ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Darklab Pty Ltd

Destination Artwork and Visitor Welcome Centre

328 Lune River Road
Ida Bay State Reserve

RAA 3854

February 2024

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Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania

Environmental Assessment Report

Proponent	Darklab Pty Ltd
Proposal	Public artwork, visitor welcome centre, carpark and connecting walking paths
Location	328 Lune River Road Ida Bay
Reserve	Ida Bay State Reserve
RAA No.	3854
Document ID	Environmental Assessment Report – Ida Bay State Reserve - Destination Public Artwork and Visitor Welcome Centre, 328 Lune River Road, Ida Bay – RAA 3854 – February 2024
Assessment type	Reserve Activity Assessment - Level 3
Related issues	Historical railway, lease agreement, Ida Bay Railway Preservation Society
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Glossary and abbreviations

AHT	Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
DNPW	Director National Parks and Wildlife
EAR	Environmental Assessment Report
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EoI	Expression of Interest
EPBC Act	*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
HVC	Huon Valley Council
IBRPS	Ida Bay Railway Preservation Society Inc.
IBSR	Ida Bay State Reserve
IBSRMP	*Southport Lagoon Conservation Area, George III Monument Historic Site & Ida Bay State Reserve Management Plan 2006*
LUPA Act	*Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*
MNES	Matters of National Environmental Significance
NC Act	*Nature Conservation Act 2002*
NPRM Act	*National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*
NPWAC	National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council
OCG	Office of Coordinator-General
PWS	Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service
RAA	Reserve Activity Assessment
RSF	Recreational Standards Framework
TSP Act	*Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*
TWWHA	Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area
UDP	Unanticipated Discovery Plan

Report Summary

This Environmental Assessment Report (EAR) completes the environmental assessment of the proposed artwork installation, visitor welcome centre and connecting walking footpaths to and from the artwork within the Ida Bay State Reserve (IBSR). The proposal's unique identifier is Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) 3854.

The IBSR is managed for the protection of its historic, recreational and natural values. A narrow-gauge railway, built around 1920 is located within this reserve. The narrow-gauge railway runs along the southern shore of the Lune River estuary and finishes at Deephole Bay.

The railway was converted to a tourist attraction in 1977. The unique narrow-gauge tourist railway experience is not currently operational. The tourist attraction was centred around providing a rail heritage experience consisting of a two-hour ride to Deep Hole Bay and educating the public of the historical significance of the railway and rich natural resources of the reserve. The Ida Bay Railway Preservation Society Inc. (IBRPS) are the current licence holders of the section of this reserve which encompasses the railway and historic buildings. The IBRPS is keen to progress resuming tourist railway rides at the current location.

Darklab Pty Ltd (the proponent) proposes a controlled adaptation and development within the visitor services zone of the IBSR. The proposal is adjacent to the IBRPS lease. The purpose of the proposal is to install a unique artwork, create additional visitor experiences in the far south of Tasmania and provide additional opportunities to showcase the natural, cultural and heritage values of the state reserve.

The proposed works include the construction of an artwork Installation, visitor centre/café, new private access to the visitor centre/café and artwork location, construction of an on-site car park, construction of connecting pedestrian paths between the car park, visitor centre/café and the artwork installation. The complete package of works will be confined to a total greenfield disturbance footprint of 1.5 hectares.

The initial proposed location for the visitor welcome centre and carpark was advertised on the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) 'Have your say' website in June 2021. Thirty-four submissions were received for the proposal. These submissions ranged in topics from the proposal's compatibility with the statutory management objectives to environmental impact considerations. In response to public submissions articulating concerns about the proposed location of facilities and the likely interference with the potential future operation of the railway and the need to clearly fulfil the requirements of the *Southport Lagoon Conservation Area, George III Monument Historic Site & Ida Bay State Reserve Management Plan 2006 (*IBSRMP), the proposed location of the visitor welcome centre and car park was re-sited outside the Ida Bay Railway precinct and would be a second distinct tourist facility within the State Reserve.

The final EIS was completed by the proponent in response to PWS advice and public submissions on the draft EIS. Submissions have been addressed by the proponent in EIS Appendix D and the relevant sections of the final EIS. This EAR evaluates the proponent's response to the submissions.

Section 1 of this EAR presents the steps in the Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) process and the dates they were completed. Section 2 outlines the statutory and PWS policy requirements. Section 3 is a description of the proposal. Section 4 summarises the public and agency consultation process. Section 5 evaluates the need for the proposal and alternatives to the proposal. Section 6 is an evaluation of the proposal against the IBSRMP and policy settings. Section 7 provides an assessment of the impacts to values, evaluation of the proposed management actions, and a summary of how the submissions

have been addressed in the final design and management actions. Section 8 is a summary of assessment criteria relevant to the proposal and how the criteria were considered by the delegate. Section 9 is the decision made by the Deputy Secretary, Parks and Wildlife Service.

Appendix 1 is the proponents list of recommended commitments.

Appendix 2 provides a list of environmental management recommendations for an authority under the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002* (NPRM Act).

This EAR finalises the RAA process.

1. Assessment Process

The proposal was assessed as a Level 3 RAA as a requirement of the IBSRMP for proposed introduction of new infrastructure on reserve lands, potential impacts on natural and cultural values and the likely community interest in the proposal.

The proponent's draft EIS was reviewed by PWS officers and specialists and published for public consultation. The proponent developed the final EIS in response to the submissions received.

The final EIS presents a relocated proposal and addressed issues from submissions on the draft EIS as well as advice from Huon Valley Council (HVC) regarding the planning permit under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* (LUPA Act).

The assessment process and milestones are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 Assessment Process milestones

Date	Milestone
1 October 2020	Scoping letter issued to the proponent to commence the Reserve Activity Assessment process.
16 February 2021	Draft EIS submitted to PWS by the proponent.
2 June 2021	PWS provided landowner consent to lodge planning application with the HVC.
5 June 2021	Draft EIS published by PWS on the "Have your say" web site for public consultation.
4 July 2021	End of public consultation on draft EIS.
29 September 2021	PWS request for a submissions report and final EIS to be prepared by the proponent. Submissions received during public consultation provided to the proponent.
5 September 2022	Proponent requested extension to period allowed for submitting an amended EIS.
7 September 2022	PWS provided extension to proponent for submitting an amended EIS.
8 November 2022	Proponent submitted an amended EIS to PWS for advice.
22 February 2023	PWS provided landowner consent to lodge an amended planning application with HVC PWS provided direction on adjustments required in the Final EIS.
24 November 2023	Final EIS submitted to PWS for assessment.

March 2024	PWS Environmental Assessment Report published including statement of reasons, commitments list, and decision.
Planning Permit – Huon Valley Council	
23 July 2021 – 05 August 2021	DA-428/2020 advertised by Huon Valley Council. Initial proposal was for the visitor centre and carpark located within the Ida Bay Historic Heritage precinct to alter the railway workshop into a visitor centre welcome centre.
29 September 2021	The application was refused as it was inconsistent with Clause 23.3.3, Discretionary Use, (P1) of the Huon Valley Interim Planning Scheme 2015.
03 March 2023 – 20 March 2023	DA-210/2022 Advertised by Huon Valley Council. This amended development application redesigned the visitor welcome centre and carpark to areas outside the Ida Bay precinct.
31 May 2023	Planning Permit issued by HVC.

1.1 Related permits and management plans required

Table 2 outlines permits, and related management plans required. These permits are assessed separate to the PWS RAA process. When identified in Table 2 below the plans identified must be provided to PWS within 24 hours or being submitted to the HVC.

Table 2 Other Permits / Plans required

Approval or Permit	Agency or Authority	Documentation and process
Certificate of Likely Compliance	Building Surveyor	Building Surveyors are the delegates under the *Building Act 2016* for assessing building designs to ensure compliance with the National Construction Code (NCC), Australian Standard and the *Building Act 2016*. The Building Surveyor will assess the detailed building drawings and engineering designs before issuing the Certificate of Likely Compliance.
Building Permit	Huon Valley Council	HVC is the permit authority under the *Building Act 2016* and will consider a Building Permit on receipt of the Certificate of Likely Compliance from the Building Surveyor.
Plumbing Permit	Huon Valley Council	HVC is the permit authority under the *Building Act 2016* for issuing Special Plumbing permits.
Bin Storage Area	Heritage Tasmania	Detailed designs and drawings to be provided to Heritage Tasmania for approval.

