritage resources. The continued development of the equivalent document for management of Aboriginal heritage resources is equally pivotal. The approach set out in the charter, informed by various publications on the application of standards in the heritage industry, provides for the delivery of best practice management processes and results.

The Commonwealth publication *Ask First, a guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values* (Australian Heritage Commission 2002), provides a broad definition and guide for Aboriginal heritage assets. *Ask First* is based upon the principle that consultation and negotiation with Aboriginal communities is the best means of

addressing Aboriginal heritage issues. It promotes a process whereby the relevant Aboriginal community determines the significance of a place in accordance with its traditions, before progressing to negotiations and agreements between parties on how to manage a place. The publication clearly defines a consultation and negotiation process for engaging with aboriginal heritage assets.

The preservation of Tasmania's cultural heritage is directly linked to the Goals of the Tasmania *Together* program, with particular emphasis on cultural heritage within Goal 10 and Goal 21.

*Goal 10 Acknowledge and respect the contribution that the Aboriginal community and its cultural have made and continue to make to Tasmania and its identity.*

*Goal 21 Protect and conserve our natural and cultural heritage.*

Tasmanian Industry Development Plans provide for a systematic audit of key industry sectors by appropriate industry councils and the subsequent development of Industry Strategies. The Tourism and Forestry sectors have accounted for cultural heritage assets in their respective industry plans. Reserve management and management of cultural heritage assets across the State is impacted upon by the recently completed Reserve Management Code of Practice.

## **9. Proposed Management Action targets for the asset (at the national, state and/or regional level)**

Broad management actions affecting cultural heritage assets include the following goals from the Tasmanian Heritage Office Strategic Plan 2002 – 2005:

*Goal 1:* To identify, conserve and understand Tasmania's cultural heritage.

*Goal 2:* To facilitate a community engaged and educated in cultural heritage.

*Goal 3:* To develop policies and processes of the highest standard that are clear, equitable and accessible to all.

*Goal 4:* To foster sustainable management of Tasmania's cultural heritage assets consistent with legislative and statutory obligations.

*Goal 5:* To foster a skilled and motivated Tasmanian heritage industry.

Priority achievable actions (provided here under key headings) include:

### **TASMANIAN HERITAGE COUNCIL**

- Maintain Tasmanian Heritage Council regulatory services.
- Implement policies developed by the Tasmanian Heritage Council.
- Administer the Tasmanian Heritage Conservation Funding Program.

### **GOVERNMENT**

- Provide advice to government in relation to shortcomings of the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*.
- Provide expert heritage advice and heritage project support services for PWS and other Government agencies.
- Provide expert heritage advice in support of the development of major State initiatives.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

- Work with local government to develop Aboriginal and historic heritage protection and conservation provisions for inclusion in local government planning schemes.
- Provide expert advice to local councils on the management and conservation of heritage properties.

### **EDUCATION, PROMOTION, TRAINING AND TOURISM**

- Work with the Tasmanian Heritage Council and key stakeholders to identify priority educational and interpretation requirements.
- Develop and implement a coordinated approach to the promotion of Tasmania's cultural heritage.
- Develop education, training and information programs to promote understanding within and among government agencies about Aboriginal and historic heritage values, and the services and expertise available from the Tasmanian Heritage Office and the Tasmanian heritage industry.
- Conduct information sessions and forums across the state on heritage topics of mutual interest.

## **10. Relevant scientific publications**

Australian Heritage Commission, 2002, *Ask First, a guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values*, Canberra

Australia ICOMOS Inc., 2000, *The Burra Charter, The Australian ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, Burwood

Tasmanian Heritage Council, no date, Practice Note Series, Hobart