

# PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

## THREE CAPES TRACK

September 2012

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Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

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Parks and Wildlife Service

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#### I BACKGROUND

#### I.I Project Overview

The Three Capes Track is a proposal to establish a multi-day iconic bushwalking experience, including a waterbased journey, featuring Cape Raoul, Cape Pillar and Cape Hauy on the Tasman Peninsula in south-eastern Tasmania. Implementation of the proposal is the responsibility of the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS), a division of the Department of Primary Industry, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE). The project will require the construction of five overnight hut nodes, while the track will be completed both through the upgrading of existing tracks and the development of new track. Walkers on the Three Capes Track will walk from west to east commencing at White Beach and finishing at Fortescue Bay with a boat journey across Port Arthur Bay (see maps 1-3 below). The development is almost entirely within the Tasman National Park with some minor components on Crown Land and private land that the PWS has negotiated long-term leases across.

A key component of the proposal is the combination of two streams of users, 'independent' walkers and guided or 'commercial' walkers. Independent walkers will constitute the majority (approximately 86%) of users. These walkers will undertake a 5 night/6 day walk and will utilise public huts and associated infrastructure dedicated for use for the Three Capes Track during the operating season of the walk (expected to be nominally I November to 30 April inclusive). The public huts will have a capacity to accommodate 48 people and up to 4 PVVS staff. Walkers will be guaranteed a bed in each hut as they progress along the track through a fee and booking system. Guided walkers will utilise private huts or an equivalent facility, for example a standing camp, designed to accommodate 13 people, which will be constructed and managed by a commercial operator. Commercial trips will depart from the existing Cape Raoul track car park and will complete a 4 night/5 day walk. Commercial accommodation will be in the vicinity of the public huts but with some visual separation. The Three Capes Track will have a planned capacity of 10 000 walkers across the operating season with a maximum of 61 walkers departing on any given day.

The fee and booking system will run during the operating season of the Three Capes Track, as currently occurs for the Overland Track. The cost of undertaking the walk as an independent walker is projected to be \$200. The business model for the Three Capes Track is for full operational cost recovery. Operation of the track will include management of income from walker use and the commercial operation, asset maintenance, managing the booking system, marketing and promotion, providing a presence on the track through the employment of hut wardens and rangers and the provision of information and interpretation.

The coastal scenery of the Tasman Peninsula, which includes the highest sea cliffs in Australia, favourable weather and visitor infrastructure, has led to the existing Tasman Trail being recognised as one of Tasmania's great walks. The Three Capes Track proposal will build on this by providing a coherent, multi-day bushwalking experience with a high standard of visitor infrastructure and experience.

A complete description of all elements of the proposal is provided in the draft Development Proposal and Environmental Management Plan (DPEMP) provided as Appendix I.

#### I.2 History

The proposal has arisen in response to investigations into the potential for an additional iconic multi-day bushwalk in Tasmania to complement the Overland Track. In 2006, the PWS commissioned a scoping report examining demand and supply attributes and the business case and investment required to develop another multi-day 'Great Bushwalk' in Tasmania. The report concluded that there was demand for a moderately challenging 3-5 day walk in a spectacular and diverse location. After consideration of a range of options throughout the State, the report concluded that the Tasman Peninsula offered the greatest opportunity for an additional multi-day bushwalk of this nature in Tasmania and hence the Three Capes Track was conceived.

In 2007, a feasibility study was produced which presented a business case for the Three Capes Track based on the Overland Track model. The study endorsed the concept of the Three Capes Track as a combined walking and water experience taking in Cape Raoul, Cape Pillar and Cape Hauy that provided for both 'independent' walkers and a commercially guided experience. The study indicated broad acceptance and support for the walk and a high level of interest from the market and the project was strongly supported by the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania and the Tourism Transport Forum. The key drivers of interest identified in the study included the standard of track and accommodation and supporting infrastructure, inclusion of a water based experience, and the presence of guides, huts and track rangers with the track and hut standard seen as critical to the experience from the consumer and service delivery perspective.

The feasibility study presented a business model that included estimated staff requirements, projected operational costs and revenue and suggested a nominal \$200 fee and a potential capacity of 10 000 walkers per annum. Originally the walk had an east to west direction starting with a boat trip from Pirates Bay to Fortescue Bay and finishing at White Beach. However preliminary ecological surveys in 2007-2008 led to a decision to operate the walk in a west to east direction in order to achieve improved environmental outcomes and the final Pirates Bay boat leg was abandoned as unfavourable sea state conditions were expected to be common during the summer months.

Construction and operation of the Three Capes Track required amendment of the *Tasman National Park and Reserves Management Plan 2001*. This process required independent assessment through the then Resource Planning and Development Commission (RPDC), subsequently the Tasmanian Planning Commission (TPC). The amendment process included formal public submissions. The amended plan, gazetted in 2011, contained provision for the Three Capes Track to be constructed subject to any required assessment processes.

In 2010, an Implementation Plan under the National Partnership Agreement on Local Government and Regional Development between the Commonwealth and State Governments secured \$12.5 million in Commonwealth funds for the project subject to project milestones. The State Government allocated an additional \$12.8 million to the project. The Implementation Plan defines the Project outcomes and outputs as a multi-day bushwalking experience on upgraded existing walking trails together with accommodation sites, associated amenities and new walking track.

The detailed investigations, including natural and cultural values, required for the planning and approval process for the Three Capes Track were largely undertaken in late 2010 and 2011. Given the potential for the proposal to impact on Matters of National Environmental Significance protected under the Commonwealth's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), a referral under the Act was made in November 2011. The State approval process consisted of a Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA). The RAA process is the standard approval process undertaken by PWS for all activities on reserved land. The RAA process tests whether a proposal is consistent with the objectives of reserved land as provided in Schedule I of the National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002 (NPRMA).

The upgrading of the Cape Hauy Track (Fortescue Bay to Cape Hauy), which will become the last section of the Three Capes Track, was subject to a separate approval. This allowed for some work to commence prior to the entire Three Capes Track being approved, thereby providing both an early opportunity to create employment and to test the construction methods and budget prior to entering into contracts for the remaining Three Capes Track. The upgrade work commenced in July 2011 with the track length split into two sections with corresponding contracts for track construction. The Cape Hauy track upgrade was completed on 18 May 2012.

On 16 January 2012 the Commonwealth Minister determined the Three Capes Track project was not a controlled action under the EPBC Act provided it is undertaken in accordance with the referral decision notice. On 9 February 2012, the General Manager, Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) approved the Level 4 RAA for the Three Capes Track project, subject to a number of construction and operational management controls. PWS submitted a Development Application (DA) to the Tasman Council on 18 June 2012. This is the final 'whole of project' approval required. Apart from some minor elements, the project is within reserved land managed by PWS and therefore is a 'permitted use' under the Tasman Planning Scheme. On 25 June 2012 the Council approved the DA subject to a number of conditions.

#### I.3 Project Constraints

The larger scale track route and overnight node selection has been designed to create a walking experience that meets the identified demand that drives the project. The fine to medium scale track route has been selected in response to recreational, ecological, geoheritage, visual considerations and track engineering, track standard and cost considerations. In particular, the track standard requires gradients not in excess of 8° for the majority of its length. This requirement is a significant constraint in routing the track in such a way as to take in the key natural features of the area, particular through areas of variable or steep topography. The route has also been constrained by a number of important ecological values, in particular eagle nests. There have been a number of reroutes required following more intensive ecological survey work. In other areas the route selection is constrained by the narrow extent of the national park.

The intention to construct the track with imported material, principally gravel, rock and timber, is driven by a number of considerations. The hardened or 'mud free' surface provided by the use of these materials is a key mitigation measure for reducing the risk of further increasing the extent of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (root rot fungus) within the national park. The use of these materials is also required in order to meet the track

standard. While some natural rock may be utilised where practical, the extent of the track lengths and the standard required clearly require the use of imported material as there would not be a sufficient quantity of local material that could be sourced from within the National Park. The remote location of the works will require that the material is primarily delivered by helicopter.

The general locations of the overnight nodes reflect the need to separate the walk into appropriate walking times for each day. The final locations were determined by visual considerations, natural values, site practicalities such as topography and drainage, and the need to provide both varied and aesthetically pleasing locations for users of the walk. A final key consideration was the suitability of each site in terms of fire management, as the buildings will function as on site 'fire refuges' given the opportunity to evacuate people out of the National Park is extremely limited due to the sheer numbers of predicted walkers.

The final overall constraint on the project is that the basis for its undertaking requires the provision of a multi day, hut based, bushwalking experience.

#### I.4 Project Objectives

The overall objectives of the project are to:

- create Australia's premier coastal walk;
- deliver a world class iconic bushwalking experience designed to appeal to specific target markets and their key buying reasons;
- build on Tasmania's strategic competitive advantage as a bushwalking destination;
- produce a new product and brand that compliments the Overland Track;
- stimulate the Tasman regional economy; and
- produce an intergenerational infrastructure project.



Map I Three Capes Track, track route and overnight nodes



Map 2 Three Capes Track, track route and overnight nodes, western section



Map3 Three Capes Track, track route and overnight nodes, eastern section

## 2 THE EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### 2.1 The Tasman National Park

The proposal is almost entirely within the Tasman National Park and Safety Cove State Reserve. The Tasman National Park consists of three separate parcels of land. The first occurs on the eastern side of the Forestier Peninsula. The second extends from Pirates Bay south around to the eastern side of Port Arthur and includes Tasman Island, Cape Pillar and Cape Hauy. The third section of the park extends from Safety Cove around to Curio Bay and inland to Mt Spaulding and includes Cape Raoul. The proposal is sited only within these last two sections. The National Park extends generally to the low water mark and includes adjacent offshore rocks and islands. The park has an area of 10 755 hectares, Safety Cove State Reserve has an area of 16 hectares in a narrow strip along the coast between Port Arthur Historic Site and Tasman National Park and extends to the low water mark.

The Parks and Wildlife Service have been managing the land as a National Park since 1999 and prior to that as a State Reserve since 1974. Current management is required to be in accordance with the objectives of the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*, in particular the management objectives for national parks as set out in Schedule I of the Act: being conservation of natural biological diversity, geological diversity and areas of cultural significance; preservation of water quality and the natural, primitive and remote character of wilderness areas; protection against fire, introduced species, diseases and soil erosion; and to encourage and provide for tourism, recreational use and enjoyment consistent with the national park's natural and cultural values. The management of the Tasman National Park has been in accordance with the Tasman National Park and Reserves Management Plan 2001 and subsequently the Tasman National Park and Reserves Management Plan 2011.

#### 2.2 Track Network

The area currently included within the Tasman National Park, as well as the Tasman Peninsula in general, has a long history of utilisation by bushwalking enthusiasts for both day and short overnight walking. There are over 30 identified walking tracks within the park and associated reserves. Both the Cape Raoul and Cape Hauy day walks have been promoted as 'Great Short Walks' by the PWS. It has been estimated that annually approximately 14,000 visitors walk some part of the extended track network within the park. Cape Pillar has long been a popular multi-day walk with small numbers of walkers overnight camping at Retakunna Creek and at various locations on Cape Pillar. The Cape Hauy track and Cape Raoul track will become part of the Three Capes Track as will a significant proportion of the existing Cape Pillar track. Preliminary analysis of the Cape Pillar track logbook indicates that approximately 220-300 walking parties visit the area per annum. December and January are the busiest months, with November through to March receiving more than half of all visitors. Approximately 6000 walkers departed from the Cape Raoul start point in the 12 months to July 2011, with just over half using the Ship Stern Bluff track.

#### 2.3 Facilities

Within the extent of the Tasman National Park traversed by the Three Capes Track, camping consists of unimproved, largely informal sites. While some established sites are well known and commonly utilised, no facilities are provided. Walking tracks are generally Class 4 standard.

The Three Capes Track will terminate at Fortescue Bay, located halfway along the eastern coast of the Tasman Peninsula. As this is one of a few areas within the park that has a sandy beach and is vehicular accessible, the area is a popular day and overnight destination. There is provision for basic camping and good access to fishing grounds from the boat ramp. Toilets are provided. Fortescue Bay is also the main access for walking tracks north to Waterfall Bay and south to Capes Hauy and Pillar.