Soil and Water Management Plan (SWMP)	Huon Valley Council	The lodgement of a Soil and Water Management Plan (SWMP) with Council to minimise soil and erosion runoff prior to any development or works being carried out on a development site(s) on the property.
Site Management and Design Plan	Huon Valley Council	The lodgement of a detailed Site Management and Design Plan prepared by a suitably qualified specialist that incorporates appropriate procedures and design requirements for: • Mitigation of bird strike risk associated with approved use and development. • Mitigation of bird strike risk associated with use of any other facilities on the property identified in the Site Management and Design Plan. • Management and monitoring of bird strikes by the permit holder including systems to respond to bird strike incidents that include monitoring methods, frequency of monitoring, strike thresholds for generating incident responses, details of monitoring technology, reporting requirements and other relevant procedures. • Preventing birds gaining internal access to structures identified in the plan. • Mitigation of any identified impacts from illumination from approved facilities and structures on nocturnal fauna.
Roadkill Monitoring Plan	Huon Valley Council	The lodgement of a Roadkill Monitoring Plan prepared by a suitably qualified specialist that incorporates: • Relevant advice, guidelines and recommendations in the 'Survey guidelines and management advice for development proposals that may impact on the Tasmanian Devil 2015' as roadkill mitigation measures; • Mitigation measures required for events that occur during the late afternoon and evening on the site.
Landscape and Offset Plan	Huon Valley Council	The lodgement of a Landscape and Offset Plan is to align the information contained in the Tree Protection, Revegetation, and Landscaping Plans to describe the required offset ratios detailed in the Huon Valley Council Biodiversity Offset Policy to set out how and when the biodiversity offset will be delivered or provided.
Weed Hygiene	Huon Valley Council	The lodgement of a Weed Hygiene and Management Plan.
Boardwalk Management Plan	Huon Valley Council	The lodgement of a Board Walk Management Plan.
The lodgement of an	Huon Valley Council & PWS	The report must show the design and location of the OSWM system and irrigation area and must include appropriate minimum setbacks from all existing and

updated Onsite Wastewater Report and Design Report		proposed infrastructure at the site including but not limited to car-parking areas, any buildings, structures, railway line and other railway infrastructure as well as the requisite setbacks to all property boundaries.
Right of Way (ROW)	Huon Valley Council & PWS	Prior to commencement of the use and development, a right of carriageway easement (ROW) is to be registered on the property title of 308 Lune River Road (CT - 245082/1) and on the property title of 328 Lune River Road (CT-238040/1) at the permit holder's expense that provides for 328 Lune River Road to have a ROW over 308 Lune River Road.
Forest Practices Plan (for temporary road access for artwork)	Sustainable Timber Tasmania	Temporary access for artwork installation, construction phase only. Arrangements via Private Forestry Agreement which will require a Forest Practices Plan to upgrade part of the road for the proposed installation.
Liquor Licence	Tasmanian Liquor and Gaming Commission	Requirement of the *Liquor licencing act 1990*.
Registration as a Food Business	Huon Valley Council	Requirement of the *Food Act 2003.*

2. Statutory and policy requirements

The *PWS Environmental Risk Management Policy* takes a risk management approach to assessing and controlling the likely impacts of proposals on environmental values. The RAA process is the PWS system used to evaluate the proposal's consistency with legislative and PWS policy requirements. The RAA process is a systematic way of documenting proposals, their impact and determining any recommendations required to protect environmental, cultural or social values. The RAA process is equivalent to an environmental impact assessment process.

The PWS Level 3 RAA process requires EIS documentation, public consultation, and Statement of Reasons to inform a decision.

2.1 Statutory Requirements

Land is reserved under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* (NC Act). Schedule 1 of the NC Act sets out the purposes of reservation for the various classes of reserved land. For a State Reserve the purposes of reservation are:

The protection and maintenance of any one or more of the following:

(a) the natural and cultural values of the area of land;
(b) sites, objects or places of significance to Aboriginal people contained in that area of land;
(c) use of the area of land by Aboriginal people –
while providing for ecologically sustainable recreation consistent with conserving any of the things referred to in paragraphs (a), (b) and (c), as applicable.

The key statutory framework for achieving the purpose of reservation is the NPRM Act. Section 30 of the NPRM Act requires that the managing authority (the Director of National Parks and Wildlife [DNPW]) for any reserved land for which there is a management plan is to manage that land for the purpose of giving effect to the management plan. For the IBSR, on which the proposal is sited there exists an applicable statutory Management Plan, *Southport Lagoon Conservation Area, George III Monument Historic Site and Ida Bay State Reserve Management Plan 2006*.

The proposed works must be consistent with the statutory management plan for the State reserve which identifies that "All objectives for State reserves set out in the Act apply to the Ida Bay State Reserve". (page # 9 IBSRMP) Therefore, the following objectives apply:

(a) to conserve natural biological diversity;

(b) to conserve geological diversity;

(c) to preserve the quality of water and protect catchments;

(d) to conserve sites or areas of cultural significance;

(e) to encourage cooperative management programs with Aboriginal people in areas of significance to them in a manner consistent with the purposes of reservation and the other management objectives;

(f) to encourage education based on the purposes of reservation and the natural or cultural values of the State reserve, or both;

(g) to encourage research, particularly that which furthers the purposes of reservation;

(h) to protect the State reserve against, and rehabilitate the State reserve following, adverse impacts such as those of fire, introduced species, diseases and soil erosion on

the State reserve's natural and cultural values and on assets within and adjacent to the State reserve;

(i) to encourage tourism, recreational use and enjoyment consistent with the conservation of the State reserve's natural and cultural values.

The proposal's consistency with the Management Plan (therefore the reserve purpose and objectives) and PWS policies, are evaluated in section 6 of this EAR.

2.2 Licence / Lease

Under the NPRM Act the Minister may grant a lease or licence to occupy reserved land. This power is exercised (under delegation) by the DNPW if the proposal is consistent with the management plan and deemed acceptable. A lease or licence may include conditions.

The proponent has submitted their final EIS which includes 31 supporting appendices. Potential environmental impacts and recommended mitigations identified in the supporting appendices have been captured in Appendix 1 of the final EIS and these are copied in Appendix 1 of this EAR. In addition, the proponent has captured these mitigations in appropriate detail in the Construction Environmental Management Plan EIS Appendix Q.

Appendix 2 of this EAR is a list of environmental management recommendations for consideration in an Authority under s48 of the NPRM Act. To reduce post assessment and authority administration the PWS recommends the proponent is to provide an Environmental Review Report every two years for the total term of six years. The intention of this Environmental Review Report is to require the proponent to undertake a self-audit on environmental matters.

The proponent will require a lease for the purpose of construction and occupation of the site and also a business licence to operate the artwork tourist venture.

2.3 Additional approvals

The Aboriginal Heritage Assessment Report acknowledged there are no site-specific Aboriginal heritage constraints that apply to the project. A copy of the report was forwarded to Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania (AHT), for review and AHT have acknowledged the findings and recommendations of the assessment.

The natural values surveys have identified several values in and surrounding the reserve which will require avoiding, remedying or mitigating. The Ida Bay district supports numerous stands of Eucalyptus ovata making it a swift parrot important breeding area (SPIBA). Implementing measures to avoid impacting habitat, avoiding the breeding season (September to December) and maintaining a construction activity buffer distance of 50 metres from potential foraging tress are all aimed at avoiding impacts to swift parrot's use of foraging and nesting habitat.

The natural values surveys have investigated if the proposed location contains denning habitat for the Tasmanian Devil. No potential dens sites were discovered however the Tasmanian devil may use the reserve to forage for food. The proposed increase of traffic volume may have a potential impact on foraging devils. Implementing construction and operational limits for hours of operation, ensuring traffic is managed outside nocturnal periods and implementing appropriate road signage alerts is proposed to avoid and mitigate potential impacts to the Tasmanian Devil.

The proposal is unlikely to require any permits to take any threatened or protected wildlife species (or products thereof).

2.4 *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*

On 22 May 2022, PWS provided consent on behalf of the Crown to lodge the Development Application for the amended proposal under section 57 of the LUPA Act. The proposal was assessed against the HVC Interim Planning Scheme 2015.

The Huon Valley Council approved the Planning Permit on 5 May 2023.

Permits under the Building Regulations 2016 are at the application stage.

2.5 *EPBC Act*

The proponent has not referred the proposal to the Commonwealth Government for assessment under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (*EPBC Act). The Flora and Fauna Habitat Assessment, including Collision Risk (EIS Appendix R1) found no EPBCA listed threatened ecological communities or flora and as such there is no potential for significant impacts to MNES of these types. This report identifies the proposal is unlikely to result in a significant impact on the listed swift parrot.

Table 3: Statutory requirements summary

Legislation or requirement	Permit Required?	Details
Aboriginal Heritage Act 1975	No	An Aboriginal Heritage Assessment was completed and determined a low likelihood of impacting Aboriginal Heritage. AHT has reviewed the report and advised that the works could be conducted in accordance with an Unanticipated Discovery Plan (UDP).
Building Regulations 2016	Yes	A certificate of compliance from a building surveyor is yet to be issued for the proposal. Once issued a Building Permit and Plumbing Permit will be sought from Huon Valley Council.
Crown Lands Act 1976	Yes	The proposal will require the establishment of a Right of Way (ROW) for the car park entrance at the front of the site (Lune River Road) and staff / service delivery access to the visitor centre.
Fire Service Act 1979 Tasmania Fire Service	No	A Bushfire Hazard Management Plan is not required. The proposal is not for a subdivision or hazardous use.
Forest Practices Act 1985	Yes	The construction phase access is under negotiation with Sustainable Timbers Tasmania (STT). A Private Forest Practices Agreement may be established to allow access to the rear of the site across the STT land.
Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993	Yes	A planning permit from Huon Valley Council was issued in May 2023.
National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002	Yes	A licence or lease is required.

Nature Conservation Act 2002	Unlikely	A permit to interfere with wildlife is unlikely based on survey results.
Threatened Species Protection Act 1995	Unlikely	A permit to take threatened flora or fauna is unlikely to be required. The only threat to the swift parrot is the potential impact during construction work on one potential habitat tree nearest the artwork.

3. Proposal

3.1 Proponent

The proponent is Darklab Pty Ltd. The proposed Doug Aitken art installation is an integral element of Project X, a DarkLab initiative which has attracted both State and Federal funding.

