

Media Release
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North west coast harness and greyhound track update

A Natural Values Assessment on the site of a proposed harness and greyhound track at Latrobe in the state's north west has identified a critically endangered Black Gum forest and woodland community.

As a result, Tasracing, in consultation with the Tasmanian Government, has resolved to cease work at the Latrobe site and has agreed to develop a dual code facility at a new site in the region.

The assessment work followed community consultation and normal due diligence work to prepare a Development Application for the Latrobe Council.

Issues addressed included traffic management, helicopter flight paths given the proximity of the site to Helicopters Tasmania and the local hospital, lights, noise and water impacts on the site.

The latest report, undertaken by ECOTas as part of the ongoing Development Application process, found the area in question was a "high priority for conservation management" under both state and federal conservation acts.

The report also found the vegetation community was a high potential foraging habitat for the swift parrot, and that a burrowing crayfish found at the site, while not endangered or on a protection list, had not been previously identified.

Tasracing CEO Paul Eriksson said the company had already commenced searching for a new site.

"We will continue to consult with the racing industry and the local community about our plans as they progress," he said.

"Importantly, Tasracing plans to use the existing design for the tracks which has been accepted by both the harness and greyhound codes," he said. This will reduce the amount of time required once we identify a new location.

The current track design cuts straight through the protected vegetation community at Latrobe – the proposed harness track cannot sit on the site in any way that avoids the protected area.

Mr Eriksson said following receipt of the report and follow-up advice from ECOTas, Tasracing determined the best way forward was to consider a new site.

“We were advised that it was highly unlikely that the project would achieve ‘exceptional circumstances’ status under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and would be denied,” he said.

“Also, any application through the state and federal system would involve a potential two year delay with no guarantee of success. This was not acceptable to Tasracing, nor would it have been acceptable to our racing industry partners.”

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