The Remarkable Cave car park is a focus for many visitors and gives them the opportunity to look into the Southern Ocean from Maingon lookout or walk down to Remarkable Cave. The car park is also the main access onto the Mt Brown track, a popular rock climbing destination and the formal access track to Crescent Bay. A toilet is provided.

There are no designated facilities for visitors within the Safety Cove State Reserve.

At the start of the Cape Raoul track on Stormlea Road a recently redeveloped car park is in place, however there are no toilet facilities.

#### 2.4 Access

Key access points for the Tasman National Park are reached through the Fortescue Road to Fortescue Bay, Safety Cove Road to Remarkable Cave and Stormlea Road which accesses the Cape Raoul track. Fortescue Road is unsealed and is managed over much of its length by Forestry Tasmania with some contribution by the PWS towards maintenance costs. Stormlea Road is managed by the Tasman Council and is largely unsealed and provides access to a number of residences and farms before terminating at the start of the Cape Raoul track. Safety Cove Road is paved through to its terminus at Remarkable Cave. The proposed start point of the Three Capes Track at White Beach is accessed by Noyes Road. This is a minor gravel road managed by the Tasman Council that is not currently used as a recognised entry point to the park. Noyes Road is accessed from White Beach Road, the single access road to the White Beach community. There is no traffic volume data available for these roads; however volumes for White Beach Road, Noyes Road and Stormlea road have been estimated at 3000 vehicles per day (high season), 50 vehicles per day and 200 vehicles per day respectively. Remarkable Cave was estimated to have received 84 00 visitors per annum in 2003/04 while Fortescue Bay received approximately 32 000 visitors in the twelve months to January 2011.

## **3 PROJECT JUSTIFICATION**

#### 3.1 Meeting an Identified Market Demand

The location of the Three Capes Track, the overall concept and the detailed design elements combine to meet the identified demand for an extended bushwalk to complement the Overland Track and to meet the expectations of walkers identified in the feasibility work undertaken for the proposal. In addition, these aspects will combine to establish the walk as Australia's premier coastal walk. The elements of the Three Capes Track, in particular the provision of hut accommodation and the track standard, will contribute to the diversity of recreation opportunities within Tasmania's reserved land. The upgrading of the existing tracks, provisions of huts, including facilities such as cook tops and mattresses, and the link provided by new track work will allow a greater range of walkers to enjoy the Tasman National Park.

Currently the Tasman Peninsula is viewed as primarily a tourist day destination with a limited range of accommodation and visitor expenditure opportunities. Encouraging higher tourism yield, through greater visitor expenditure and overnight stays, has been adopted by the Tasman Council and other local stakeholders as a key goal for boosting the local economy.

The Tasman Tourism Development Strategy 2005-2008 recognised that continued focus on Port Arthur would result in the Tasman Peninsula remaining a largely day-visit destination with a consequent impact on the viability of businesses within the region. In order to attract overnight visitation, and ongoing tourism investment in an increasingly competitive environment, the strategy concluded that the Tasman Peninsula must impress on the market place that the region is worth visiting for more than one day. The strategy recognised that an important component in that marketing initiative is to highlight that the Tasman Peninsula is strong in natural as well as cultural heritage experiences. Market research undertaken for the feasibility study indicates that a significant percentage of walkers undertaking the Three Capes Track are likely to seek additional experiences in the area. The increased marketing and promotion of the Three Capes Track, as well as the improved track surface and possible new day walk options are both likely to induce visitors to extend their stay, or attract visitors who might not otherwise have visited the Tasman Peninsula. The Three Capes Track will increase exposure for the region through media and marketing channels. In the same way as the high national profile of the Port Arthur Historic Site creates an awareness of the history of the area, the profile of the Three Capes Track will bring greater attention to the area's natural attributes at both a national and international level.

#### 3.2 Economic Benefits

Construction of the Three Capes Track infrastructure will provide significant employment opportunities and generate increased levels of economic activity, observed in the first instance as direct payments or expenditures with a subsequent flow through to the supply chain, as well as increased levels of consumption due to higher employment. While the allocation of State funds represents an expenditure of existing funds and therefore not a net aggregate increase in expenditure, the use of those funds for the Three Capes Track creates new opportunities for particular sectors and in the Tasman region that may not otherwise have been available. The commitment of Commonwealth funds does represent an additional input into the Tasmanian economy.

The most important distributive consequences will be for the economy of the Tasman Peninsula as it is clear that the Tasman Peninsula economy will be the primary beneficiary of the construction expenditure through

the competitive advantage offered by its proximity both in terms of the direct provision of material, services and labour and in capturing secondary expenditure such as accommodation, fuel and other goods and services.

Construction of the track may offer opportunities for workers with relevant skills derived from other areas such as forestry or construction. The provision and transport of materials and construction of the huts will offer opportunities for those with experience in transport, extractive industries and construction, areas of traditional employment in the region. Construction is likely to offer significant opportunities for unskilled or semi-skilled workers and to also contribute to increasing skill levels in the regional workforce.

Once construction is complete, the operation and maintenance of the Three Capes Track will provide ongoing long term sustainable economic activity.

It is estimated that the total outlay of all walkers on the Three Capes Track on walk related items will be in excess of \$ 8.7 million annually, including track fees and the cost of the guided walk. The proportion spent in the region is estimated at over \$1 million dollars, which excludes the track fee and guided walk cost. In addition it is estimated that a further \$10.9 million per annum will be spent state wide on non-walk related goods and services. The estimated overall total expenditure within Tasmania that can be attributed to the Three Capes Track for 10,000 walkers is \$19.7 million per annum. Regionally that figure is estimated at over \$3 million.

The operation of the walk will require five permanent staff; an operations manager, business enterprise manager, visitor information officer responsible for track bookings and two rangers/field officers. In addition, the following seasonal staff will be required; ten track rangers (two shifts for each of the five overnight nodes) track workers based on need and two visitor reception officers. The ten track rangers and two visitor reception officers are assumed to work for six months each year, so these represent six equivalent full-time employees. Adding the five full-time positions gives a total staff of 11 full-time equivalent employees, excluding the casual positions for track workers. The two permanent rangers/field officers and all the seasonal staff are expected to live within the Tasman Peninsula. This represents approximately seven full-time equivalent employees plus the casual staff for ongoing track maintenance. The economic analysis of the Three Capes Track estimates that the guided walk will require 18 full time equivalent staff which includes guides and support staff.

#### 3.3 Inter-generational Opportunities

In considering the benefits of the Three Capes Track it is important to consider that the life span of the track, infrastructure and its operation is expected to be inter-generational. The project controls will ensure that the Three Capes Track will deliver environmentally and socially sustainable economic activity in the long term, an ongoing source of employment and income in the Tasman region and the State as a whole.

## 4 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed works can be categorised into the following key components:

Construction of approximately 60.3km of walking track;

- Construction of five overnight nodes;
- Construction of 2 jetties or floating pontoons; and
- Construction of entry point facilities.

A detailed project description is provided in Section 2 of the DPEMP.

#### 4.1 The Walking Track

The Three Capes Track will require the construction of approximately 60.3 km of track, consisting of approximately 40.6 km of new track and upgrading of approximately 19.7 km of existing track. The track will commence near White Beach and will finish at Fortescue Bay, creating a 6 day/5 night walk. Walkers undertaking the commercial trip will commence at the current Cape Raoul track and will complete a 5 day/4 night walk to Fortescue Bay. Bypassed sections of existing track and associated campsites will be actively or passively rehabilitated except where required to allow for the continuation of traditional walking opportunities. The larger scale track route and overnight node selection has been designed to create a walking experience that meets the identified demand that drives the project. The fine to medium scale track route has been selected in response to recreational, ecological, geoheritage and track engineering, track standard and cost considerations. The track is to be constructed in such a way that will both protect and present the values of the area and will allow users to experience the 'wildness' of the area and the features that are considered to underpin the potential of the Three Capes Track to be Australia's premier coastal walk. Wherever possible the track route will provide a variety of experiences such as changes in outlook and vegetation.

The track is to be constructed where practicable to the upper requirements of Australian Standard 2156 Class 3 track, allowing for a high standard of walking experience. Meeting this standard is a key driver in route selection, particularly in the gradients experienced along the route as the track will not exceed 8° for the majority of its length.

A key quality of the track is that it is to be 'mud free'. This element, in conjunction with avoiding wet and muddy areas, is also an important aspect to reducing the environmental impact of the track. The track will be designed to avoid water flow on the track surface under normal conditions, with the track having an outward cross slope of 2-3° with regular cross drains, water bars and grade reversals.

The track will be constructed using primarily timber, gravel and stone and will have a high degree of fire resilience. The material used will be geologically compatible to ensure that the visual impact of the track is minimised. The track will generally be 0.9 m to 1.2 m in width; although in technically difficult sections it can be as narrow as 0.5 m. In some locations at prominent look out points or where walkers are likely to stop and rest, a larger area may be constructed in order to accommodate groups of walkers and to prevent environmental damage. The construction standard will also ensure that ongoing maintenance costs are minimised.

The following prescriptions will apply to the track although it is recognised that throughout its length there are likely to be sections where they may not always be achievable due to ground conditions:

- The track slope should not exceed 8° (1 in 7). This will not always be possible due to terrain, potential impacts on values, or cost implications. Another exception is where the route accesses a viewing point or particular area of interest, which is considered important for the overall experience;
- Avoid the fall line as far as possible;
- Entire walking surface to be hardened with gravel, rock or timber. Exposed natural soils are not acceptable, however sections of exposed bedrock are;
- Walking surface to be of 'dry boot' standard throughout -mud or puddles are not acceptable;
- Support walls for medium and heavy benching need to be placed, bedded and/or anchored to the substrate. They must be stable to support the track surface;
- Supporting rock work needs to contain rock of a reasonable size to limit the potential for future movement or undermining. A certain amount of 'keying' into the track structure will be required for long term stability;
- Install steps wherever track slope exceeds 8°. If the track slope is in the range 9-15°, install
  intermittent steps or intermittent clusters of 2-3 steps;
- Under normal rain conditions there should be no significant water flow on the final track surface;
- Minor surface flow is acceptable if the walking surface is rock or gravel and consequently not subject to erosion damage;
- On cross-slopes, track surface ideally to have an outward cross-slope of 2-3°;
- On cross-slopes subject to significant water flow (surface or subsurface), install a top drain;
- On sloping track install regular cross-drains, water bars and/or grade reversals. (Cross-drains and grade reversals are preferable to water bars because they do not involve structures that protrude above the track surface.);
- Flights of steps also catch a significant amount of water and need to have drainage incorporated into their design; and
- Below-ground culverts need to blend in with the surroundings and/or, where possible, be hidden from view;

#### 4.2 Overnight Nodes

There are five independent overnight nodes proposed to be developed, two on the western side of the route, Tunnel Bay and Maingon Creek, and three on the eastern side, Surveyors Cove, Lunchtime Creek and Retakunna Creek (see Map I-3). The overnight nodes will contain the following facilities for independent walkers: a communal kitchen and eating area, and bunk rooms for 48 walkers. Each node will also have a rangers' hut for up to four staff, a maintenance store/workshop, external toilets, and a helipad.

The overnight nodes and associated facilities are designed to minimise environmental impacts and be elegant, simple and relatively comfortable. The location of each overnight node and their plans were informed by and are a response to detailed site analysis, consideration of natural values, how the buildings would appear in the landscape, and the experience walkers will have and were shown to want. Each is therefore different, although all share common elements.

Considered as basic forms, each overnight node is an arrangement of building modules linked by external verandahs except at Surveyors Cove where the modules are separate. Each arrangement or plan is different as they are located to retain mature and/or high value flora, maximise solar gain, to provide attractive views out from the site while also avoiding excessive visual impact and in response to the topography and micro climate. The buildings will be unheated.

The modules are standardised to simplify construction and maximise off site prefabrication, and to reduce costs. They include details to maximise occupant protection during a bush fire. Windows are sloped at 20 degrees to minimise bird strike. The plans create a mix of sunny and shaded spaces sheltered from the wind that will encourage walkers to venture outside on good days while providing protection from the elements on days of inclement weather. The indoor spaces maximise natural light and ventilation. Materials are chosen to be light weight, low maintenance, bush fire resistant and attractive and the colours chosen are generally darker tones and the same or similar to those found at each site.