3.2 Proposal's infrastructure

The proposal includes:

- Construction of a permanent Artwork Installation in the southwestern area of the lot
- Construction of a Visitor Centre/Café with a dedicated commercial vehicle loading area
- Construction of new private access to the Visitor Centre/Café from the internal road off 308 Lune River Road (245028/1)
- Modification of the existing access off Lune River Road (to the proposed car park)
- Construction of an on-site car park (to service the proposal)
    - 32 car parking spaces (including 2 all-ability car parking spaces)
    - 2 motorcycle parking spaces
    - 2 recreational vehicle parking spaces
    - 2 bus parking spaces
    - Recreational vehicle and bus set down area and turning
- Construction of connecting pedestrian paths between the car park, Visitor Centre/Café and the Art Installation
- Tree and vegetation removal
- Regenerative planting

3.3 Objective and outcomes

The proponent states (EIS section 2.2) the project's objectives and outcomes as:

Project X is a DarkLab initiative established through the support of combined State and Federal funding to address the need to reinvigorate visitation to the Huon Valley (Southern Trove) region after the devastating impact of the 2019 summer fires.

DarkLab sees a unique opportunity for a sensitive development within the Ida Bay State Reserve facilitating a controlled adaptation of usage of the site to

create a viable tourist offering. The increased visitation to the region generated by Project X is intended to bolster bushfire recovery, using art as a vehicle for creative, social and economic regeneration in the Huon Valley.

The proposed development is for a permanent artwork installation, Visitor Welcome Centre, a dedicated car park and associated civil works.

3.4 Exhibited versus modified site design

The initial proposed location comprised land at 328 Lune River Road, Ida Bay (CT 238040/1) and is classified as a Visitor Services Zone, in the IBSRMP. The exhibited proposal included an adjoining triangular parcel of land at the northeast corner of the site identified as Parks and Wildlife Service land. This land is not identified with a Title or PID reference. It is noted that the Folio for 308 Lune River Road (CT 245028/1) shows the land as part of the Lune River Road Reserve. This proposed use included the use of the Quarry Managers house. For a visual representation of the initial proposed location refer to the *Ida Bay Destination Public Artwork and Visitor Centre Draft EIS RAA # 3854* (page 17).

The modified proposed location of the subject site comprises of land at 328 Lune River Road, Ida Bay (CT 238040/1), as shown below in Figure 1, and is classified as a Visitor Services Zone, in the IBSRMP. Still including the adjoining triangular parcel of land at the northeast corner of the site is identified as Parks and Wildlife Service. Any potential use of the Quarry Managers house has now been removed.

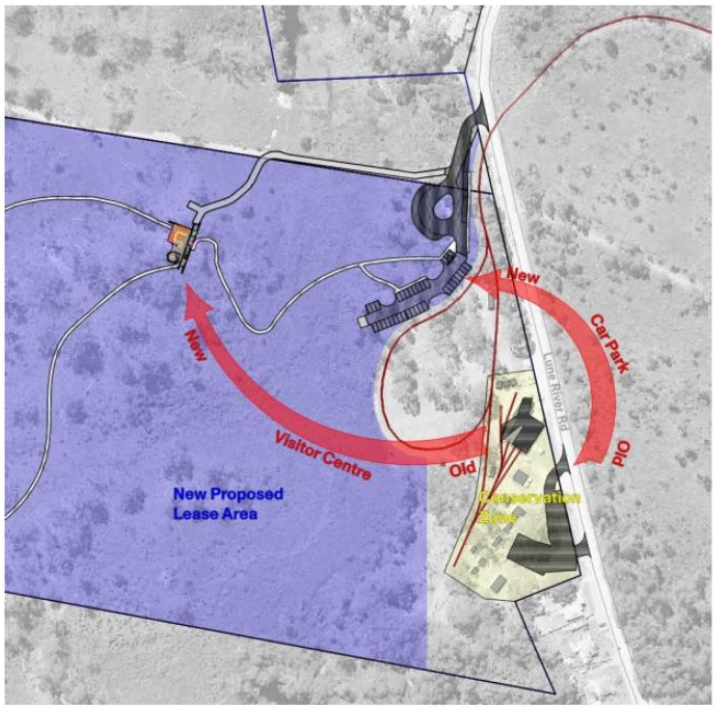


Figure 1 (left). Exhibited verses the modified proposal. Visitor centre and car park / access relocated to the northeast of the site within a newly proposed lease area to separate from licence area of the Ida Bay Railway Preservation Society. (EIS Appendix D).

The location of the proposal is in the far south of Tasmania in the Ida Bay precinct. The proponent is proposing that a new lease area which is separate to the existing lease, of part of the lot, to the IBRPS.

Table 3: Details of proposed land

Lot and plan	Address	Land tenure type	Holder	Total Area of Lot
CT 23804011/1 PID 5267994	328 LUNE RIVER RD IDA BAY TAS 7109	Reserved Land	Parks and Wildlife Service	18.66 (ha)
CT 23804011/1 PID 1651358	LUNE RIVER RD IDA BAY TAS 7109	Reserved Land	Parks and Wildlife Service	.1 (ha)
Small triangle adjoining parcel of land.	No address registered	Crown Land (Road Reserve)	Parks and Wildlife Service	Approximately .0417 (ha).
Total Area of Land area				18.66 - .1 (excised from plans) + .0417 = **18.6 (ha)**

The proposed disturbance area (to greenfield sites on the reserve) for the carpark, visitor centre, internal access road, artwork installation and boardwalk is 867 square metres as shown below in Table 4. The total area of these titles of 18.6 hectares as shown in Table 3. EIS Appendix R provides quantitative details on vegetation community losses from the impact footprint (page 29).

Additional disturbance is anticipated in the construction phase of the project, in relation to access for artwork installation, micro siting the pathway, establishing the carpark and creating an internal road to the visitor centre. A maximum disturbance area of 1.5 hectares is a condition included into the lease agreement acknowledging that rehabilitation and offset plans will be implemented post construction, which will reduce the initial development impact. The total disturbance of this proposal represents less than 0.4% to the IBSR.

Table 4: Proposed footprint calculated areas

Component of Development	Proposed total footprint area
Carpark area, visitor centre, internal access road, artwork installation	.56 ha
Boardwalk / pathway from car park to visitor centre	260 metres long by 1.8 metres long .046 ha
Boardwalk / pathway from visitor centre to artwork	870 metres long by 1.8 metres wide. .156 ha
Rear access to artwork site	105 metres to artwork by 10 metres width .105 ha
Total Footprint area	.**867 ha**

4. Public and Agency consultation

4.1 Early community engagement

The proponent identified and engaged with stakeholders across the region to minimise and or mitigate potential social impacts the proposal presents to the community. EIS Appendix V provides an engagement strategy which builds on the scale and scope of engagement through to the operation stage of the project.

The proponent has demonstrated an appropriate amount of engagement with key stakeholders, communities and individuals during the preliminary design, redesign, and public consultation processes required by the PWS and the HVC. The proponent conducted community meetings, local area letter drops, released information to the local media and coordinated meetings with relevant state government entities.

4.2 Department referrals

The following branches within the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania have been consulted and reviewed information relevant to their specialities during the assessment:

- Environment Heritage and Lands Division, Conservation Assessment Team
- Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania
- Heritage Tasmania
- PWS Tourism, Experience & Visitor Services
- PWS Landscapes Program
- PWS Assets and Engineering
- PWS Southern Region
- National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council (NPWAC)

4.2 Public consultation of the EIS

Public submissions were invited on the draft EIS during a four-week period, from 5 June to 4 July 2021. The consultation included a public notice in three regional papers (The Advocate, The Mercury and The Examiner) to alert the public that the draft EIS was available on the 'Have your say' page of the PWS website.

34 submissions were received via the PWS email address, and no other submissions were received in the mail or by the proponent. The respondents included 7 organisations and 27 individuals. The 34 submissions were made available to the proponent on 9 July 2021 for consideration. These submissions are available in in the EIS Appendix D.

Many of the submissions related to the heritage railway and the aspirations to restore an operating railway as a tourist attraction. Issues identified in relation to the railway:

- Keeping pedestrians separate to live railway lines.
- Potential unseen impacts on proposed location of walking tracks.
- The proposal limits the railway site as a static museum display comprising buildings, equipment, rolling stock and rails.
- Requests to reconsider the proposed location of the visitor centre.

- The newly proposed facilities, such as the visitor centre, would be surrounded by disused industrial equipment from previous rail operations at the site.
- The proposed infrastructure may dominate the Ida Bay heritage site.
- Lack of detail of how the proponent will address an ongoing commitment to maintain heritage buildings.

Submissions in relation to the statutory IBSRMP:

- The proposal is likely to have a permanent impact on the integrity of the railway values.
- Recommending the designing a visitor centre in an appropriate location to the north of the railway structures and outside of the identified heritage areas, to retain the heritage integrity of the site.
- The EIS needs to address how the proposal is aiming for "a controlled adaptation" of the site (Section 4.1.3 of the IBSRMP).

