

**NATURAL VALUES ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED NORTH WEST
HARNESS AND GREYHOUND FACILITY PROJECT, PALMERS
ROAD, LATROBE, TASMANIA**



**Environmental Consulting Options Tasmania (ECOtas) for
Dalton Consulting Engineers Pty Ltd**

10 February 2022

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CITATION

This report can be cited as:

ECOtas (2022). *Natural Values Assessment of Proposed North West Harness and Greyhound Facility Project, Palmers Road, Latrobe, Tasmania*. Report by Environmental Consulting Options Tasmania (ECOtas) for the Dalton Consulting Engineers Pty Ltd, 10 February 2022.

AUTHORSHIP

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Digital and aerial photography: Brian French, Mark Wapstra, GoogleEarth, LISTmap

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Staff of Woolcott Surveys (Brett Woolcott, James Stewart, Geoff McGregor) and Dalton Consulting Engineers Pty Ltd (Drew Dalton) provided background information on the project. Rod Sherriff (Sherriff Excavator Hire) provided excavation services (burrowing crayfish surveys).

QUALIFICATIONS

Except where otherwise stated, the opinions and interpretations of legislation and policy expressed in this report are made by the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the relevant agency. The client should confirm management prescriptions with the relevant agency before acting on the content of this report. This report and associated documents do not constitute legal advice.

Note that any reference to the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment (DPIPWE) now refers to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania.

COVER ILLUSTRATION

View across existing pasture that dominates the project site.

Please note: the blank pages in this document are deliberate to facilitate double-sided printing.

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SUMMARY

General

Dalton Consulting Engineers Pty Ltd engaged Environmental Consulting Options Tasmania (ECOtas) to undertake a natural values assessment of the proposed North West Harness and Greyhound Facility Project, Palmers Road, Latrobe, Tasmania, primarily to ensure that the requirements of the identified natural values are appropriately considered during any further project planning under local, State and Commonwealth government approval protocols.

Site assessment

The main natural values assessment of the study area was undertaken by Brian French (ECOtas) on 30 Nov. 2021. An additional assessment was undertaken by Mark Wapstra (ECOtas) on 17 Dec. 2021 (review of initial findings). Targeted surveys for burrowing crayfish (*Engaeus* sp.) were undertaken on 17 Dec. 2021 (Mark Wapstra, Brian French, Alastair Richardson) and 12 Jan. 2022 (Brian French & Alastair Richardson).

Summary of key findings

Threatened flora

- No plant species listed as threatened on the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBCA) and/or the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* (TSPA) were detected, or are known from database information, from the study area.

Threatened fauna

- No fauna species listed as threatened (Endangered) on the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBCA) and the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* (TSPA) (endangered) were detected, or are known from database information, from the study area.
- The study area supports potential habitat (to varying degrees) of several species, as follows:
 - *Sarcophilus harrisii* (Tasmanian devil);
 - *Dasyurus maculatus* subsp. *maculatus* (spotted-tailed quoll);
 - *Dasyurus viverrinus* (eastern quoll);
 - *Perameles gunnii* subsp. *gunnii* (eastern barred bandicoot);
 - *Accipiter novaehollandiae* (grey goshawk);
 - *Haliaeetus leucogaster* (white-bellied sea-eagle);
 - *Aquila audax* subsp. *fleayi* (wedge-tailed eagle);
 - *Lathamus discolor* (swift parrot);
 - *Litoria raniformis* (green and golden frog); and
 - *Tyto novaehollandiae* (masked owl).

Other fauna

- An unidentified species of *Engaeus* (burrowing crayfish) was recorded but the specimens collected are not attributable to a species listed on the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBCA) and the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* (TSPA) i.e. *Engaeus granulatus* (Central North burrowing crayfish) was not recorded.

Vegetation types

- The study area supports the following TASVEG mapping units:
 - *Eucalyptus amygdalina* forest and woodland on dolerite (TASVEG code: DAD);
 - *Eucalyptus ovata* forest and woodland (TASVEG code: DOV);
 - agricultural land (TASVEG code: FAG);
 - regenerating cleared land (TASVEG code: FAG);
 - improved pasture with native tree canopy (TASVEG code: FAC);
 - extra-urban miscellaneous (TASVEG code: FUM);
 - weed infestation (TASVEG code: FWU); and
 - water, sea (TASVEG code: OAQ).
- *Eucalyptus amygdalina* forest and woodland on dolerite (TASVEG code: DAD) is not listed as threatened on Schedule 3A of the Tasmanian *Nature Conservation Act 2002* and does not equate to a threatened ecological community under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBCA).
- *Eucalyptus ovata* forest and woodland (TASVEG code: DOV) is listed as threatened on Schedule 3A of the Tasmanian *Nature Conservation Act 2002* and the patches identified are considered to equate to a threatened ecological community under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBCA), viz. Tasmanian Forests and Woodlands dominated by Black Gum or Brookers Gum (*Eucalyptus ovata* / *E. brookeriana*), listed as Critically Endangered.

Weeds

- Three plant species classified as declared weeds within the meaning of the Tasmanian *Weed Management Act 1999* (Tasmanian *Biosecurity Act 2019*) were detected from the study area, as follows:
 - *Rubus* sp. (blackberry);
 - *Erica lusitanica* (spanish heath); and
 - *Ulex europaeus* (gorse).

Plant disease

- No evidence of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (PC, rootrot) was recorded within the study area.
- No evidence of myrtle wilt was recorded from within the study area.
- No evidence of myrtle rust was recorded from within the study area.

Animal disease (chytrid)

- The study area support habitat types associated with amphibian species.

Recommendations

This initial natural values assessment has identified that the proposed development area includes native vegetation that has a high priority for conservation management, with particular respect to the area mapped as *Eucalyptus ovata* forest and woodland (TASVEG code: DOV) due to its:

- classification as a threatened native vegetation community under the Tasmanian *Nature Conservation Act 2002*; and
- classification as a threatened ecological community under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*; and
- provision of potential foraging habitat for the swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*), listed as Critically Endangered/Endangered on the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*/Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*.

There are other natural values matters that will also require consideration but the DOV/swift parrot issue is clearly the most complex.

Review of the relevant provisions of the Tasmanian *Nature Conservation Act 2002*, Tasmanian *Forest Practices Act 1985* and associated *Forest Practices Regulations 2017*, Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the Tasmanian *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* (with reference to the *Latrobe Interim Planning Scheme 2013* and the Clearance and Conversion of Native Vegetation Code) indicates likely non-compliance if the area mapped as DOV were to be removed (in part or whole).

It is recommended to seek a design solution that wholly avoids clearance and conversion (and material impact to) any native vegetation.

Any proposal that includes loss (or material disturbance to) the Matters of National Environmental Significance (i.e. as a minimum the area mapped as DOV) is likely to require a formal referral to the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBCA).

Formal advice will need to be sought from the Forest Practices Authority on the application of "exceptional circumstances", the need for a Forest Practices Plan and the interaction of the Tasmanian *Forest Practices Act 1985* and associated *Forest Practices Regulations 2017* with other legislation, most notably the Tasmanian *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* (with reference to the *Latrobe Interim Planning Scheme 2013* and the Clearance and Conversion of Native Vegetation Code).