Fire resistant rainwater tanks will store up to 147,580 litres, allowing 10 litres per walker per day. This water is for drinking, hand-washing, cooking and cleaning and will be provided via a central tap located above a gross pollutant trap/basket filter. A bag filtration system or a bio-filter trench will provide secondary treatment. A dedicated 10,000 L water supply will also be provided for fire fighting.

Toilets will be located not more than 50 metres from the hut, and in as discrete a location as practical. Up to 4 closed circuit toilets (no discharge to ground) will be provided. Sewage will be treated using a system accredited by Workplace Standards Tasmania, prior to off site disposal by licensed contractors in accordance with State legislation.

Geotechnical assessments were conducted for all five overnight node locations. The scope of the geotechnical assessments was to consider the capability of the land to support sustainable development without environmental harm or undue risk to capital. The geotechnical assessments considered a range of risk scenarios including risk of land instability, risk of inundation/flooding, risk of foundation failure and erosion risk. All sites were found to have an overall geotechnical risk rating as 'low'. The geotechnical investigation also considered the capacity of the sites to receive the expected waste water inputs. The investigation determined that all sites are suitable for the expected on site disposal of waste water utilising primary separation, secondary filtration and in ground absorption. In response to the geotechnical recommendations, all sites will be subject to a Soil and Water Management Plan to protect soil and local surface water values.

Fire risk mitigation design and construction of the overnight node huts is based on the following guiding principles:

- Protection of human life is the key priority;
- Huts may be required by walkers and management personnel as on site refuge areas during bushfire and the protection provided will not require any input from the walkers sheltering within the huts;
- Given the cost of construction and the remote location, the huts should be designed as far as is reasonably possible to withstand the passage of bushfire; and
- Bushfire protection planning and analysis is to be based on a Fire Danger Index (FDI) of 50.

The Australian Standard AS3959 Construction of buildings in bushfire prone areas has been utilised to determine the appropriate level of protection for the huts. The fundamental elements that contribute towards building protection is the combination of a Building Protection Zone (BPZ), an area of modified vegetation, which creates a separation between the building and the hazard, and the building construction standard, which is a measured as the Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) that a buildings construction is expected to withstand. Where the BPZ is reduced, a higher construction standard, or higher BAL, will be required, while a lower construction standard will require a more extensive BPZ. Within a BPZ, prescriptions for vegetation modification vary according to the vegetation type. Further information is provided on bushfire management in the DPEMP (Section 2.3.7, page 43).

#### 4.3 Jetties

A fixed jetty or floating pontoon will be constructed at Safety Cove and a floating pontoon will be constructed at Denmans Cove. The floating pontoon at Denmans Cove will be sited on the southern shore of the cove on the rocky shoreline. The jetty at Safety Cove will be sited on the rocky shoreline in the south eastern corner of the bay.

The floating pontoon landing facility will be comprised of a fixed timber walkway of approximately 9 metres length above the mean sea level. An aluminium gangway of up to 12 metres length would connect the timber walkway to the floating pontoons. The floating pontoons will be secured to regularly spaced piles in such a way that they are anchored but still able to rise and fall with the tide and swell. This type of arrangement is already successfully deployed in a variety of locations around Tasmania, including the Tasman Peninsula. The pontoons will be arranged to be either perpendicular to the gangway or in an 'L' arrangement so that one or two pontoons could also provide some wave attenuation and allow a variety of berthing options. The sizing of the pontoons can be customised according to the vessel size, but would be up to 20m long in total and approximately 1.5-2.4 m wide.

Construction of the new jetties will involve the installation of a small number of piles (approximately 8 -14 per floating pontoon and 12-16 per jetty), suspended walkways, fender piles and possibly mooring dolphins. Piles will be installed by means of barge either by impact pile driving or using 'spun piles' (pile shafts are drilled into the seabed). It is envisaged that the piles will be installed on the sand where possible so that walkways are fully suspended over any fringing reef present. Piles in shallow water may be placed in concrete filled rock sockets excavated into the seabed.

The jetty at Denmans Cove will only be available for the operation of the commercial operator to service the Three Capes Track. The proposed floating pontoon system will allow the pontoons and gangway to be removed outside of the booking season by PWS and reduce potential impacts to the natural values of the area outside of the walking season.

All marine infrastructure associated with the landing facilities will be designed and constructed in accordance with MAST requirements and relevant Australian Standards.

#### 4.4 Entry Point Facilities

The main entry point for the Three Capes Track is accessed via White Beach Road and then Noyes Road. All independent walkers will commence the walk from this point. This site will include a car park, toilet, and walker registration and information facilities. The car park has indicative capacity for 35 standard sized vehicles (including two disabled spaces), three larger sized vehicles (buses and campervans) and several bicycles. The layout is configured to direct vehicles to drive in a clockwise direction through the site. The design allows for retention of a number of larger eucalypt trees, and understorey vegetation, through a central 'island' and several 'peninsulas' to soften the overall appearance of the car park.

Through seed funding provided by PWS and additional Council and Commonwealth funding, the Tasman Council have upgraded the existing Cape Raoul, Tunnel Bay and Ship Stern Bluff car park on Stormlea Road which now allows for day parking of 17 vehicles. It is envisaged that the commercial walkers, accompanied by their guides, will be dropped at this car park by minibus. As such it is anticipated they will not be occupying a space in the car park for longer than 15-30 mins and in fact may not even require any parking space given they will effectively simply be unloading their passengers at the car park. A toilet may be installed at this site to enhance the work recently done by the Tasman Council.

Minimal infrastructure is proposed for the Remarkable Cave area. The track will cross Safety Cove Road approximately 40 metres north-east of the road terminus at Remarkable Cave. There will be a Phytophthora (root rot fungus) brushdown facility on the western side of the road. Signage indicating the Three Capes Track will be placed on both sides of the road to direct walkers. The Three Capes Track will link with the Maingon Blowhole/Crescent Bay track, which leaves the Remarkable Cave car park, shortly after crossing the road.

Minimal infrastructure is proposed for Safety Cove. The jetty is described above. After leaving the road reserve, the track will traverse the terminus of Dog Bark Road, where an informal car park and turning circle exists, before joining the Safety Cove State Reserve. PWS may construct a toilet adjacent to the informal car park. Signage will direct walkers to the beach and jetty area, which is approximately 200m south east along the Safety Cove shoreline.

Fortescue Bay will be the terminus of the Three Capes Track. The current day walk car park will be utilised as the end point for the track. It is possible that some minor works may be required to improve the efficiency of this facility; however no major upgrades are planned as part of the construction of the Three Capes Track.

#### **5 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT**

#### 5.1 Flora

The track route, overnight nodes and gateway facilities have been the subject of a comprehensive ecological survey. The survey found that the proposed track traverses three communities listed as threatened under Schedule 3A of the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*. The track passes through small patches of *Eucalyptus globulus* dry forest (TASVEG code DGL, listed as Vulnerable) north of Fish Hawk Gully near Maingon Heights. This community also occurs on the final stages of the Cape Hauy track near Fortescue Bay. A small patch of

*Eucalyptus viminalis – Eucalyptus globulus* coastal forest and woodland (TASVEG code DVC, listed as Vulnerable) occurs near the Remarkable Cave car park. The existing track to Maingon Blowhole passes through this community.

The existing track on Cape Pillar passes through small patches of *Allocasuarina littoralis* forest (TASVEG code NAL, listed as Rare). This community is actually dominated by *A. crassa*, however the TASVEG classification does not separate forests and woodland dominated by *A. crassa* from *A. littoralis*. This vegetation community is restricted to the Cape Pillar area where it occurs in a number of forms related to the degree of shelter and soil fertility. This community is of particular significance as it is dominated by a threatened species, as *A. crassa* is listed as 'rare' under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* (TSPA). The community occurs in patches along existing track to be upgraded. The proposed route deviates from the current Cape Pillar track alignment in order to avoid the sensitive geoheritage values at Perdition Ponds and also to avoid the high wind area of Hurricane Heath. This reroute passes through an area of *Allocasuarina littoralis* forest where it deviates from the current route south of Hurricane Heath.

Six flora species listed under the EPBC Act and/or the TSPA occur or are assumed to occur within the vicinity of the proposed route. These are:

- Euphrasia amphisysepala, shiny cliff-eyebright, (EPBC: Vulnerable, TSPA: rare) this annual or short lived perennial species occurs on the rocky cliffs in the vicinity of Cape Hauy and Mt Fortescue. Although no individuals were located it is assumed to persist in the areas from which it has previously been recorded.
- Euphrasia semipicta, peninsula eyebright, (EPBC: Endangered, TSPS: endangered) occurs as two
  populations, on the existing track to Ship Stern Bluff and near the proposed new route across the
  eastern end of the Ellarwey Valley. Records also place the species at Hurricane Heath and at Mansfield
  Plains near Maingon Blowhole. As with Euphrasia amphisysepala, this species is assumed to persist in
  sites from which it has been previously recorded.
- *Euphrasia* sp. Bivouac Bay, masked cliff-eyebright, (EPBC: Endangered, TSPA endangered) was confirmed on the cliffs of Arthurs Peak, while two previous records place the species at Perdition Ponds and Cape Pillar. As with the other *Euphrasia* species, this species is assumed to persist in sites from which it has been previously recorded.
- *Prasophyllum apoxychilum*, tapered leek-orchid, (EPBC: endangered, TSPA endangered): a single specimen was located from the Ellarwey Valley and two individuals were detected immediately adjacent to the existing track between the Cape Raoul-Ship Stern Bluff junction and Ship Stern Bluff.
- Prasophyllum castaneum, chestnut leek-orchid, (EPBC: Critically Endangered, TSPA endangered): a single specimen was located from the Ellarwey Valley in the vicinity of the Prasophyllum apoxychilum individual.
- Prasophyllum pulchellum, pretty leek-orchid, (EPBC: Critically Endangered, TSPA endangered): a record for the species east of Crescent Mountain was not able to be confirmed but is assumed to be correct. A population of the species occurs in the vicinity of the existing Cape Hauy track.

A further five species listed under the TSPA also occur within the vicinity of the proposed route:

- Allacasuarina crassa, capes sheoak, listed as rare, this species is endemic to Tasmania and its distribution is limited to Tasman Island and the wider Cape Pillar area, where it is patchy but widespread, with a population estimate of over 100 000 mature individuals (Threatened Species Section 2008). It may form monotypic scrubs in the prolonged absence of fire. Where it comprises the dominant canopy species it forms the threatened vegetation community 'Allocasuarina littoralis forest'.
- *Cyathodes platystoma*, tall cheeseberry, listed as Rare, this species is widespread throughout the proposed route and occurs in a range of vegetation types.
- Deyeuxia densa, heathy bentgrass, listed as rare, this species occurs in the vicinity of the proposed track between Denmans Cove and Arthurs Peak and between Arthurs Peak and Crescent Mountain. The habitat at all sites consisted of dolerite rock outcrops or cliff edges.
- Stellaria multiflora, rayless starwort), listed as rare, this species occurs on the slopes and summit of Arthurs Peak, on the slopes of Crescent Mountain and at Ship Stern Bluff and along the existing Ship Stern Bluff track.
- *Phyllangium divergens*, wiry miterwort, listed as vulnerable, this species was observed on an exposed rock plate to the west of the Surveyors Creek overnight node and is outside of the footprint of the proposal.

A detailed description of the existing flora is provided in the DPEMP (Section 3.2.4, page 61).

#### 5.2 Weeds

The diversity of exotic plant species even from the existing well-worn walking tracks is notable for its virtual absence. The immediate vicinity of the footprint of the proposed track does not support any significant populations of species classified as Declared Weeds under the Weed Management Act 1999. Scattered individuals of the Declared Weed Cirsium arvense (perennial thistle) were observed along the proposed route between Denmans Cove and Surveyors Cove in 2008 but were not observed in January 2011. A population of Cirsium arvense occurs on the flood bank of the creek at Tunnel Bay, with some individuals of Cirsium vulgare (Scotch thistle) also present.

#### 5.3 Phytophthora cinnamomi

There are a number of vegetation communities within the Tasman National Park and in the vicinity of the proposed Three Capes Track route that are susceptible to *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (root rot fungus) due to the high proportion of susceptible individual species. These are predominantly heathlands, buttongrass moorland and the understorey of sclerophyllous woodlands and forests. The Three Capes Track passes through three highly susceptible communities; coastal heath, wet heath and *Eucalyptus amygdalina* coastal forest and woodland. Three other communities are considered to be of moderate or variable susceptibility; *Eucalyptus tenuiramis* forest and woodland on dolerite, *Eucalyptus obliqua* dry forests and coastal scrub.