Submissions in relation to potential impacts of flora and fauna:

- Inadequate discussion and analysis of the potential impacts due to lighting of infrastructure on the site, inclusive of any night-time work during both the construction and operational phases.
- Inadequate consideration of the increased risk of roadkill, further consideration should be given to undertake a Traffic Impact Assessment in particular reference to the Tasmanian Devil *(Sarcophilus harrisii)*.
- Proposal is within the identified Swift Parrot Important Breeding Area (SPIBA) therefore the clearing of potential Swift parrot foraging and nesting trees should be avoided.
- The proponent should commit to undertaking a substantial response if a nominated species-specific threshold level of bird strike occurs post-construction.

The issues raised by the submissions are addressed in EIS Appendix D and states:

The impacts on the existing heritage items have been ameliorated through revised siting and design. The proposed car park, visitor centre and applicable pedestrian paths have been relocated to the north of the site within the leased area completely clear of the rail line and Ida Bay Railway buildings. The impacts of site disturbance are minimised through site selection, revegetation and construction management (access rehabilitation, micro-siting).

Satisfaction with proponent's submission response

The proponent has demonstrated adequate responses to community, stakeholder and PWS feedback following the advertisement of the Draft EIS. The proponent amended the proposed location of the visitor centre and carpark away from the Ida Bay Railway precinct. This amendment reduces potential impacts to the historic heritage of the site, allows for future operation of a tourist railway at Ida Bay and is consistent with the IBSRMP for the reserve. The proposal allows a clear distinction of leased areas for tourism opportunities at this location. In addition, the proponent has removed the intention to utilise the Quarry Masters house (on PID 1651358) as staff accommodation and has no intention of using helicopters as part of the construction or operational stage of this proposal.

The amended proposal as described by the Final EIS, required crown consent in accordance with the LUPA Act and included a 14-day public advertising period with the HVC. The PWS liaised with the HVC on Council's planning report and response to 13 submissions.

The public submissions were predominately about the potential impacts to a future tourist railway and potential impacts to historic heritage. These are no longer issues as the amended EIS proposes all infrastructure outside the historic heritage area.

The PWS assessment process accords with the statutory management plan for public consultation, protection of the railway heritage, conservation and incorporation of outcomes of the LUPA Act process.

5. Need for the proposal and alternatives

Section 2.2 of the Final EIS discusses the need for the proposal to reinvigorate visitation to the Huon Valley region after the impact of the 2019 summer fires. Project X is a Darklab initiative and has attracted State and Federal funding to progress the proposed artwork and visitor centre installation.

5.1 Expression of Interest

The proposal is part of the Tourism Expression of Interest (EoI) initiative coordinated through the Office of the Coordinator-General (OCG). A Business Plan was a requirement of this process, the OCG has reviewed (and coordinated an independent review) thus fulfilling the economic and financial requirements of the OCG and PWS regarding this proposal and assessment process.

5.2 Alternatives of site location

EIS Appendix D acknowledges that the original proposed location of the visitor centre and carpark location in the Draft EIS would likely impact existing heritage items and the possible future operation of a tourist railway attraction. The proponent has addressed and responded to public concern by undertaking a redesign and siting of the carpark and visitor centre location proposed in a new location away from railway infrastructure.

It is accepted that there is potential demand for the proposal, and the development would have benefits to other tourism initiatives in the Huon Valley.

6. Evaluation of statutory requirements and policies

6.1 Reserve Management Plan

The proposal site at 328 Lune River Road, Ida Bay is classified as a Visitor Services Zone in the IBSRMP. The property is the only part of IBSR that is west of Luna River Road.

Relevant requirements of the IBSRMP include:

- Historic Cultural Heritage Conservation Management Plan (completed for the initial draft EIS but not required for the amended proposal due to separation from railway infrastructure).
- Natural values assessment (flora, fauna, geomorphology and geo-heritage) for the development area (EIS Appendix R).
- Aboriginal Heritage Assessment Report (EIS Appendix O) *deliberately not released
- Social Impact Assessment, including the Community Profile Reports (EIS Appendix T)
- Visual Impact Assessment (EIS Appendix U)
- On-site wastewater management system report and geotechnical assessment, if a new, or substantially modified system is required (EIS Appendix M)
- Bushfire Hazard Management Plan (if required by the Huon Valley Council)
- A detailed business and a financial plan showing at least a three-year projection of operations (in accordance with section 4.3.6 of the IBSRMP (EIS Appendix B) * deliberately not released.

The requirement for a Bushfire Hazard Management Plan (BHMP) does not apply as the proposal is not for a subdivision or a vulnerable or hazardous use.

EIS Section 3.1.3 and 3.3 includes the proponent's assessment of the proposal and the degree to which it is in accordance with the requirements of the IBSRMP and policies.

Several submissions raised concerns with the proposal's consistency with the IBSRMP. These issues are addressed in EIS Appendix D.

The IBST objectives are addressed by the IBSRMP, all the objectives for State reserves set out in Schedule 1 of the NPRM Act are applicable.

The evaluation of the proposal and whether it is in accordance with the relevant IBSRMP aims and prescriptions follows.

a) Section 2.1 – geological diversity

The site is of geo-conservation significance involving Lune River Area Jurassic Basalts and Gemstone Association deposits. Low impact shallow excavations are planned that are unlikely to affect these underlying deposits. The foundations of the artwork sculpture are not likely a significant impact to the underlying rock.

It is concluded that the sculpture site and visitor centre are not located on soils of conservation significance (EIS Appendix W).

b) Section 2.3 – water quality

The proposal is unlikely to affect the protected environmental values of the water catchment of the IBSR. Stormwater will be collected as part of the water supply and any runoff is to be treated before low flow swale discharge (EIS Appendix S).

c) Section 2.4 to 2.6 – biodiversity

The likely direct environmental impacts from the proposal are minor due to the small footprint (overall less than 1.5 hectares) and avoidance of disturbing the conservation values of the site (EIS Appendix R1).

This includes the possible use of the site for foraging and nesting by the state and federally listed endangered swift parrot. Using already cleared and disturbed areas and replanting foraging trees are acceptable strategies for the proposal in dealing with biodiversity impacts.

Potential swift parrot collision-induced mortalities are unlikely due to the scale, location and design of the buildings.

The significance of any impact on the swift parrot is low as the proposal would not fragment the habitat, disturb the breeding cycle or reduce the swift parrot occupancy in the area. Monitoring of foraging tree flowering events, breeding behaviour and swift parrot presence are requirements for the proposal and provide assurance that potential impacts are monitored and remain low as predicted.

The likelihood of introducing pests and disease is also low given the recommended best practice management measures (EIS Appendix R). There are no identified listed threatened flora species on the site.

d) Section 2.7 to 2.8 – cultural significance

There were no artefacts discovered during the survey for Aboriginal heritage and the report identified the site is unlikely to yield artefacts during construction. The intangible aboriginal values of the site are recognised involving flora, fauna, water and geo conservation natural resources. The proposal aims to protect these values and has developed suitable management commitments (EIS Appendix 1).

Ongoing Aboriginal cultural interpretation, fire management, and other opportunities are set out in the proposal's commitments (EIS Appendix V).

European heritage includes the Ida Bay railway and the adjacent lease held by IBRPS. The proposal has been redesigned so that it does not negatively impact the railway heritage or likelihood of an operating railway. The proposal is independent of IBRPS. Of benefit is the heritage assessment provided by the proponent (EIS Appendix P) that will assist the IBRPS in its aims. By encouraging tourism to the area there is a likelihood that the European heritage of the area may be better understood and recognised.

e) Section 3.1 to 3.3 – reserve protection

Commitments for the protection of the IBSR focussing on fire management and weeds/disease management is outlined in the Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and summarised in Section 8 of the EIS. The commitments for managing fires, weeds and diseases as detailed in EIS Appendix Y and Appendix R are suitable.

f) Section 4.1 - leases

The proposal has been designed to minimise impacts from vehicle access. The car park is located at the entrance to the site off Lune River Road avoiding the need for further vehicle access to the reserve.

g) Section 4.1 & 4.1.3 – Ida Bay Railway conservation and leaseholder

The proposal does not directly impact on the neighbouring railway leasehold. The proposal is not inconsistent with the aim of allowing the railway leaseholder to facilitate the continuing conservation of the railway site and infrastructure. PWS recognises the proposal for a controlled adaptation and development of the site. By attracting visitors to

the artwork site, the neighbouring railway site will likely benefit from increased interest in a viable tourist operation.

h) Section 4.3 – managing development works

The proposal would not disturb sensitive areas on the State reserve. The RAA process included public and stakeholder feedback, scientific advice from specialists on heritage and natural values impacts of the proposal. The HVC assessment process has been incorporated in the RAA process. The management objectives of the IBSRMP have been addressed as outlined in this report and the final EIS (Section 3.3).

i) Section 4.3.1 to 4.3.10 – prescriptions for managing development

The Tasmanian Heritage Council has approved the proposal with conditions (EIS Appendix N) as part of the HVC planning permit approved 31 May 2023 (Attachment F of that permit).

The Aboriginal Heritage Assessment Report provides advice of the low likelihood of artefacts being found on the site. Ongoing Aboriginal involvement in the proposal is described in the Aboriginal Community Engagement Plan (EIS Appendix V). Commitments 30 to 32 (EAR Appendix 1, EIS Section 8) address aboriginal heritage engagement, artefacts and ongoing involvement of Ochre-Rai (Aboriginal owned enterprise) in reviewing the project for suitable opportunities for Aboriginal community creative practitioners, land managers, fire managers and knowledge holders.

The economic viability of the proposal has been detailed through the Tourism EoI process as well as the confidential Business Plan (EIS Section 5). Both the Commonwealth and State government have committed to part funding the proposal. The viability of the proposal is demonstrated by 10-year attendance and revenue projections.

The proposal is reliant on maintaining the natural values of the reserve and adjacent reserves and has been designed to be managed at a high level of protection incorporating best practices as described in the EIS. The CEMP outlines the best practices to be employed under multiple codes of practice as referenced (EIS Appendix Q).

j) Sections 4.3.12 to 4.3.14 – major project prescriptions

The Huon Valley Council issued a Planning Permit for the proposal on 31 May 2023. The assessment process included PWS consent to lodge the development application and provision of advice.

The PWS RAA process is equivalent to an Environment Impact Assessment process. The draft EIS was available for public review for 30 days from 5 June to 4 July 2021. PWS consent for the proponent to lodge the development application to HVC was provided 2 June 2021.

Both the draft EIS and development application provided site plans (EIS Appendices C and G), identified all relevant statutory requirements and specified design objectives and management targets (EIS Appendix Q).

k) Sections 4.4.2 to 4.4.9 - Visitor Services Zone prescriptions

The proposal is not inconsistent with the values of the site and management aims of the zone. The proposal provides infrastructure for recreational use consistent with the natural and cultural values of the site and reserve vicinity. The context is the artwork component of the proposal.

Bushfire risk and fuel load management are addressed (EIS Appendices X and Y) assisted by and in the context of Aboriginal cultural burning (EIS Appendix V).

The Visitor Services Zone is the primary location in the reserve for tourist infrastructure and the location for this proposal’s education and interpretation facilities and program.

PWS limit the use of signs at this site (EAR Appendix 2).

The proponent has committed to rubbish removal (EIS Appendix Q) and waste is to be managed as described by the waste hierarchy (EPA Tasmania). Waste will not be disposed on site. Waste awaiting removal must not be accessible by wildlife.

l) Section 5.2 - recreational vehicles

No publicly accessible vehicle tracks are presently on the IBST. The proposal does create two additional access routes to recreational vehicles at the reserve location but access will be restricted to public vehicles by strategically located boom gates at the visitor welcome centre and at the artwork installation site. The proposal is not inconsistent with the IBSRMP.

m) Sections 5.3 to 5.7 - other uses

The proposal is not located near areas that provide for recreational vehicle use, camping, hunting or other uses not compatible with visitor services. Bushwalking is a compatible use and the proposed pathway linking the carpark to visitor centre through to the artwork and will be compatible with W1 of the PWS track classification scheme. The proposal is not inconsistent with the IBSRMP aims in this section.

n) Section 5.8 and 6.2 - information and interpretation

An aim of the proposal is to provide a new Visitor Centre with a focus on education about reserved land including the natural and cultural values. The proposal aims to would provide a unique interpretation and visitor experience of the natural and cultural values of the reserve and the adjacent parts of the southern Tasmanian region.

The proposal is not inconsistent with the IBSRMP aims in this section.

o) Section 6.3 – monitoring and research aims

The proposal addresses several key aims and performance indicators IBSRMP Table 6 and does not negatively affect the remaining aims and indicators including:

- Aim 2 Landscape values – Infrastructure is provided to encourage visitors to appreciate the values of the reserve and neighbouring reserves.
- Aims 4 and 5 Flora and fauna protection – No human induced threatening processes are introduced.
- Aim 7 Historic heritage protection – The proposal protects the Ida Bay Railway heritage and any future operation of the railway.

The proposal is not inconsistent with the management plan aims for monitoring and research.

Summary of consistency with the IBSRMP

It is accepted that the proposal directly encourages tourism and is not inconsistent with the prescriptions in the IBSRMP. The proposal also supports the protection of other reserved land in the area.

6.2 Other policies

The proposal is consistent with the *Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice 2003*, particularly policies on the provision of visitor services and infrastructure and protection of reserves from impacts of human use.

Section 6.8 of the Code of Practice requires the location and infrastructure provided considers:

- conservation values
- zoning decisions in management plans and local government planning schemes
- existing infrastructure (including outside the reserve)
- establishment and maintenance costs and
- recreational opportunities in keeping with the character of the reserve

The proposal has appropriately considered against each of the above as the proposal:

- is sited to avoid key conservation values
- is consistent with the NPRM Act management objectives
- was assessed and found consistent with the *Planning Scheme 2013* by the HVC
- adjoins existing railway infrastructure and does not directly impact on the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA)
- will not result in unreasonable costs for PWS to establish, maintain or operate
- provides a diversity of tourist opportunities catering to a range of visitor types to the local area of the IBSR.

6.3 Recreational Standards Framework

The Recreational Standards Framework (RSF) is a PWS tool for determining the location of visitor sites and services in consideration of risk management, visitor management and finance management. The RSF is a mapped representation of the level-of-service delivery.

The management plan for the state reserve provides for the proposal site within the visitor services zone (Map 5 of the IBSRMP). The RSF site classification as day use – comfort (Table 4 and Appendix 3 of the IBSRMP) with no accommodation provided.

The proposal provides an artwork and visitor centre infrastructure and is compatible with the IBSRMP aspirational level of service for the site as set out in Table 4 (Recreation Settings) section 5.1 of the IBSRMP.

There is likely demand for the provision of this unique viewing access, interpretation concept and catering services to a wide range of visitor types to this site.

7. Evaluation of environmental impacts

The assessment of environmental, cultural and social issues raised in the submissions and relevant to the proposal have been evaluated. Details of this evaluation, including the commitments made by the proponent for implementing the proposal, are discussed particularly relevance are:

- flora and fauna (including swift parrot habitat)
- railway heritage
- bird strike

The EAR also evaluates remaining issues raised by the submissions and how potential impacts are avoided or mitigated.

7.1 Flora and Fauna

Values and Potential Impacts

Clearing

The proposal would clear native vegetation of an area less than 1.5 hectares. The area to be cleared contains small areas of dry forest/Leptospermum (E. Obliqua 0.283ha) and wet heathland (0.239ha). The field survey of the site found no listed flora present. Small areas of Button grass moorland and melaleuca scrub will be cleared.

Native species will be used in the rehabilitation of cleared areas not included in the final footprint of the buildings, car park and pathways.

Biosecurity

There is no evidence of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (root rot fungus) or significant priority weeds (as classified under the *Weed Management Act 1999*). These issues have not been recorded in the proposal footprint or found during the field survey (EIS Appendix R).

There is a risk that machinery and material imported could introduce *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (root rot fungus) or other weeds to the site. Once operating there is the ongoing risk that visitors could introduce biosecurity risks to the site. The ongoing monitoring and supervision of the site means that emerging biosecurity threats can be supressed and managed appropriately (EIS Section 8 and EIS Appendix Q).

Vehicle Movements

During construction and the life of the proposal, there is the risk of fauna strikes from vehicle movements. Several submissions raised concerns with the potential for more frequent fauna strikes due to an increase in frequency of vehicle movements associated with the construction and operation of the proposal. The roads within the area are not conducive to vehicles travelling at high speed and it is likely there would be adequate time to spot and avoid striking fauna. The hours of operation would be restricted to allow return journeys in daylight.

There would be an increase in traffic numbers generated by the proposal (estimated at 180 vehicles/day - 90 vehicles/day entering and 90 vehicles/day exiting the site) if all visitors use a car. The use of buses will reduce this traffic.

Staff and signage at the site will also inform visitors of the risks of fauna strike when driving to and from the site. Vehicles would also be confined to the site demarcated areas.

Speed limits and other fauna strike avoidance methods on the roads to and from the site are outside the scope considered for this proposal.

Lighting, noise and visual impact

Several submissions raised concerns with the potential for lighting and noise affecting fauna as well as the visual impact from Lune River Road.

Lighting standards are set by the planning requirements of the local council. It is accepted that the proposal does not include unnecessary lighting and that the lighting is adequate for visitor safety. The proposal does not intend for the facility be open after dark. All lighting would be designed with dark sky principles in mind.

Noise generated from construction activities are not considered significant and are temporal. The proposal would be undertaken in stages thus reducing the number and extent of noise source emissions at any one time. The potential to disrupt fauna and visitors with noise from work undertaken therefore is not significant. Helicopters will not be used as part of the works. The heavy vehicle movements to the site during construction are estimated at 6 vehicles per week.

The Visitor Centre and artwork are located in the only part of the IBST on that side of the Lune River Road. Species which are perturbed by anthropogenic noise are likely to already avoid the area and it is considered that the noise from the proposal would have a negligible additional impact on fauna. The field surveys show that several species were present in areas near the existing site. There is unlikely to be a significant change in the impact to fauna species from any additional noise generated from the increased capacity.

Visual impact from Lune River Road has been minimised by the design such that the car park (nearest infrastructure to the road) avoids vegetation loss particularly adjacent to Lune River Rd and the visitor centre has been located to be not visible from Lune River Rd.

Swift parrot and habitat

The Ida Bay area in general supports numerous stands of *Eucalyptus ovata* and is an important foraging and breeding area for the listed endangered Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*).