There are 23 Phytophthora records from the southern section of the Tasman National Park. Field surveys indicate that Phytophthora occurs in most patches of moorland and coastal heathland, however its current impact is limited with healthy, multi-aged specimens of susceptible species occurring within infected areas. The widespread nature of positive *Phytophthora cinnamomi* samples collected from the park suggests that most highly susceptible vegetation communities in the Tasman National Park are infected. Vegetation communities with low and moderate susceptibility to Phytophthora can broadly be considered to be uninfected areas as well as some isolated highly susceptible areas.

A detailed description of the status of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* is provided in the DPEMP (Section 3.2.4.4, page 67).

#### 5.4 Fauna

No fauna species, listed as threatened on the TSPA or the EPBC Act, were recorded from the study area of the ecological survey conducted for the proposal. A number of species listed under the TSPA or EPBC Act are known to occur in the immediate surrounds of the Three Capes Track. In addition the area provides habitat that may support other EPBC Act and TSPA listed species.

The *Eucalypus globulus* forests of Fortescue Bay are recognised as foraging habitat for *Lathamus discolor*, swift parrot, (EPBC: Endangered, TSPA: endangered). The area traversed by the Three Capes Track is within the recognised core breeding range for the species and there is potential nesting habitat within the broader area although foraging habitat is patchy.

A number of nests of Aquila audax subsp. fleayi, wedge-tailed eagle, (EPBC: Endangered, TSPA: endangered) and *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, white-bellied sea eagle, (EPBC: Migratory, TSPA: vulnerable) have been identified both in the general area and in proximity to the proposed track route and consequently the entire area consists of foraging habitat for both species, although the white-bellied sea eagle forages mainly in the coastal environment. An aerial survey of the area of the Three Capes Track was undertaken in 2008. The survey targeted potential nesting habitat and inspected previously known nests. An additional nest was identified from the ground in 2011; no additional nests were identified through the ecological surveys conducted for the proposal. An aerial survey in 2011 confirmed the findings of the 2008 work with some additional searching in key areas. Thirteen white-bellied sea eagle nests and five wedge-tailed eagle nests have been previously identified in the wider area. A number of these nests have been active in recent years while some nests previously recorded have been found to be lost to natural causes, such as fire. It should be noted that these species are known to utilise the same nests.

The wider area provides potential foraging and denning habitat for *Sarcophagus harrisii*, Tasmanian devil, (EPBC: Endangered, TSPA endangered) and *Dasyurus maculatus* subsp. *maculates*, spotted-tailed quoll, (EPBC: Vulnerable, TSPA: rare).

There is habitat in the wider area that may be utilised opportunistically for foraging by *Tyro novaehollandiae* subsp. *castanops*, masked owl, (EPBC: Vulnerable, TSPA endangered) although there are no records. This

species requires large tree hollows for breeding. Nest hollows were not observed from area surveyed for the Three Capes Track.

Habitat for *Perameles gunnii* subsp. *gunnii*, eastern barred bandicoot, (EPBC: Vulnerable) is marginally present within the study area. No evidence of the species (e.g. distinctive diggings) was recorded from the ecological surveys although it is reasonable to assume that the area forms part of the range of one or more individuals.

Additional species listed under the TSPA may also occur in the general area. The proposed route is within the potential habitat range of *Lissotes menalcas* (Mt Mangana stag beetle), listed as rare. This species inhabits wet forest with decaying logs in southern Tasmania. There have been sporadic recordings of *Accipiter novaehollandiae* (grey goshawk), listed as endangered, from the wider Tasman and Forestier Peninsula region and the area of the Three Capes Track may provide some marginal opportunistic foraging habitat but is not likely to contain breeding habitat.

A detailed description of the existing flora is provided in the DPEMP (Section 3.2.5, page 68).

#### 5.5 Geoheritage

Twelve features in the general region of the Three Capes Track route are listed on the Tasmanian Geoconservation Database. The database is a source of information about earth science features, systems and processes of conservation significance in the State of Tasmania. The first seven features are landscape scale features while the remaining five are erosional or depositional. These are:

- I. Tunnel Bay Shore Platform;
- 2. Fortescue Plains Erosion Surface;
- 3. Cape Raoul Jointing and Soils;
- 4. Tasman and Forestier Peninsulas High Energy Coastline;
- 5. Cape Hauy High Energy Coastal Erosion Landform Suite;
- 6. Tasman Island Cape Pillar Dolerite Geomorphology;
- 7. Western Tasmanian Blanket Bogs;
- 8. Maingon Blowhole and Zawn;
- 9. Basket Bay High Level Wave Deposit;
- 10. Remarkable Cave;
- 11. Perdition Ponds Clifftop Aeolian Features; and
- 12. Cape Raoul Clifftop Aeolian Features.

The Three Capes Track is not expected to impact any geoheritage features of significance. A detailed description of the geoheritage features in the area is provided in the DPEMP (Section 3.2.3, page 57).

#### 5.6 Marine

The marine and intertidal environments within the immediate locations of the proposed jetties or floating pontoons at Denmans Cove and Safety Cove have been the subject of a marine ecological values assessment. The assessment also considered relevant aspects of the wider marine environment within Port Arthur. The

marine assessment survey did not observe any species listed under either the EPBC of TSPA, however listed shark and marine mammal species are likely occur at times in the wider Port Arthur marine environment and members of the family *Syngnathidae* (pipefish) could also potentially occur within the jetty development area or in the wider marine environment. Other more common cetacean species (whales, dolphins and porpoises) may also occur within Port Arthur Bay.

A detailed description of the marine environment is provided in the DPEMP (Section 3.2.6, page 73).

#### 5.7 Aquatic

Aquatic systems traversed by the Three Capes Track are considered to be in natural to near natural condition and largely free of introduced pests, weeds and diseases. The only permanent streams are considered to be Retakunna Creek, Lunchtime Creek, Tunnel Bay Creek and Denmans Creek. Retakunna Creek and Lunchtime Creek occur in narrow valleys before falling steeply off the coastal escarpment. Denmans Creek has a more developed morphology, consisting of alluvial flats, marshes and swamps. There are a number of small watercourses that drain the elevated plateau of the Cape Pillar section of the track before descending steeply to the coast. There are wetlands of conservation significance on the extremity of Cape Raoul and at Perdition Ponds on Cape Pillar.

#### 5.8 Visual

The landscape of the lower Tasman Peninsula can be thought of as a combination of three broad landscape types. Overall the area consists of steep, isolated forested hills and foothills interplaying with some residential development, grazing and some more intensive agriculture. The coast is visible from most high points.

At the scale of the Three Capes Track itself, the extended Cape Pillar area of the national park, and to a lesser extent that of Cape Raoul, form a landscape more natural in character, with a diverse mosaic of vegetation and topographic features. A third distinctive landscape feature is the coastal margin with its spectacular sea cliffs and associated features.

The natural landscape of the national park and associated coastal features are visible from a number of vantage points on its margins, most notably from within the western side of Port Arthur, including the historic site, and from Remarkable Cave. Conversely from within the park the surrounding residential, agricultural and forestry landscape can be seen from some key vantage points and also in a more incidental manner. In general, however, the combination of vegetation and topography combine to create a sense within the park largely of the natural environment. In particular, views of prominent features such as the three capes themselves both from within the park and from its margins provide a sense of a largely untouched landscape. Even within the more narrow extent of the Cape Raoul section of the park, the surrounding private land is not strongly visible. Importantly, the view fields from the three capes are composed largely of the natural landscape with extensive sea views extending to distant coasts. The large tracts of natural landscape in the area are of significance as an aboriginal landscape with its important material and cultural resources still evident.

A particular feature of the aesthetic landscape of the area is the combination of seascapes and the spectacular and often forbidding nature of the sea cliffs and offshore rocks and islands. This landscape feature is increasingly sought after as an important drawcard for boat based tourism and is appreciated by other users of the marine environment. In addition, this landscape, with the tracts of tall forest reaching to the coastal environment, combines with the historical and cultural history of the Tasman Peninsula to evoke a sense of the rich history of the area. This quality has been recognised through the listing of the Tasman Peninsula on the Register of the National Estate. Furthermore this combination of historic heritage with the surrounding sea and landscape values is seen as an important component of the heritage values of Port Arthur.

#### 5.9 Cultural and Historic Heritage

The Tasman Peninsula has been occupied by Aboriginal people for thousands of years. The presence throughout the area of shell middens, stone quarries, rock shelters, art sites and stone artefacts is testament to that occupation. These sites and artefacts occur within a wider cultural landscape that encompasses all the elements of the natural environment and their cultural meaning. From this perspective the Tasman National Park is of particular significance as the landscape is largely intact.

Twenty three sites registered on the Tasmania Aboriginal Site Index (TASI) are known from within one kilometre of the Three Capes Track. The majority of these are stone artefact scatters or isolated artefacts. One stone quarry was identified and a stone arrangement of uncertain utility was also identified.

A field survey was undertaken in an effort to identify any additional sites along the route of the Three Capes Track and within the footprint of the associated infrastructure including the overnight nodes. The field survey was unable to be completed due to the state wide ban on engagement put into place by the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, however approximately 60 % of the track and 2 of the 5 overnight nodes were subject to the field assessment before the ban was imposed. The remaining areas were then assessed using a risk based model developed by the archaeological consultants engaged to do the field work.

The field survey located six additional sites in proximity to the Three Capes Track consisting of four isolated artefacts and two artefact scatters. Three previously recorded sites were also relocated. All these sites are located along high coastal cliff top areas. The isolated artefacts are assessed as having low archaeological significance while the artefact scatters are assessed as having medium-high archaeological significance. The social or cultural significance of the sites can only be determined by the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and this was unable to be done due to the ban.

The historical, or European, development of the Tasman Peninsula can be considered in terms of three broad phases: pre-penal, a period of exploration, whaling and coastal use, penal and then the post-penal period of forestry, fishing, agriculture and tourism.

The most prominent material historic heritage is that of the penal period, for which the area is well known. The constructed remnants of this period are significant on a world scale, the most prominent of which is the Port Arthur Historic Site. Sites from the post-penal period are widespread but often less prominent due to the often temporary nature of the activities and their related structures. Two sites have been recorded from the vicinity of the Three Capes Track: the signal stations on Mt Raoul and Mt Fortescue. Some remnants of both the Mt Fortescue and Mt Raoul signal stations are likely to still be visible.

Constables huts were known at Fortescue Bay, however no evidence remains. Fortescue Bay also contains remnants of post penal activities, most notably sawmilling.

A field survey recorded low level post-penal structures at Moonlight Ridge near Mt Spaulding and at Denmans Cove.

## **6 PROJECT CONTROLS**

A range of project controls will be implemented to mitigate the potential impact of the construction and operation of the Three Capes Track on the identified natural and cultural values in proximity to the proposed works. The effectiveness of these measures has been endorsed through the Commonwealth, State and local Government approvals processes. The key project controls are summarised below. A complete description of the project controls is provided in Section 4 of the DPEMP. Additional controls reflect the conditions of the EPBC Act approval, provided as Appendix 2 and the Development Application approval provided as Appendix 3.

#### 6.1 Flora

Impacts to vegetation as a result of the track construction will be constrained within a 4m wide corridor. Any lay down of material or equipment and the passage of personnel will be constrained within this corridor unless it is impractical to do so, in which case laydown areas should be within an 8 m corridor. Laydown of materials outside of the 4 m corridor will require approval from the relevant PWS staff. Vegetation clearance beyond the final track footprint will be limited to the minimum required to safely and efficiently construct the track and to ensure that the track meets the required standard. Clearance of larger trees and shrubs will be avoided and the capacity to micro-site the track within the surveyed corridor will ensure that these will be retained, wherever practical, throughout its length. Similarly, damage to large roots or roots of significant trees can also be avoided. Following completion, vegetation outside of the final footprint will be allowed to regenerate naturally.

The track will not result in any significant impact to the *Eucalyptus globulus* dry forest and woodland or the *Eucalyptus viminalis* – *Eucalyptus globulus* coastal forest and woodland communities. Track sections that traverse areas of *Allocasuarna littoralis* forest will be marked on the ground and a series of management measures applied that will reduce the level of disturbance.