A collision risk assessment (EIS Appendix R) provided advice on mitigating the collision risk of the Swift Parrot with the proposed artwork and visitor centre buildings including:

- Swift parrot management commitments detail a zero-loss goal to avoid mortalities through building design elements, façade design & bird flight paths that account for flowering events.
- Annual pre-season checks on foraging trees and the likelihood of flowering food plants within the vicinity of the development.
- Utilisation surveys within seasons where food plants on site are flowering and/or the Southern Forests swift parrot important breeding areas (SPIBA) is known to be host to significant numbers of breeding pairs.
- Regular systematic patrols around the development buildings to document bird collision mortalities in line with Hager, S.B and Cosentino, B. J. (2014).

- Surveying for bird carcasses resulting from window collisions: development of a standardised protocol and providing monitoring results (Site Management and Design Plan) and notifying the PWS if swift parrots are recorded at the site during construction.

- Mitigation strategies if mortalities occur in relation to particular design elements or habitat variables (e.g., flowering events) – mitigation options may include alterations to the building details/landscaping to the degree necessary or operational changes. Trigger values for implementation of corrective action should be no more than 3 bird strikes for any threatened bird species and/or no more than 1 swift parrot bird strikes.

Management Measures Proposed

The proponent has provided commitments and management actions as part of the final EIS (EIS Section 8 and EIS Appendix Q). Commitments relevant to the flora and fauna issues raised are addressed by these commitments:

- pre-clearance surveys and if necessary, seeking associated permits to disturb
- marking areas of development footprint and marking no-go prohibited zones
- the implementation of the comprehensive CEMP
- protection of fauna during construction works (prevent wildlife entry, avoid leaving open excavations)
- priority to use material onsite and any imported material must be certified as weed and phytophthora free
- helicopters prohibited from use for the purposes of construction
- cleared vegetation, particularly hollow bearing timber to be reused in rehabilitation along with indigenous species
- ongoing monitoring for weed and biosecurity threats during operation
- micro-siting the alignment of the walking track/s avoiding habitat trees and minimising detrimental root impacts
- avoiding construction activities within 50 m of potential nesting trees and monitoring swift parrots during construction
- utilisation surveys within seasons where food plants on site are flowering
- systematic monitoring building surrounds for bird collision mortalities, with ongoing commitment to document and report.

A complete list of commitments can be found in Appendix 1 of this report. Relevant commitments are numbers 7 to 25.

Submissions

Submissions raised issues in the following categories:

- location of the proposal – on private land not public land

- ability for species impacted to persist in the area
- habitat and biodiversity loss
- concerns for biosecurity
- impacts of noise
- impacts of lighting
- consideration of cumulative Impacts

Evaluation

- The location of the proposal, fragmentation, noise and lighting

The proposal is located adjacent to the existing railway heritage infrastructure and forestry areas, with residential areas adjacent. To the west of the proposal is extensive forestry and reserved land which features forest mosaic and a mixture of regrowth and old growth forest with high value habitat. The proposal would not fragment nor intrude on this habitat. The area of the proposal is likely to be used for foraging rather than nesting or denning.

The proposal is sufficiently distanced from the TWWHA to avoid impacting the outstanding universal values including the wilderness of the TWWHA.

Locating the proposal close to existing tourism destinations has the potential to reduce vehicle trips to and from the area.

- The ability for species impacted to persist in the area

It is considered the proposal would have no significant impact on the ability for species impacted to persist in the area. The extent of clearing is a very small fraction of the vegetation community types found throughout the surrounding area. The proponent has committed to adjusting the proposal layout and footprint to avoid impacts to the listed swift parrot and its habitat requirements. The proposal would not have a significant impact on the ability of species to persist in the area.

- Habitat and biodiversity loss, biosecurity issues

An area of less than 1.5 hectares of habitat is to be cleared for the proposal. There is the risk for unattended fires, damage from vehicles driving into areas susceptible to damage and introduction of biosecurity threats such as weeds or Phytophthora. The field surveys found the existing site has been low in weed incursions and biosecurity threats.

Swift parrot habitat in the proposed footprint area is prevalent elsewhere in the reserve and other surrounding reserved land. The proposal would not result in a significant loss of habitat or biodiversity.

- Noise and Lighting

The proposal is within a consolidated area of existing low impact noise and lighting. It is considered the proposal would not significantly increase the noise and lighting impacts.

- Cumulative Impacts

The proposal would primarily be utilised by visitors to the local area. The location outside of the TWWHA supports the minimisation of impacts to the outstanding universal values of the TWWHA and locating supporting infrastructure outside of the TWWHA.

The proposal's contribution to cumulative impacts is considered to be very low. The proposal would not introduce significant new impacts to the reserve. The cumulative impacts of greater numbers of visitors to the IBSR is managed through the proposed controls outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 of this report.

- Swift parrot

The number of potential foraging trees to be removed is eleven trees. Half of these trees represent relatively low value as potential foraging habitat. No potential nesting habitat trees will be removed. Possible breeding habitat in the surrounding area will be undisturbed. Mitigation measures and offsets or rehabilitation using foraging tree species are adequate. The proposal does not include the removal or disturbance of trees suitable for swift parrot nesting.

The infrastructure has been designed to avoid larger habitat trees. There are some medium-value foraging trees needing to be removed for the development of the car park.

Conclusion

The public submissions raised natural value impact issues. The design outcomes and commitments to be utilised and conditions to be imposed would mitigate and manage the potential impacts to flora and fauna values. Whilst a small area of reserved land will be utilised for the proposal, this is balanced against the benefits the proposal offers to the community and the broader reserved land network. The commitments outlined in Appendix 1 provide sufficient impact mitigation.

7.2 Railway heritage Impacts

Values and Potential Impacts

Visitors to the area may include railway or European history enthusiasts seeking educational heritage history of the site and adjacent site. The proposal has the potential to impact on the future of the railway infrastructure that exists adjacent to the proposal site. The Ida Bay Railway depot is listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register as place no. 8215 EIS Appendix P and includes the railyard, workshops, worker accommodation, railway track and supporting infrastructure.

Management measures and commitments proposed

The proponent has outlined commitments and management actions as part of the EIS Section 6.6 and EIS Appendix P. Commitments relevant to railway and heritage are summarised below. A complete set of commitments can be found in Appendix 1 of this report. Advice from Heritage Tasmania and the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator is incorporated in the proponent's commitments EIS Appendix J and EIS Appendix P which are:

- Use of screening and fencing to separate railway enthusiasts from the proposed new artwork tourist.
- The amended re siting and design of the proposal moved the car park and visitor centre away from the railway infrastructure, separating the proposed infrastructure from the railway heritage infrastructure.
- Monitoring of excavations for heritage items.

- Access from Lune River Road to the new car park has been designed to avoid adverse aspects on the potential for operational safety of the existing rail crossing of Lune River Road.
- Treated wastewater subsurface irrigation area and any excavation area near the railway tracks to be designed and constructed to not adversely affect the structural stability or operational requirements of the historic tourist railway.

Relevant commitments include Appendix 1 of the report numbers 26 to 29, 31.

Submissions

Most of the submissions on the draft EIS from 2021 raised railway heritage issues including:

- The proposal being within the railway precinct and making use of shared infrastructure.
- The proposal's inappropriate use of the railway shed and accommodation buildings.
- Carpark sizing under designed for both the railway tourism and predicted artwork visitors.

Evaluation

In 2022, the proponent provided an amended proposal to separate the proposal infrastructure from the railway infrastructure (EIS Appendix C and EIS Appendix D). The proposed car park, visitor centre and pedestrian paths are now proposed to be relocated to the north of the site within the leased area wholly clear of the rail line and Ida Bay Railway buildings.

The IBRPS have been issued a 5-year Licence by PWS on the site adjacent to the proposal.

Conclusion

The amended proposal would not negatively affect the adjacent railway infrastructure. The proposal is independent of IBRPS. The proposed artwork is a unique opportunity which may lead a potential rejuvenation of the IBSR.

7.3 Other Issues

Aboriginal Heritage

An Aboriginal Heritage Assessment Report for the proposal was undertaken. There are no records of artefacts within the proposed footprint. Additional survey work did not locate other Aboriginal Heritage. The geology of the area was determined to be unsuitable for artefact manufacturing.

AHT reviewed the Aboriginal Heritage Assessment Report and determined that no permit was required, and that works be carried out in accordance with the Record of Advice and Unanticipated Discovery Plan (UDP).

A submission requested increased engagement with aboriginal representatives and management of Aboriginal heritage.

Commitments have been made by the proponent (EIS Section 8 and Appendix 1 of this report) that require the Record of Advice and a copy of the UDP to be readily available to contractors.

The proponent undertook and committed to continue engagement with the Aboriginal community about the Transformer project (EIS Appendix Q and V). The Aboriginal

consultancy company Ochre Rain developed an Aboriginal Community Engagement plan for ongoing engagement and opportunities for Aboriginal involvement in the proposal. A complete list of commitments can be found in Appendix 1 of this report. Relevant commitments are numbers 30 to 32.
Waste
The proposal would increase the quantity of waste generated on site due to an increased number of visitors. The proponent has committed to implement a waste hierarchy. Waste hierarchy guidance information applicable to the proposal site is outlined in EIS Appendix F. Solid waste would be segregated on site into waste and recyclables and both streams collected and removed from site. All construction wastes would be removed from site upon completion of each stage. Construction waste is not expected to be hazardous. The Visitor Welcome Centre is aimed at operating in a way that reduces, reuses and recycles materials so as to reduce waste sent to landfills.