The proposal will not result in disturbance to any EPBC Act listed flora species or any flora species listed as 'vulnerable' or 'endangered' under the TSPA. Potential habitat in the vicinity of known or previously known populations of threatened flora will be protected through the application of a number of restrictions on activities within the track construction corridor. Due to their widespread occurrence within their supporting habitat it will not be possible to avoid all individuals of *Cyathodes platystoma*, *Allocausarina crassa* and *Stellaria* 

*multiflora*, all listed as 'rare' under the TSPA, and therefore a permit under the Act will be sought. No specific management measures beyond the general mitigation measures in relation to flora are proposed for *Stellaria multiflora*. While some individuals may be impacted, the populations will not be deleteriously affected as individuals will persist in the habitat while any disturbance is likely to facilitate colonisation. Both *Cyathodes platystoma* and *Allocausarina crassa* are readily identifiable and therefore individuals can be avoided where ever possible. The majority of *A. crassa* individuals occur within the extent of the threatened vegetation community where track construction prescriptions will apply. Due to the limited area of the footprint in relation to the overall distribution of these species and, in the case of *Cyathodes platystoma* and *Allocasuarina crassa*, the opportunity to avoid individuals where possible, the impact on these species is not considered to be significant.

#### 6.2 Weeds

The following mitigation measures will be employed against the risk of the introduction of weeds through the importation of material and equipment and through the passage of construction personnel:

- Externally sourced material (rock and gravel) will be obtained from a source certified as 'low risk' for weed and disease contamination; and
- All equipment will be cleaned before entering the national park and before being moved between separate work sections utilising procedures developed in accordance with the Tasmanian Washdown Guidelines for Weed and Disease Control: Machinery, Vehicles & Equipment Edition 1.

A number of control measures will be implemented as part of the mitigation of the risk of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* as detailed below. These measures, in particular the provision of washdown stations, will also provide additional mitigation against the introduction and spread of weeds. The population of Californian Thistle (*Cirsium arvensis*) and Scotch thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) at Tunnel Bay will need to be controlled and PWS will attempt to eradicate it through the use of herbicides.

The PWS, in consultation with DPIPWE specialists, will conduct annual surveys for weeds along the track and at the overnight nodes, including rehabilitated sections of pre-existing track and in other work areas for 2 years following completion of those works and subsequently on a five year minimum basis or as required. Entry points for the Three Capes Track; White Beach, the current Cape Raoul start point at Stormlea Road, Safety Cove, Denmans Cove and Fortescue Bay, are potential sources of weed introduction into the Tasman National Park. These areas will be monitored for weed species on an annual basis.

Given the current status of weeds within the area of the proposal, the mitigation measures for construction and subsequent operation of the Three Capes Track in combination with the commitment to ongoing monitoring and eradication will minimise the risk of weed introductions along the Three Capes Track.

#### 6.3 Phytophthora cinnamomi

Key project controls that relate to the construction phase of the Three Capes Track are:

• The establishment of management zones with corresponding prescriptions for the uninfected and infected areas of those zones, particularly in relation to movement between and across zones and the direction of progress of track construction;

- All equipment will be cleaned before entering the national park, before being moved between separate work sections and before entering Phytophthora free areas utilising procedures developed in accordance with the Tasmanian Washdown Guidelines for Weed and Disease Control: Machinery, Vehicles & Equipment – Edition 1;
- All materials will be sourced from certifiably 'low risk' sites or quarries;
- All track construction and PWS staff and affiliated contractors will adhere to Phytophthora hygiene practices when accessing the track construction site; and
- Ensure P. cinnamomi hygiene specifications are written into contracts and monitor compliance.

The risk posed by the passage of walkers on the Three Capes Track, including access through side tracks, will require ongoing management. The following measures are provided in the management plan:

- Three Cape Track walkers will travel from west to east and other users will be encouraged to follow this direction as management prescriptions have been derived accordingly;
- The standard of track will ensure that where track route traverses wet or muddy low lying areas the surface will be hardened and stabilised with either duckboard, top drains and gravel, or rock paving to establish a 'mud free' surface. This standard will in fact apply throughout the track length, the track will not consist of any natural soil surface;
- Hardened surfaces through infected areas should be of sufficient width to allow walkers to pass with packs on. This will be achieved throughout the length of the track as it will be an average of 1.0 m wide;
- Washdown points will be sited at strategic points along the track network. Washdown points will be placed beyond the last site of *P. cinnamomi* infection on the walking track, at entrance points and will also use effective topographic controls (e.g. creeks); and
- Signage and interpretation will be provided in the pre-departure information pack, at the walker check-in briefing and throughout the track system to educate users regarding the importance of Phytophthora management.

Washdown points are proposed for the following locations:

- White Beach start point;
- Stormlea Road start point;
- Tunnel Bay;
- West of Remarkable Cave;
- Safety Cove;
- Denmans Cove;
- Tornado Ridge;
- Lunchtime Creek south of the overnight node; and
- Fortescue Bay.

Following completion, the extent of the Three Capes Track and associated side tracks will be routinely monitored for indications of Phytophthora. In addition a specific Phytophthora survey of the track will be carried out periodically by suitably qualified personnel at least every 5 years.

The provision and application of a dedicated management plan for *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, the provision of 9 wash down stations and the construction of a mud free track of sufficient width to allow walkers to pass while remaining on the track will ensure that the risk of additional spread of Phytophthora as a result of the construction and operation of the Three Capes Track is minimised.

#### 6.4 Fauna

The general mitigation measures for flora that relate to minimising the extent of disturbance also serve as a mitigation measure for minimising the impact on fauna. In addition, while the clearance of trees for the track construction is expected to be minimal, the ability to micro-site the track will allow for mature trees or those that support hollows or old growth features to be largely avoided. . It is possible during construction that dens or nests may be revealed that were not identified during the ecological surveys. In order to ensure that dens and nests are properly identified, all contractors will undergo mandatory training provided by the relevant DPIPWE specialists. In the event contractors discover what they suspect may be dens or nests, then all work in the immediate vicinity will cease pending advice from DPIPWE specialists and this will be a requirement of the CEMP. This mitigation measure in particular applies to, but is not limited to, the following species: Tasmanian devil, spotted-tailed quoll, grey goshawk and eastern barred bandicoot.

In addition to the general mitigation measures the following additional mitigation measures are also proposed to minimise the potential impact to swift parrot:

- Avoid the loss of any trees in vegetation communities identified as providing potential foraging habitat for swift parrot; and
- Reduce the collision risk associated with the overnight nodes by incorporating the relevant recommendations from *Minimising the swift parrot collision threat* (WWF-Australia 2008) into the overnight node hut design criteria, namely:
  - Any windows will be non-reflective, and installed so that they are angled in at their base to a minimum of 20 degrees from vertical; and
  - Windows will not be installed so that they meet on corners of the huts, or opposite one another so that they present a clear line of sight from one side of the hut to the other (as per Point 6 in Appendix 7).

In Tasmania, protocols have been developed that prevent heavy disturbance within 500m or 1 km line of sight of an eagle nest during the breeding season. The breeding season is currently accepted as 1 August to 31 January, although it is recognised that this period may vary between breeding pairs and between years.

These protocols were developed in response to the impact of forestry operations on eagles and have become standard prescriptions enforceable for forestry operations that are subject to the *Forest Practices Act 1985* following recommendations from raptor specialists in the DPIPWE's Threatened Species Section.

These protocols form the basis for the regulation of other activities likely to produce similar levels of disturbance. In the absence of any other established guidelines these protocols are therefore considered to be the most appropriate mitigation measure for the Three Capes Track for construction activities and the use of helicopters.

During the breeding season, no helicopter operations will occur within I km of any active nest. Construction will not be undertaken within 500m or I km line of sight of any active nests during the breeding season. No hut accommodation will be constructed within 500m of an eagle nest, except for Tunnel Bay, where the hut accommodation must be beyond 450 m.

All known existing nest sites will be subject to annual productivity monitoring by a suitably qualified individual and areas where nests were previously known from but are no longer present due to natural causes will also be included in this annual survey which will ensure the information of eagles remains current. The survey will include monitoring of control nests beyond the potential influence of the Three Capes Track. The monitoring will consist primarily of an annual aerial survey but be supplemented by occasional ground observation as determined necessary by DPIPWE specialists.

Line of sight is a critical issue in the consideration of the impact of a walking track or hut site on eagle nests, particularly within close proximity where a nest or an individual or pair of eagles might be visible near the nest where line of sight exists. On this basis, the use of the Three Capes Track by bushwalkers is not likely to result in reduced breeding success for eagles currently nesting in proximity to the track as there is no location on the track where eagle nests can be subject to any significant direct disturbance.

The application of accepted mitigation prescriptions for wedge-tailed eagle and white-bellied sea eagle nests during construction and restrictions placed on helicopter flight paths will ensure that breeding success will not be impacted through disturbance associated with the construction of the various components of the Three Capes Track. The combination of topography and thick vegetation and significant rerouting of the track away from specific nests will ensure that all the nests within proximity of the Three Capes Track will not be subject to additional disturbance from walkers and it is considered that there is little risk that breeding success of these nests will be effected by usage of the Three Capes Track and its associated overnight nodes. The ongoing restriction of helicopter operations during the breeding season following construction provides further effective mitigation against disturbance associated with the operation of the Three Capes Track.

Measures designed to mitigate the potential impact of the proposal on fauna have been endorsed through the RAA approval and, where they relate to EPBC Act listed fauna such as eagles, through the EPBC Act approval.

#### 6.5 Marine

A number of species are sensitive to acoustic disturbance and therefore may be impacted by the jetty construction. Disturbance from boat operations on Port Arthur or in the wider area has the potential to impact on marine mammals through disruption of behaviour, displacement and avoidance of important habitat.

The potential for acoustic impacts on marine biota will depend on the sound frequency and intensity, continuity and duration of the disturbance, as well as the timing of the activity in relation to key breeding and

migratory seasons of sensitive species. At both Safety Cove and Denmans Cove, there is flexibility for construction activities to occur outside the breeding and migratory seasons of sensitive species and every effort will be made to avoid the peak migratory period for humpback and southern right whales of June to September and the wider migratory period of May to November. Regardless of the timing of construction, the application of acoustic disturbance mitigation guidelines will reduce the potential for acoustic disturbance to impact on any marine mammal species. Where practical, 'spun' piles that are drilled into the seabed will be used in preference to impact pile driving as they cause less acoustic disturbance in comparison with impact pile driving. A 'soft start' technique will also be used at the beginning of each pile installation day to allow any marine mammals or penguins that may be in the immediate area to leave before impact piling reaches full energy. Employing a 'soft start' technique will also benefit other mobile animals (e.g. shorebirds, fish, sharks) which have the ability to move away before impact piling reaches full strength. A qualified marine mammal observer will also be present at all times during jetty construction and will be monitoring the area before and during construction for the presence of any marine mammals that may require the construction to be suspended until the marine mammals leave the immediate area. Boat operators associated with the Three Capes Track will be required to adhere to the Australian National Standards for Whale and Dolphin Watching 2005.

Exotic marine pests can impact native communities through predation, competition and smothering of habitats. If any vessels or equipment used during construction have been used at sites outside the study areas there is a risk of introducing marine pests. Vessels that are usually based elsewhere may potentially bring new species to the area via hull fouling or bilge/ballast discharges. Similarly, certain types of equipment that have not been cleaned thoroughly may be vectors for the transport of exotic species.

Any barges or work vessels that are used in any aspect of the project will be subject to strict boat hygiene measures, particularly for vessels that are not locally based. It will be ensured that the hulls of these vessels do not support populations of fouling species, and that no bilge or ballast water is discharged from these vessels in the vicinity of the construction area. Best practice guidelines have been developed under the National System for the Prevention and Management of Marine Pest Incursions and these guidelines will be followed for vessels involved with the development of the jetties/floating pontoons at Denmans Cove and Safety Cove.

Wastes generated at the proposed site during construction will depend on the construction methodologies used. There is potential for fuel or other construction fluids and wastes to enter the marine environment, with subsequent degradation of water quality and marine and intertidal habitats. Waste will also be generated from operational activities associated with construction. If barges are used during construction, there is potential for fuel spillages or other boat wastes to be emitted at the site.

Waste management at the jetty sites during construction will be managed according to the Best Practice Guidelines for Marine Waste Management, developed by the Australia and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council (ANZECC). Activities also need to comply with ANZECC water quality guidelines and state legislation governing pollutant emission and Protected Environmental Values. Any vessels used for jetty construction will be required to adhere to the relevant hygiene prescriptions developed under the National System for the Prevention and Management of Marine Pest Incursions.

#### 6.6 Aquatic

During construction, erosion and sediment control measures will be employed throughout the length of the track but will have particular importance in proximity to water courses and drainage lines. Erosion controls, such as sediment traps and temporary drainage prior to the laying of the track surface will be installed prior to construction. They will not be removed until the track section is completed and any rehabilitation is completed. Rehabilitation will be completed as soon as possible following construction. Stockpiles of materials will not be located in proximity to watercourses or drainage lines. A key mitigation measure to prevent contamination of waterways by sediment running off the track surface is its standard of construction which is designed to minimise water flow across the track surface.

The wetlands at Perdition Ponds have been avoided by a reroute to the east which will allow the existing track and campsites to be rehabilitated preventing any further damage to this unique feature. The upgrading of the track where it passes the margins of the wetlands at Cape Raoul will prevent further erosion and will allow natural processes to occur. The track will not alter the hydrology of this wetland. Interpretative signage and the track standard will help to prevent erosion caused by the incursion of walkers onto the wetlands.

#### 6.7 Visual

Over its length the Three Capes Track is expected to be a generally more visible track than those tracks in current use in the area due to its overall standard of construction. However the use of natural and geologically compatible material for track construction and the use of cross slopes will reduce the visual impact of the track and this is evident from the recently completed upgrade to the Cape Hauy track. In addition, the thick vegetation and steep and varied topography will aid in reducing visual impact as is evident for much of the current track network. Where there are expanses of low vegetation such as button grass moorland the presence of the track is likely to be more apparent, however the generally flat nature of these areas will mean that views of the track will be limited from along its length. In other areas the avoidance of the fall line and the rehabilitation of eroded or poorly constrained track lengths will likely reduce the visual impact of current tacks in the area.

Visual impact has been a key factor in consideration of the location and design of the overnight nodes. All the materials for the hut construction will be selected to reduce visual impact and to be sensitive to the environmental setting and, allowing for other constraints on site selection, all the final siting of the huts within each general location will maximise any opportunity to use vegetation and topography to reduce any possible visual impact.

The visual analysis undertaken for the approval process demonstrated that the combination of steep and complex topography and dense vegetation throughout much of the Tasman National Park restricts the number of vantage points that offer extensive views over the proposed route of the Three Capes Track and the overnight node locations. The majority of viewpoints look seaward, with views over the terrain often in the middle to far distance. Where there are exceptions to this, for example from Arthurs Peak, the track is likely

to be visible to some extent, although not as extended sections. The visual impact of the track and overnight nodes both from within and beyond the Tasman National Park is expected to be minimal.

#### 6.8 Cultural and Historic Heritage

Due to a ban put in place by the Tasmanian Aboriginal community on engagement in cultural heritage assessment, the cultural heritage ground survey was unable to be completed. It is possible that for both surveyed and unsurveyed areas of the Three Capes Track, artefacts of potential cultural (or historic) origin may be revealed as a result of construction. Therefore an Unanticipated Discovery Protocol (UDP) will be applied to manage this occurrence and to ensure a timely and appropriate management response.

By employing the UDP in the event of uncovering any subsurface heritage material the proposal will not have any impact on Aboriginal or historic heritage.

## 7 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

#### 7.1 Social Assessment

The construction and operation of the track is expected to result in an identifiable increase in expenditure and employment in the region, an increase in visitor rates and exposure of the area as a tourism destination. It is likely that the proposal will have a positive impact given the general community support of tourism in the region. The unemployment rate in the Tasman Peninsula region (6.6% in June 2010) is consistently higher than the rate for Tasmania (6.1% in June 2010). As such, the direct and indirect employment opportunities resulting from the Three Capes Track will provide important social benefits on an ongoing basis.

Construction and operation is unlikely to have a significant impact on the social demographic of the region, as a large importation of workers is not required and there will not be a significant demand on community facilities or infrastructure. There is likely to be sufficient capacity within the region to meet the required supply of labour and goods for the project without resulting in any negative social impact.

The Three Capes Track does represent a significant change to the level of infrastructure and management in the southern portion of the Tasman National Park. Responses to the proposal in various forums clearly show that some users of the park have a preference for a more 'low key' experience with current track standards and routes largely considered sufficient. For some community members, increased visitation and associated traffic volume may be seen as a negative impact, although this may be offset by improved amenities and facilities. It should be noted that direct visitation as a result of the Three Capes Track is capped and that this level will most likely be reached over time. How indicative these views are of all users of the park is difficult to determine, however for those that value the park in this way the Three Capes Track is likely to be seen as having a negative impact. Current opportunities within the park for day and short overnight walks will remain unchanged.

While some of the changes to the current use and experience of the park are likely to be viewed as a negative social impact by some users, the Three Capes Track will result in changes that may equally be viewed in a

positive way by other users. The Three Capes Track will establish a new multi-day walk that will take in many of the features of the area. The availability of this opportunity may be seen as a positive outcome by some who place a social value on the area and a new multi-day walk has broad support in the bushwalking community. The Three Capes Track will also provide new day walk opportunities and the improved standard will both decrease walking times on the current track network and will increase the range of walkers that are capable of undertaking those walks. The increased access to the features of the area may contribute towards the social values associated with the park.

In considering the socio-economic impact of the Three Capes Track it is important to consider that the life span of the track and its operation is expected to be inter-generational and that the benefits and impacts need to be considered in this context in addition to the more immediate consequences. The planned capacity of the walk, and therefore its full economic benefit, will not occur in the first few years of operation, thereby allowing time for the economy of the region to adjust to the opportunity it represents. The economic impact at the state and regional level will begin to be realised immediately through the employment demands and expenditure relating to construction and ongoing planning, while the operation of the walk will provide for long term sustainable employment and expenditure, particularly in the Tasman region.

#### 7.2 Property

The proposal is almost entirely within reserved land, consisting of the Tasman National Park and the Safety Cove State Reserve. The entry point facilities at White Beach will be within the national park. Infrastructure at the existing Cape Raoul track entry point at Stormlea Road will be added to the current facilities within the road reserve. This track has a section of approximately 60 metres length which crosses private land (Title 228905/1), in order to link the track from the unmade road reserve to the national park. PWS has an existing licence agreement with the landowners. PWS will seek to modify this to become a long term lease.

From the Maingon Bay blowhole near Remarkable Cave the track heads inland to Safety Cove. This route utilises an existing road reserve through to the Safety Cove State Reserve. The jetty at Safety Cove will be constructed within the Safety Cove State Reserve and on Crown Land below the low water mark. Safety Cove State Reserve has an area of 16 hectares in a narrow strip along the coast between Port Arthur Historic Site and Tasman National Park and extends to the low water mark.

The jetty or floating pontoons at Denmans Cove will be in the national park and on Crown Land below the low water mark with the track entering directly into the National Park.

East of Mount Raoul the track will traverse private land (Title 210148/1) to provide a minimum of 500 metres separation from a white bellied sea eagle. PWS has an in-principle lease arrangement with the landowner to allow the track to be constructed across this title which is expected to be signed when the land owner is next in Tasmania as this individual resides overseas.

Immediately to the west of Remarkable Cave, the track will either traverse private land (Title 159762/2) to avoid a steep and unstable section of cliffs that may be difficult to build a track through or would be located

within the national park below these cliffs. PWS has also negotiated a lease with this landowner to allow the track to be constructed across his title at the time when the track is being constructed through this area.

There are no other properties directly impacted by the proposal. All property owners adjacent to the any element of the Three Capes Track have been informed prior to the Development Application being lodged with the Tasman Council.

#### 7.3 Public Consultation

Initial, formal public consultation on the proposal, at least in its conceptual stage, occurred through the approval process required for the revision of the 2001 Tasman National Park and Reserves Management Plan. In addition, substantial informal consultation was undertaken prior to the formal approval process. The Feasibility Study was made available to the public prior to the release of the Draft Management Plan in order to inform people of the rationale and feasibility of the Three Capes Track proposal.

Further, formal public representation was sought as part of the approvals process. The level 4 RAA process required a period of public review of the draft DPEMP. Representations received were considered in the final RAA documentation provided for approval to the General Manager of PWS. In addition the EPBC Act approvals process also provided an opportunity for public representation. Where elements of the Three Capes Track are outside the Tasman National Park or other reserves, public representation on those components was sought through the planning approval process undertaken by the Tasman Council.

Ongoing community consultation through the provision of public information has been undertaken throughout the planning stages of the proposal. The Parks and Wildlife website has a dedicated Three Capes Track webpage which has provided project summaries and updates, key documents and also provides a dedicated email address for public comment and feedback. Project summary documents have been made publicly available and have also been posted on this web page. Regular media releases have been provided as the project progresses.

A number of meetings have been held with representatives of key stakeholder groups, including Bushwalking Tasmania and the Tasmanian National Parks Association, throughout the development of the Three Capes Track. Public meetings have been held on the Tasman Peninsula in order to update local communities on the progress of the proposal and to allow for public feedback on issues of concern. Briefings and discussions have been held for State members of parliament, Tasman Council, local residents and elements of the tourism industry. In addition the PWS has recently formed a Three Capes Track Reference Committee with members from Bushwalking Tasmania, Environment Tasmania, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority, Tasman Council, the Port Arthur and Tasman Tourism Association and the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania.

Consultation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community has been undertaken both in terms of the overall proposal and more specifically the cultural heritage surveys undertaken and the management of cultural artefacts. A state wide ban put in place in December 2010 by the community on engagement over issues of cultural heritage has effectively ended ongoing consultation. Despite this, the community is regularly updated on key developments and opportunities provided for re-engagement.

## 8 APPROVALS

In response to the potential for the proposal to impact on Matters of National Environmental Significance listed under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), the PWS referred the proposal to the Commonwealth for assessment under the EPBC Act. A decision was provided to PWS by the Commonwealth on the 16 January 2012. The proposal was determined to be 'not a controlled action if undertaken in a particular manner' under Sections 75 and 77A of the EPBC Act. That decision is provided as Attachment 2.

The proposal is almost entirely within reserved land, consisting of the Tasman National Park and the Safety Cove State Reserve. Natural, cultural and aesthetic values within reserved land are protected under the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*. The PWS has committed to using the Tasmanian Reserve Management Code of Practice 2003 as the guidance document for activities within the Tasmanian reserve system, including the development of new activities that may impact on these values. The Code requires a systematic assessment of any proposed activity. In order to facilitate this, the PWS have developed the Reserve Activity Assessment (RAA) process.

The RAA process tests whether proposed activities meet the requirements of legislation and relevant PWS plans and policies (such as management plans, site plans etc). The process weighs the risks and benefits of a proposed activity against the values of the reserve and its users and guides the PWS in deciding whether an activity should proceed, proceed with conditions or not proceed. There are four levels of RAA assessment in proportion to the scale or potential impact of a particular activity. The Three Capes Track is designated as a Level 4 RAA requiring final approval of the proposal to be determined by the General Manager of the PWS. The RAA process includes specialist input from within DPIPWE, and as the proposal is a Level 4 RAA, public representations on the draft DPEMP were sought and these informed the final proposal submitted for approval. The RAA was approved on 9 February 2012.

The final whole of project approval required for the project was the granting of planning approval by the Tasman Council. A Development Application was lodged on 18 June 2012. The majority of the proposal is within reserved land managed by PWS and is therefore a permitted use. The Development Application was approved by the Council on 25 June 2012.

## 9 CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM AND COSTS

#### 9.1 Program

The PWS intends to construct the Three Capes track using a staged approach. Over the next 2-3 years the intention is to concentrate building the track and associated infrastructure on the eastern side of the Peninsula which would allow a 3 night 4 day walking experience to be completed by late 2015. As such the project team is now focusing on preparing tender documentation for track construction on the eastern side of the route (from Denmans Cove in the west to the junction with the recently completed Cape Hauy Track upgrade in the east). These are intended for release in late 2012, with tenders for overnight node construction at 3 locations

expected to follow after. Contracts for construction of the track on the eastern side of the route are expected to be awarded by early 2013.