8 Statement of Reasons

This Environmental Assessment Report is based on the information provided in the final EIS and incorporates advice provided by NRE specialists and PWS regulatory staff. This assessment also addresses the issues raised in specialist advice and public submissions.

This statement of reasons is a summary of assessment criteria relevant to the proposal and how the criteria were considered by the delegate.

8.1 Assessment Criteria

Southport Lagoon Conservation Area (George III Monument Historic Site and Ida Bay State Reserve) Management Plan 2006

The provisions of the management plan are addressed as summarised in section 3.3 of the EIS including the following initiatives:

- scale and location of the proposal – avoiding impacts on habitat
- building and artwork design within visitor services zone of IBSRMP
- proposing a location separate from the adjacent Ida Bay Railway site – no impact on railway heritage or future potential operation of a tourist railway, and endorsement by Tasmanian Heritage Council
- environmental management commitments provided by the proponent

that together address the IBSRMP provisions.

Nature Conservation Act 2002

Given the proposals' consistency with the management plan for the reserve the proposal is also consistent with the purpose of reservation for state reserves, listed in Schedule 1 of the *NC Act.* The proposal is for providing ecologically sustainable recreation consistent with conserving the natural and cultural values of the area.

National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002

Given the proposal's consistency with the management plan the proposal is also consistent with the management objectives for state reserves. The proposal furthers objectives **e** (to encourage cooperative management programs with Aboriginal people) **f** (to encourage education based on the purposes or reservation) and **i** (to encourage tourism and recreational use) and is not inconsistent with the other management objectives of Schedule 1 for State reserves.

Crown Lands Act 1976

Where the proposal impacts Crown Land (South Lune Road temporary access), it is not inconsistent with the *Crown Lands Act 1976* or its subordinate legislation. This includes the proposed construction of new private access to the Visitor Centre/Café from the internal road off 308 Lune River Road (245028/1) as part of the Lune River Road Reserve.

Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice 2003

The code of practice was considered in determining the appropriateness of the proposal. The proposal aligns with the code of practice guidance on visitor services and infrastructure.

Recreational Standards Framework (RSF)

The RSF was considered in determining the appropriateness of the proposal, in particular the aspirational RSF stated in the IBSRMP as including visitor services and visitor centre for the site - refer final EIS section 1.2.

Huon Valley Council Interim Planning Scheme 2015

The proponent has been issued a planning permit for the proposal as described in the EIS (section 1.5 and Appendix N). The HVC determined that the proposal is consistent with the planning scheme.

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

The proponent determined the proposal did not have a significant impact on Matters of National Environmental Significance – refer final EIS section 3.1.2.2 and Appendix R.

8.2 Limitations of Assessment

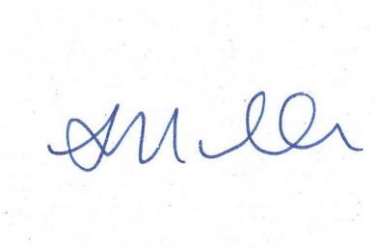
This decision has been informed by the information presented in the final EIS. Further approvals are required in accordance with the permit issued by the HVC, permits to be obtained from Sustainable Timbers Tasmania, and building and plumbing permits. Should the proposal be significantly changed, an amended EIS may be required and a new recommendation sought from PWS.

9. Decision

I am satisfied that the proposal is acceptable because:

- The environmental impact statement under the identified assessment criteria demonstrates that the proposal would not cause significant environmental impacts if appropriately managed.
- Matters raised in the public submissions have been sufficiently addressed in EIS Appendix D as summarised in sections 5, 6, 7 and 8 of this Environmental Assessment Report.
- The proposal fully addresses the IBSRMP.
- The proposal aligns with the purpose for reservation under the NC *Act* and the reserve management objectives for State reserves as stated in Schedule 1 of the NPRM Act.
- The proposal would provide facilities to safely view, interpret and contemplate the reserve landscape and surroundings including the TWWHA.
- The proposal will provide local community economic benefits and PWS recognises the proposal for a controlled adaptation of the site that promotes a viable tourist product.
- The proposal can be safely implemented with acceptable environmental commitments captured in the EIS and appendices as summarised in Appendix 1 of this report **and** PWS recommended conditions in Appendix 2.

I recommended that the proposal can be authorised and appropriately regulated under an authority issued under section 48 (5)(b)(ii) of the NPRM Act in accordance with matters for environmental management conditions in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of this report.



Sophie Muller

DEPUTY SECRETARY

PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Date: 18 April 2024

The RAA process is completed when the Deputy Secretary signs this environmental assessment report and provides it to the delegate under the NPRM Act for authorities.

Appendix 1: Proponent Commitments

Managing environmental impacts of the proposal – summary (section 8 final EIS)

Details in Construction Environmental Management Plan (Appendix Q final EIS)

and specialist reports (Appendices to the final EIS)

Table - final EIS Table 4 - Summary of proposal environmental commitments

Environmental Matter 1	Expert Report/Plan
Weed and Pathogen Control to reduce the risk of invasive weeds and disease, *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (PC) impacting the site	• Natural Values Report by North Barker Ecosystem Services • Weed Hygiene and Management Plan • Transformer Operations Plan • Construction Environmental Management Plan
1. Biosecurity controls during construction will include products brought to the site that will be from approved Pc-free quarries (if they are bringing gravel to the site) and trucks/equipment treated for seeds and *Phytophthora* before entering. 2. Blackberry and Spanish heath will be eradicated from the site prior to construction. 3. Users will be directed to stay on tracks and other formed surfaces with signage during the operation of the site. 4. The proposed use will maintain a shoe wash station at the start of the track consistent with those used in national parks and reserves. 5. At least one staff member will be trained in basic identification of weeds (including blackberry and Spanish heath) and symptomatic evidence of PC, supported by an action plan that outlines what to do if weeds or pathogen symptoms are observed. 6. Biennial spring/summer weed and pathogen inspections of the site will occur with scope for subsequent control actions if required.	
Environmental Matter 2	Expert Report/Plan
Bird Collision Management	• Natural Values Report by North Barker Ecosystem Services • Site Management and Design Plan • Transformer Operations Plan
7. Swift parrot management commitments detail a zero loss goal therefore mortalities will be avoided through building design elements, façade design & bird flight paths that account for flowering events. 8. Annual pre-season checks on foraging trees and the likelihood of flowering food plants within the vicinity of the development; 9. Utilisation surveys within seasons where food plants on site are flowering and/or the Southern Forests swift parrot important breeding areas (SPIBA) is known to be host to significant numbers of breeding pairs; 10. Regular systematic patrols around the development buildings to document bird collision mortalities in line with Hager, S.B and Cosentino, B. J. (2014);	

11. Surveying for bird carcasses resulting from window collisions: a standardized protocol and providing monitoring results (Site Management and Design Plan) and notifying the PWS if swift parrots are recorded at the site during construction;
12. Mitigation strategies for if mortalities occur in relation to particular design elements or habitat variables (e.g., flowering events) – mitigation options may include alterations to the building details/landscaping to the degree necessary or operational changes. Trigger values for implementation of corrective action should be no more than 3 bird strikes for any threatened bird species and/or no more than 1 swift parrot bird strikes.

Environmental Matter 3	Expert Report/Plan
Native Vegetation and General Works	• Natural Values Assessment • Landscape and Offset Plan • Transformer Operations Plan • Construction Environmental Management Plan • Board Walk Management Plan • Landscape Plan

13. Apply micro-siting approach (with the aid of an ecologist) to areas of the final footprint within native vegetation.
14. In cases of redesign or additions, maximise the proportion of the footprint within non-native (modified) vegetation and avoid native vegetation (as well as habitat for threatened species).
15. Clearly demarcate the permitted impact area either in situ and/or clearly on construction plans and specify on all contractor agreements that works, vehicles and materials must be confined within the designated impact areas.
16. Areas of native vegetation beyond the impact footprint should be designated as exclusion zones and marked on the ground and/or in construction plans to the degree necessary to ensure no inadvertent impacts occur.
17. Incorporate a revegetation plan (Landscape and Offset Plan) into the post-construction requirements, covering areas where clearance of native vegetation is not required to be a permanent loss.
18. Works within the area of the Waterways and Coastal Protection Code under the *Huon Valley Interim Planning Scheme 2015* must be undertaken generally in accordance with 'Wetlands and Waterways Works Manual' (DPIWE, 2003) and “Tasmanian Coastal Works Manual” (DPIPWE, Page and Thorp, 2010), and the unnecessary use of machinery within the watercourse is avoided.
19. Areas of the Waterway and Coastal Protection Code beyond the impact footprint should be treated as exclusion zones during works.

Environmental Matter 4	Expert Report/Plan
Fauna Protection Measures	• Site Management and Design Plan • Transformer Operations Plan • Construction Environmental Management Plan • Natural Values Report by North Barker Ecosystem Services • Landscape Plan

20. The CEMP (Appendix Q) will include construction hours to minimise disturbance activities that could impact Tasmanian Devil food foraging behaviour.
21. Should it be identified as a significant issue, Transformer operating hours can be modified to mitigate any potential mortality increase on feeder roads external to the site (Appendix B and Appendix F)
22. Ensure that appropriate road signage is provided by the relevant Authority.
23. Install appropriate public education at the Ida Bay site to increase awareness of the potential for an increase in animal mortality on connecting roads (not yet formalised).
24. Provide offsets to any foraging tree removal (up to 7 trees in the car park site, 4 trees at the artwork site) and any substantive impacts to trees revealed by monitoring up to 12 months post construction (Appendix I).
25. The proponent will report to PWS within 12 months of operation commencement outlining the results of the proposed swift parrot monitoring and controls (Site Management and Design Plan), habitat restoration/enhancement, and performance of the design elements.