Construction on the eastern side of the route is expected to commence in January 2013, with several teams of contractors envisaged to be working in multiple locations. It is anticipated that construction of the track and the three overnight nodes required on this side will be completed by or before October 2015. Construction timelines for the western portion will be determined prior to completion of the eastern side.

As mentioned above, it is expected that the eastern side of the Three Capes Track will be opened for visitors in November 2015. Walkers will be able to walk from Denmans Cove to Fortescue Bay, a distance of approximately 35km over three nights and four days accessing the track from the Denmans Cove pontoon having been taken over by a boat that is using existing marine infrastructure in the Port Arthur region.

#### 9.2 Costs

Table I below shows the cost estimates for the construction of the eastern side of the route (excluding the private sector investment) and remaining planning for western route.

Cost Item	Budget (\$)
Design and Planning	750 000
Gateway Infrastructure	500 000
Walking track construction/upgrade (35km)	13 750 000
Accommodation infrastructure (3 nodes)	6 500 000
Water transport infrastructure	500 000
Establish operation	800 000
Project management	2 500 000
Total	25 300 000

The table above shows the current budget for the Three Capes Track project. This expenditure will result in the completion of the construction of the eastern route and associated infrastructure and all remaining planning for the western route. Any budget under run will be used for construction activities on the western route. This budget has been informed by analysis of the costs associated with the recently completed Cape Hauy track upgrade. The original project costs for infrastructure (excluding the track construction) estimated in 2008 remain current or have reduced. However, the Cape Hauy track upgrade has demonstrated that the

costs associated with building a class 3 track over a long distance in a remote area where all the materials for the track are imported, are significantly higher than was originally estimated.

These costs increases have primarily been driven by: the need to comply with strict construction codes imposed to minimise impact on the environment and to maximise client enjoyment, changing market prices for complex track construction, and unforseen construction difficulties associated with limited on-ground knowledge during the inception phase.

It is worth noting that upgrading an existing track is recognised as often being more expensive than building a new track on a green field site given an upgrade is restricted to an existing area and must address existing problems like erosion and management of special values that could otherwise be avoided. As such the PWS believes that extrapolating the costs from the upgrade to the remaining Three Capes Track project (as has been done here) is likely to result in an overestimate of actual construction cost. Actual costs of the proposed work will not be revealed until the tenders are released and the market provides a response. So while the PWS believes the costs provided above are a realistic estimate of the project, it is difficult to predict exactly what can be achieved within the existing budget. However, the proposed staged construction approach, coupled with conservative estimates, will ensure the PWS can develop a new iconic three night four day bushwalk on the eastern side.

The staged construction approach is also a reflection of that reality of the specialist track building work force likely to be available and a realistic time frame of what is likely to be required to complete the entire route. The completion of the eastern portion will allow for a coherent product to be put to the market prior to completion of the entire route and will provide efficiencies in terms of material supply and construction management while also restricting disturbance to one area of the park. In addition it will allow for an income stream to contribute to asset maintenance prior to completion of the entire route.

In conclusion, while the recent final costs for the Cape Hauy upgrade suggest that delivery of the entire Three Capes track project may prove challenging within the existing budget the PWS is committed to the vision of the Three Capes Track and is still working towards constructing this project in its entirety. Construction of the eastern side will allow for a three night/four day hut based bushwalk to be provided that will meet the identified demand that underpins the Three Capes Track, should construction of the entire experience prove to be unfeasible within the current budget.

#### 10 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Three Capes Track proposal aims to establish a "world class" iconic hut based bushwalking experience by linking the outstanding natural features of the Tasman Peninsula in a coherent multi day experience with a high standard of infrastructure and operational support.

A key feature of the proposal is the provision of a track built to a Class 3 Australian standard. This standard of track will provide a walking experience that will contribute significantly to the appeal of the walk as well as providing significant environmental benefits over the existing tracks in the park. Walkers will be able to

undertake an extended walk with a 'dry boot' standard, a feature that is likely to attract walkers from a wider cross section than existing overnight walks throughout much of temperate Australia. The ultimate linking of the two main sections of the Three Capes Track by boat will contribute towards the unique qualities of the experience.

Further enhancing the appeal of the walk is the provision of hut accommodation within the five overnight nodes. The high standard of design of the huts, the high level of facilities provided and an emphasis on principles of sustainability is another key element in achieving the aim of the proposal. In particular the provision of separate sleeping quarters, external decking, mattresses and gas cooking will ensure that the Three Capes Track offers a unique walking experience in Tasmania and Australia.

The Tasmanian Government has committed \$12.8 million to the Three Capes Track project and the Commonwealth Government has committed \$12.5 million with an expected additional private investment of up to \$8 million for the provision of water and land based transport and a guided (commercial) walking experience. The construction of the Three Capes Track will provide significant employment and economic opportunities at both the State and regional level. The value of this investment needs to be seen in the context of the inter-generational lifespan of the proposal.

The operation of the Three Capes Track will continue to generate direct economic activity and employment into the foreseeable future. The business model will ensure that the economic contribution at the regional and State level of the operation of the Three Capes Track will be sustainable and therefore the long term return on the capital investment will be significant. Beyond the operation of the Three Capes Track itself, the proposal is likely to generate considerable economic opportunity, particularly at the regional level. By linking the natural features of the area in a high quality experience, the Three Capes Track will raise the profile of the natural environment of the Tasman region and therefore meet a key objective required to ensure ongoing sustainable economic activity in the Tasman region.

The proposal will improve the current recreational opportunities within the Tasman National Park while also adding to the value of Tasmania's competitive edge in natural experience tourism. The walk will have all the attributes required to make Australia's premier coastal bushwalking experience.

The potential environmental impacts of the proposal have been thoroughly investigated. The proposal has a limited footprint and the environmental investigations have identified that the potential impact of the proposal on the natural values within the footprint and in the wider area is either not significant or can be effectively mitigated and managed. The application of the mitigation measures endorsed through the Commonwealth, State and local Government approval processes will ensure that the construction and operation of the Three Capes Track is compatible with the national park management objectives under the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*.

Given the benefits that are expected to be derived from the proposal over the long term and the extent to which the proposal provides a significant additional recreational opportunity to park users, the limited residual impacts of the proposal are considered to be acceptable. In closing, the Parks and Wildlife Service consider that the proposal for an iconic walking experience of world class standard is therefore worthy of the committee's endorsement and it is recommended that the project be approved.

## Appendix I Three Capes Track DPEMP

(See CD provided)

Appendix 2 EPBC Act Decision

Australian Government



Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

#### Notification of REFERRAL DECISION – not controlled action if undertaken in a particular manner

#### Three Capes Track (2011/6200)

This decision is made under sections 75 and 77A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* 1999 (EPBC Act).

#### **Proposed action**

person named in the referral	Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment ABN 58 259 330 901
proposed action	To construct and maintain a multi-day walking track, including two jetties and five public overnight huts, within and near to the Tasman National Park, Tasmania [See EPBC Act referral 2011/6200].

Referral decision: Not a controlled action if undertaken in a particular manner

status of proposed	The proposed action is not a controlled action provided it is
action	undertaken in the manner set out in this decision.

#### Person authorised to make decision

Name and position	Charmayne Murray Assistant Secretary (acting) Environment Assessment Branch	
signature		
date of decision	16 January 2012	
manner in which proposed	The following measures must be taken to avoid significant impacts on:	
action must be taken	<ul> <li>Listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 &amp; 18A)</li> </ul>	
	<ol> <li>The person taking the action will implement the following management prescriptions to minimise the spread of <i>Phytophthora cinnamomi</i>:</li> </ol>	
	<ul> <li>Prior to construction, washdown points will be established in mud-free sites immediately outside disease areas.</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li>b) Construction will be staged in a manner that ensures it progresses from disease free areas to disease areas.</li> </ul>	

- c) Any mud or dirt contained on materials, tools, machinery and other equipment (including tents, boots and gaiters) associated with construction or maintenance will be removed when moving from a disease area to a disease free area.
- d) All imported track materials, such as gravel and rock, will be sourced from sites assessed by the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment as low risk for the introduction or spread of weeds and diseases.
- e) The track will be operated from west to east for permitted walkers.
- f) Washdown stations for the cleaning of boots, gaiters and other equipment of persons walking the track will be placed at the following points prior to commencement of the use of the track:
  - i) White Beach car park;
  - ii) Stormlea Road entrance;
  - iii) Tunnel Bay;
  - iv) Remarkable Cave;
  - v) Safety Cove;
  - vi) Denmans Cove;
  - vii) Tornado Ridge;
  - viii) Lunchtime Creek; and
  - ix) Fortescue Bay.
- g) Instructive signage and educational information on Phytophthora hygiene protocols for bushwalkers will be placed at all entry and exit points, washdown stations, huts and toilets along the track.
- h) Requirements 1a) 1d) will be written into any third party contracts related to track construction.
   Requirement 1c) will be written into any third party contracts related to track maintenance.
- 2. Prior to **construction**, high-visibility flagging tape will be used to identify known occurrences of *Euphrasia semipicta*, *Prasophyllum apoxychilum*, *Prasaphyllum pulchellum* and *Prasaphyllum castaneum*, where these occur within 10 m of **construction**, or where known occurrences of *Euphrasia* sp. Bivouac Bay and *Euphrasia amphisysepala* occur within 5 m of **construction**.
  - a) Prior to construction occurring within areas identified at requirement 2, construction workers will be briefed by a botanist or a works supervisor on protocols to prevent disturbance to these species; and
  - b) Construction activities will not occur within 2 m of the species listed at requirement 2 for track work, or within 5 m for all other activities.

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- 3. Buildings within the overnight nodes, with the exception of the Tunnel Bay overnight node, will not be constructed within 500 m, or 1 km line-of-sight, of an **eagle** nest. Buildings within the Tunnel Bay overnight node will not be constructed within 450 m, or 1 km line-of-sight, of an **eagle** nest.
- 4. Construction and maintenance will not occur within 500 m, or 1 km line-of-sight, of an active eagle nest during the eagle breeding season.
- Helicopter activities associated with construction, maintenance and ongoing use of the track will not occur within 1 km of an active eagle nest during the eagle breeding season.
- 6. To minimise potential impacts on the Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*), any buildings to be constructed will be positioned below the mature height of the tree canopy, and designed such that:
  - Any windows will be non-reflective, and installed so that they are angled in at their base to a minimum of 20 degrees from vertical; and
- b) Windows will not be installed so that they meet on corners of the huts, or opposite one another so that they present a clear line of sight from one side of the hut to the other.
  - 7. Marine vessels, associated with **construction** and ongoing use of the **track**, will not:
    - a) Enter the no approach zone;
    - b) Wait in front of the direction of travel of an EPBC Act listed cetacean;
    - c) Attempt to interact with an EPBC Act listed cetacean if it shows signs of disturbance; and
    - d) Enter the **caution zone** if more than two vessels are already present within the **caution zone**.
  - Aircraft associated with construction and ongoing use of the track will not:
    - a) Fly within the no fly zone;
    - b) Hover over, or cast a shadow over, the no fly zone; and
    - c) Approach an EPBC Act listed cetacean from its direction of travel.
  - 9. A Marine Mammal Observer will be present at all times during jetty construction, and will:
    - a) Conduct pre-construction observations of the monitoring zone 30 minutes prior to the commencement of pile driving; and

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- b) Remain in radio contact with the person overseeing jetty construction to enable communications regarding any observation of EPBC Act listed cetaceans within the monitoring zone, alert zone and exclusion zone.
- 10. Jetty construction will not occur or will cease if any EPBC Act listed cetacean is detected within the exclusion zone. Jetty construction must not commence/recommence until the last observed EPBC Act listed cetacean has either moved outside the exclusion zone or has not been sighted for a period of at least 30 minutes.
- 11. Before commencement of pile-driving, the person taking the action will carry out 'soft start' piling, increasing the intensity of the driving hammer power gradually.

#### **Definitions**

Active eagle nest means: Any eagle nest other than those determined inactive by a suitably qualified person, following a nest activity assessment by that person during that eagle breeding season which clearly demonstrates that the nest is not being used by an eagle during that eagle breeding season.

**Alert Zone** means: The marine area within a 2 km radius of **jetty construction** activities. This area must be monitored continuously if an EPBC-Act listed cetacean is known to be present.

**No Approach Zone** means: The area within 100 m of an EPBC Act listed cetacean, and also includes the area directly in front of or behind an EPBC Act listed cetacean out to 300 m.

**No Fly Zone** means: The area of airspace above water that is lower than 500 m and within a 500 m radius of an EPBC Act listed cetacean.

*Caution Zone* means: The area within 300 m either side of an EPBC-Act listed cetacean.

**Construction** means: Any works or activities associated with the construction or upgrading of tracks, car parks or overnight nodes. This includes the onsite erection of any temporary structures, the use of vehicles and machinery, the storage of chemicals, fuels and materials, the development and use of access roads and tracks, the implementation of erosion and sedimentation controls, site remediation, preparatory works, and the clearing or piling of vegetation, materials or earthworks.

*Eagle* means: Wedge-tailed Eagle (Tasmanian) (*Aquila audax fleayi*), or White-bellied Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*).

Eagle breeding season means: 1 August to 31 January inclusive

*Exclusion Zone* means: An area of 1 km radius from **jetty construction** activities. This area must be monitored at 10 minute intervals, or continuously if an EPBC Act listed cetacean is known to be present.

*Jetty construction* means: Any works or activities associated with the construction, upgrading or maintenance of jetties that may cause acoustic disturbance to EPBC Act listed cetaceans. These activities include impact pile driving, spun or screw pile installation, and any underwater grinding, hammering or cutting.

**Maintenance** means: Any works or activities associated with the maintenance or upgrading of tracks, car parks and overnight nodes. This includes but is not limited to the use of vehicles and machinery or any actions that could disturb *Aquila audax fleayi* during the **eagle breeding season**.

Marine Mammal Observer means: A staff member with observation experience associated with marine mammals and trained in marine mammal identification and distance estimation and reporting. As a minimum, the training should include a demonstrated familiarity with the Australian Petroleum and Exploration Association CD-based identification and reporting package in addition to on-ground training. The Marine Mammal Observer must be equipped with the necessary equipment required for observing marine mammals – including range finder, binoculars, camera and recording documents.

*Monitoring Zone* means: The ocean area within a 3 km radius from **jetty construction** activities. This area must be monitored at 30 minute intervals.

**Permitted walkers** means: a person undertaking the Three Capes track who has been issued a pass by the Parks and Wildlife Service to walk the track during the nominated walking season.

Suitably qualified person means: a person with qualifications in ecology or zoology and demonstrated experience in undertaking eagle nest activity assessments.

Track means: the Three Capes Track.

Appendix 3 Tasman Council Development Application approval



RECORDS File No: Doc No: 612/ 328

1713 Main Road, Nubeena TAS 7184 Telephone: (03) 6250 9200 Fax: (03) 6250 9220 Email: tasman@tasman.tas.gov.au Website: www.tasman.tas.gov.au ABN 63 590 070 717

Our Ref: DA 2012 / 00039

DEPT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES PARKS, WATER & ENVIRONMENT 25 July 2012 2 7 JUL 2012 HOBART

Mr Colin Shepherd Project Manager (Three Capes Track) Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service GPO Box 1751 HOBART TAS 7001

Dear Mr Shepherd,

RE: DA 39/2012 – "Tourist Operation" in State Forest Reservation, National Parks and Wildlife Service Reservation, General Rural and Coastal Protection Zones

Tasman National Park, Stormlea Road road reserve, 916 Stormlea Road, Stormlea (CT 228905/1), Thorntons Road, Stormlea (CT 210148/1 & CT 159762/2), Safety Cove State Reserve, Reserved Road between Maingon Blowhole & Dog Bark Road, Port Arthur

I advise that Council has granted a planning permit for the above use/ development. The planning permit and approved plans are enclosed.

Please read the permit carefully. You <u>must</u> comply with all permit conditions otherwise substantial penalties may be imposed.

You cannot lawfully start the works allowed under this permit until you have obtained any other approvals (including building approval) that may be required for the proposed use or development.

You may appeal Council's decision within 14 days after this notice is served on you, by lodging a Notice of Appeal with the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal. If there is an appeal, this permit does not take effect until the appeal is determined or abandoned.

Yours sincerely

Melissa Geard Building & Development Services Officer

'al Escape'



"A Natural Escape"

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**Tasman Planning Scheme 1979** 

## **PLANNING PERMIT**

Application No:	DA 2012 / 00039
Applicant:	Parks & Wildlife Service <b>(</b> Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment)
Proposal:	Tourist Operation in State Forest Reservation, National Parks & Wildlife Service Reservation, General Rural and Coastal Protection Zones
Location:	Tasman National Park, Stormlea Road road reserve, 916 Stormlea Road, Stormlea (CT 228905/1), Thornton's Road, Stormlea (CT 210148/1 & CT 159762/2), Safety Cove State Reserve, Reserved Road between Maingon Blowhole and Dog Bark Road, Port Arthur

This permit is granted, subject to the conditions set out below, for the Tourist Operation at Tasman National Park, Stormlea Road road reserve, 916 Stormlea Road, Stormlea (CT 228905/1), Thornton's Road, Stormlea (CT 210148/1 & CT 159762/2), Safety Cove State Reserve, Reserved Road between Maingon Blowhole and Dog Bark Road, Port Arthur

This approval shall lapse at the expiration of two (2) years from the date on which it is granted if the development and/or use is not substantially commenced within that period.

#### CONDITIONS

#### General

The use or development must be carried out substantially in accordance with the application for planning approval, the endorsed drawings and with the conditions of this permit and must not be altered or extended without the further written approval of Council.

#### Amenity

- 2. All metal building surfaces must be clad in non-reflective pre-coated metal sheeting or painted to the satisfaction of the Council's General Manager.
- 3. Before any work commences a schedule specifying the finish and colours of all external surfaces and samples must be submitted to and approved by the Council's General Manager. The colours must be sympathetic to the environment. The schedule shall form part of this permit when approved.
- 4. Any use or development is to be carried out and maintained in accordance with the recommendations of *Guidelines for Development in Bushfire Prone Areas of Tasmania*, Tasmania Fire Service, Hobart, 2005 and constructed in accordance with Level 1 of Standards Australia (1999): AS 3959: Construction of Buildings in Bushfire Prone Areas Standards Australia, Sydney
- 5. All proposed buildings must be designed in accordance with the *"Minimising the Swift Parrot Collision Threat Guidelines"* and recommendations for parrot safe building design (WWF, 2008).

#### Services

- 6. Stormwater from roofed areas must discharge to a storage tank with an overflow connected to an absorption drain with an area of 5% 10% of the roof area, a road drain or other legal point of discharge in accordance with a Plumbing Permit issued by the Permit Authority in accordance with the *Building Act 2000*.
- 7. Wastewater from the development must discharge to an on-site waste disposal system in accordance with a Plumbing and Special Plumbing Permit issued by the Permit Authority (Council) in accordance with the Building Act 2000 prior to the commencement of any works.

#### **Construction Amenity**

8. The development must only be carried out between the following hours unless otherwise approved by the Council's General Manager:

•	Monday to Friday	8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

- Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- Sunday and State-wide public holidays 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- 9. Any accumulation of vegetation, building debris or other unwanted material must be disposed of by removal from the site in an approved manner. No burning of such materials on site will be permitted unless approved in writing by the Council's General Manager.
- 10. The developer must pay the cost of any alterations and/or reinstatement to existing services, Council infrastructure or private property incurred as a result of the proposed works. Any work required is to be specified or undertaken by the authority concerned.

#### Carparking

11. The areas set-aside for parking and associated access and turning must be provided in accordance with Australian Standard *AS 2890.1 – Parking Facilities Part 1: Off Street Car Parking*; Standards Australia, Sydney, 2004 and have any associated drainage discharging to the stormwater system in accordance with the requirements of a plumbing permit issued by the plumbing Permit Authority.

#### **Civil Construction**

- 12. Construction of public infrastructure shall be carried out in accordance with engineering design plans and specifications approved by the Council's General Manger and prepared by a qualified and experienced civil engineer, or other person approved by Council's General Manger.
- 13. All new or upgraded public infrastructure must be designed and constructed in accordance with the statutory requirements, standards and guidelines contained in:-
  - Local Government (Building & Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993
  - Local Government (Highways) Act
  - Sewers & Drains Act 1954
  - Waterworks Clauses Act
  - Relevant Australian Standards
  - Building and Plumbing Regulations
  - Relevant By-laws and Council Policy
  - WSAA 02-2002 Sewerage Code Of Australia
  - WSAA 03-2002 Water Supply Code Of Australia
  - Current IPWEA and Tasman Council Municipal Standard Drawings
  - Current IPWEA and Tasman Council Municipal Standard Specification
- 14. Noyes Road is to be upgraded between the built up area and proposed walking track carpark as described in the report *Road Safety Review White Beach Road-Noyes Road and Stormlea Road* prepared by Milan Prodanovic and dated August 2011. The following minimum requirements shall apply:-
  - Minimum carriageway width of 5.0m;
  - A minimum formation width of 7.0m where table drains are needed each side of the road;
  - Minimum stopping sight distance of 50m on slower speed sections of the road and 90m on the flatter sections of the road with a minimum available sight distance to vehicles approaching from the opposite direction of twice these distances;
- 15. Stormlea Road at crest locations 7.3km and 8.4km south of Nubeena Road junction is to be upgraded as described in the report *Road Safety Review White Beach Road-Noyes Road and Stormlea Road* prepared by Milan Prodanovic and dated August 2011. Works shall include:
  - o road widening to provide a minimum carriageway width of 5.5m
  - o Installation of necessary warning signs and delineation.

- 16. Stormlea Road/Robinsons Road junction to be upgraded to a conventional Tjunction design with adequate intersection sight line to be provided for the speed environment as described in the report *Road Safety Review – White Beach Road-Noyes Road and Stormlea Road* prepared by Milan Prodanovic and dated August 2011.
- 17. Stormlea Road to be upgraded including drainage, trafficability and passing bays between crest at 8.4km south of Nubeena Road junction and car park at southern end to the satisfaction of Council's General Manager.
- 18. Prior to the development of the land commencing on site or within a council roadway, a "start work" notice must be lodged with and accepted by the General Manager. The "start work" notice must be accompanied by evidence of payment of the Building and Construction Industry Training Levy.
- 19. All works associated with the development of the land must be carried out in such a manner so as not to cause injury to, or prejudicially affect the amenity, function and safety of any adjoining or adjacent building, and of any person therein or in the vicinity thereof, by reason of:
  - (a) Emissions from activities or equipment related to the use or development, including noise and vibration, which can be detected by a person at the boundary with another property.
  - (b) Transport of materials, goods or commodities to or from the land.
  - (c) Appearance of any building, works or materials.
- 20. Public roadways or footpaths must not be used for the storage of any construction materials or wastes, for the loading/unloading of any vehicle or equipment, or for the carrying out of any work, process or tasks associated with the project during the construction period.

#### THE FOLLOWING ADVICE APPLIES TO THIS PERMIT:

- A. This permit does not imply that any other approval required under any other legislation or by-law has been granted.
- B. The issue of this permit does not ensure compliance with the provisions of the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*. The applicant may be liable to complaints in relation to any non-compliance with this Act and may be required to apply to the Minister for the Environment, Parks and Heritage for a permit and to undertake a further Aboriginal Cultural Heritage assessment of the site by a qualified aboriginal heritage consultant. The assessment will indicate if a permit is required and shall provide recommendations to undertake the proposed work.
- C. The issue of this permit does not ensure compliance with the provisions of the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995.* The applicant may be liable to complaints in relation to any non-compliance with this Act and may be required to apply to the Minister for Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment for a permit.

- D. If you notify Council that you intend to commence the use or development before the date specified above you forfeit your right of appeal in relation to this permit.
- E. This planning approval shall lapse at the expiration of two (2) years from the date of the commencement of planning approval if the development for which the approval was given has not been substantially commenced. Where a planning approval for a development has lapsed, an application for renewal of a planning approval for that development shall be treated as a new application.

Robert Higgins General Manager





FOR MORE CONTACT: INFORMATION

## **Colin Shepherd**

Project Manager (Three Capes Track) Parks and Wildlife Service GPO Box 1751 Hobart Tasmania 7001