Environmental Matter 5	Expert Report/Plan
Maintenance of works in proximity to Heritage Buildings	• Heritage Impact Assessment • Construction Environmental Management Plan

26. Signage associated with the carpark should be only as necessary and directional signage should be minimised and designed at a low level.
27. Excavations have the potential for unexpected archaeological features or artefacts associated with the place. Excavations works will be monitored to ensure any deposits are managed.
28. A photographic extant recording should be undertaken of the site and specifically all items for demolition or removal, prior to demolition works.
29. Photographic recording of all items for demolition & removal prior to works commencing.

Environmental Matter 6	Expert Report/Plan
Disturbance of archaeological artefacts and/or relics during excavation and site clearing	• Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania Assessment • Heritage Impact Assessment • Construction Environmental Management Plan • Transformer Aboriginal Community Engagement Plan

30. An *Unanticipated Discovery Plan* has been obtained which provides procedures for the management of unanticipated discoveries of Aboriginal relics in Tasmania (Appendix O).
31. Any unexpected archaeological features and/or deposits revealed during excavation should be recorded and artefacts retained as part of the collections policy for the place.
32. Cooperation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land Council has been sought concerning any determination on development that may have potential impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage or values (Appendix V).

Environmental Matter 7	Expert Report/Plan
Landscape Rehabilitation	• Landscape Plan by Play St

	• Natural Values Report by North Barker Ecosystem Services • Landscape and Offset Plan

33. Salvaging of site soil but not borrow rocks, soil or vegetation from other areas within the Ida Bay State Reserve (outside of agreed footprint areas).
34. Direct vegetation sod transplanting.
35. Direct seeding and planting with tube stock.
36. Where possible, planting will use site-sourced seeds and be propagated by Wildseed Tasmania.

Environmental Matter 8	Expert Report/Plan
Natural Hazards	• Transformer Operations Plan • Landscape Plan • (draft) Emergency Management Plan • Bushfire Emergency Plan • Bushfire Evacuation Plan

37. The proponent is committed to implementing a bushfire risk mitigation strategy for the site which will detail key preparations for the site prior to a bushfire season to reduce and manage bushfire risk.
38. Any bushfire mitigation strategy will include the maintenance activities, checking the provision of onsite water for firefighting and ensuring the property access is kept clear.
39. A weather station will be installed on-site to monitor wind conditions. Site management will monitor weather conditions and BOM weather warnings to prevent patrons from being in areas of risk during hazardous weather events.
40. A tree risk assessment has been undertaken and there is a commitment to an ongoing risk assessment for patrons of the site from possible falling tree limbs (outside extreme weather events).
41. To minimize the risk during strong wind events the site will not operate.
42. The Emergency Management Plan will be revised from a “draft” plan to an “active” plan by providing operational emergency management information as identified in the *Bushfire Emergency Plan* (Appendix Y).

Environmental Matter 9	Expert Report/Plan
Stakeholder Participation During Proposal Lifetime	• Transformer Operations Plan • Transformer Business Plan • Stakeholder Engagement & Management Plan • Submissions Report

43. 3P Advisory has developed a framework to ensure DarkLab are undertaking a transparent process for informing all stakeholders equally and fairly throughout all stages of the project (Appendix V).

Environmental Matter 9	Expert Report/Plan
Geoconservation	• Geotechnical Assessment GES

44. Training of on-ground personnel will be undertaken to enable recognition of any fossil or gem material unearthed;
45. There will be an agreed routine for inspecting the excavations for evidence of such material;
46. There will be a procedure in place should any fossil or gem material be discovered, noting that where practical any finds should be left in situ and referred for expert advice.
47. If fossil and/or gem material is uncovered at the site then the maximum extent of excavation will trigger the presence of a suitably qualified and experienced geoscientist for inspection to enable data and sample recovery prior to concealment.

Appendix 2: Environmental Management Matters

Matters for consideration in conditions for an Authority under s48 of the NPRM Act

This table provides direction on the matters that should be considered for development of environmental management conditions for an authority under s48 of the NPRM Act 2002.

No.	Environmental management matters for proposed s48 Authority conditions	Project phase
1	**Amendments to the proposal or project** Further environmental impact assessment for RAA 3854 may be required if: construction is not commenced within 3 years of the date of signature of the environmental assessment report. Further environmental impact assessment for RAA 3854 must be sought if: the proposal is amended in a way that significantly changes the proposal* or its environmental impacts. PWS must be notified, and an amended Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP) provided at least 20 business days before implementing significant amendments. The amended CEMP must address all environmental impacts. ** a significant amendment is a change of >15% in the scale, size or intensity, or risk to environmental values of the proposal or project. Where uncertain if the change is significant consult with PWS Parks and Reserves Manager.*	Life of the project
2	**Management of leased area within the Ida Bay State Reserve** The agreed leased area of the land at 328 Lune River Road, Ida Bay State Reserve (CT 238040/1) classified as a Visitor Services Zone in the Ida Bay State Reserve Management Plan 2006 for the area of 16.7 hectares, is to be managed by the lessee for: - Fire in accordance with final EIS Appendix Y - Biosecurity in accordance with EIS Appendix R - Visitor safety in accordance with final EIS Appendix E - Dangerous trees	Life of the project
3	**Commitments on environmental management matters** The lessee is to ensure construction and operations are undertaken in accordance with commitments made in the final EIS submitted 24 November 2023 including in accordance with	Life of the project

No.	Environmental management matters for proposed s48 Authority conditions	Project phase
	- Appendix Q Construction Environmental Management Plan Final EIS Revision 26/9/2023 or amended as approved in writing by General Manager Park Operations and Business Services. - Section 8 Commitments RAA Report 23 November 2023.	
4	**Notification of non-compliance with authority conditions** The lessee must report any breaches or impending breaches (if known) of commitments (from Clause 2) as soon as practicable and no later than 24 hours of becoming aware of the matter. The report must be made to the PWS Parks and Reserves Manager. The report may be initially verbal, however written notification must be provided with 48 hours of becoming aware of the breach. The written notification must provide details including but not limited to: a) date, time, b) suspected cause of breach, c) likely environmental harm caused, and d) the steps taken or to be taken to resolve the breach.	Life of project
5	**PWS directions** The General Manager Park Operations and Business Services may direct the lessee to carry out actions when necessary and desirable to prevent or mitigate environmental harm.	Life of project
6	**Helicopters** Helicopters are not proposed to be used for the development or operations. Should there be a change to this aspect of the proposal, it will require a further and separate assessment.	Life of project
7	**Heritage including aboriginal, historical, and geological** Should materials of heritage interest be found during construction and operations, the lessee must report the find to PWS Regional Manager South within 24 hours. Final EIS commitments on heritage (s3.2 CEMP) must be implemented.	Construction and Operation
8	**Notifications** The lessee must notify the General Manager Park Operations and Business Services in writing in accordance with the notification periods listed in each sub-clause: a. Fourteen days prior to clearing vegetation. Vegetation to be cleared must be clearly marked and identifiable. b. Five days prior to a fuel reduction burn or cultural burn. Area to be burnt must be clearly marked and identifiable. c. Five days prior to commencement of construction activities. d. Five days prior to completion of construction activities. e. Five days prior to commencement of operations.	Pre-construction, Construction and Operation
9	**Wastewater system**	Pre-construction

No.	Environmental management matters for proposed s48 Authority conditions	Project phase
	The Onsite Wastewater Report and Design Report required to be lodged with Huon Valley Council (Condition 4i of HVC permit 31 May 2023) must be lodged with PWS Regional Manager South within 24 hours of lodgement with Huon Valley Council.	
10	**Clearing extent** The lessee is permitted to clear existing vegetation, within the leased area, up to a maximum area of 1.5 hectares in accordance with the footprints and locations identified in the final EIS.	Construction
11	**Two-year review report** A publicly available Environmental Review Report for the site must be published and submitted to the Regional Manager South at the end of the first two years of operations and subsequently at the request, in writing of PWS. The report must be submitted within three months of the end of the month of May in the reporting year. Without limitation, each Environmental Review must include the following information: - summary of any complaints received, and action taken - summary of wastewater and sewage treatment operations - details of any bird strike events or bird deaths on site and any remedial action - summary of records of any swift parrot breeding events on site - summary of any noncompliance of NPRM Act authority conditions and action taken to remedy	Post construction
12	**Water supply for firefighting** The lessee must ensure the required amount of water for firefighting is provisioned in onsite tanks.	Operations
13	**Rehabilitation plan** For rehabilitation purposes, revegetation and landscaping must use native species identified in the Natural Values Report (Appendix R) preferably sourced from the local environment.	Rehabilitation
14	**Timely rehabilitation** Where an area of disturbance is no longer required it must be rehabilitated as soon as practical and no longer than six months after use of the area has ceased.	Rehabilitation
15	**Environmental protection** The lessee is responsible for any and all costs associated with foreseeable environmental protection or remedial measures.	Life of project and rehabilitation

CONTACT DETAILS

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Tasmanian Government

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT TASMANIA