Proposal

To rename Emita Beach,
Flinders Island, Tasmania

V8.0
15th October 2015
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This submission has been prepared by Alan and Liz Robinson with assistance from Ken, Brad, Pam & Margie Robinson, Children of James Huitfeldt Robinson & wife Doris, Grandchildren of Emillie Robinson (nee Huitfeldt), Great grandchildren of Valentine & Tilly Huitfeldt.

October 2015

This submission is endorsed by John Huitfeldt, Bess Larner (nee Robinson), and Belle Solomon (nee Grist), all grandchildren of Valentine & Tilly Huitfeldt.
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23-10-2015

To Whom It May Concern

I have been an active member of the Furneaux Historical Research Association Inc. for over 30 years. My activity has been largely associated with answering research queries and cataloguing the collection. Consequently I have gained considerable familiarity and insight into Flinders Island history.

I have read the submission to Flinders Council and the Nomenclature Board arguing the case to rename Old Jetty Beach (Emita Beach) to Huitfeldt Beach. To the best of my knowledge the information within the submission is historically correct and I support this application.

[Signature]

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1. Introduction & Overview

This proposal recommends that the beach on Flinders Island currently signposted as Emita Beach is renamed.

Included are compelling reasons for this name change followed by persuasive evidence to justify the recommended new name, Huitfeldt Beach. A separate document comprises Appendices 1 through 12 which are referenced in this proposal.

DPIPWE* maps refer to this beach as Old Jetty Beach, for example, LISTmap Number 5755 (Land Information System Tasmania) included below.

*DPIPWE = Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment.
There are four primary reasons to rename this beach:

**Reason 1. Confusion through this beach having two different names.**
Confusion over the “what is the right name?” is a convincing reason to rename this beach. The road sign in the photo on the previous page points to Emita Beach, however DPIPWE maps refer to this beach as Old Jetty Beach, e.g. LISTmap Number 5755. To accentuate this confusion,

- **There is no road sign on Flinders Island pointing to Old Jetty Beach.**
- **There is no Emita Beach in official Tasmania state records, only Old Jetty Beach.**
So neither name has complete acceptance and recognition.

**Note:** Throughout this document, we refer to Old Jetty Beach and Emita Beach as “Emita Beach”. This is purely for simplicity and ease-of-understanding and does not imply that Emita Beach is the preferred name of the two.

**Reason 2. Public Safety is at risk due to this confusion.**
Through this naming confusion, a response to an Emergency Services call from a distressed individual at Emita Beach could be hampered by uncertainty regarding the exact location of the caller. A distress call from Emita Beach, an excellent swimming beach which has large granite rocks at one end could result from a child falling on those rocks. Or there might be a swimming or rock clambering accident. The caller may not be aware that the beach has two names, Emita Beach and Old Jetty Beach. For example,

**Caller (at Emita Beach):** “There’s been an accident and we need urgent assistance at Emita Beach!”
*This call is to 000 Emergency. The caller is under stress and is referring to the name on the road sign they saw on entry to Emita Beach, not a map.*

**000 Emergency operator:** “Which Emita Beach? Do you mean Old Jetty Beach?”
*The operator is looking at the official 000 map which is based on DPIPWE maps.*

**Caller (at Emita Beach):** “No. There’s no old jetty here! The sign said Emita Beach”
*A caller in an emergency on a beach on Flinders Island is unlikely to have access to a DPIPWE map or similar. They may have access to the internet with an iPhone or similar device however their next challenge would be unreliable internet access at this location. And they would probably be making the distress call on the same iPhone or similar device. They would be under stress and highly unlikely to look up Placenames Tasmania on the internet.*

**000 Emergency operator, then conveying distress message to Flinders Island Emergency Services:**
*“The caller told me “It’s definitely not Old Jetty Beach. It’s an Emita Beach.””*
*The 000 Emergency operator is using the official DPIPWE map and cannot identify Emita Beach.*

Valuable time would be lost deciphering a call like this and determining the correct location of the distress call. Mention of Old Jetty Beach might lead to Flinders Island Emergency Services incorrectly travelling to Lillies Beach (see Appendix 1) as the beach in the Emita area which still has remnants of an old jetty, and losing valuable minutes.

A similar problem of conflicting names might also arise for the CFA with a bush fire near Emita Beach as they are sometimes challenged with deciphering local names and official names.

This potential for ambiguity and confusion needs to be resolved as safety with place naming is paramount. To quote the DPIPWE publication “Rules for Place Names in Tasmania”

**Public safety**
The assignment of place-names must promote public safety and not cause confusion for emergency services, transport, communication, mail services or the general public.

**Note:** Public safety is a major consideration in the assignment, alteration or omission of place names.
2. Reasons to rename this beach

Reason 3. Neither of the current two names is unique and distinctive.

(a) One current name - Emita Beach.
The name Emita Beach is not unique and distinctive as a beach name; Emita is a locality and there are a number of beaches in this locality, all are “Emita” beaches. Refer to Appendix 1, page 1, for a map of the Emita locality. The name does not provide sufficient differentiation between other beaches in the locality.

Flinders Islanders know exactly where Allports Beach or Trousers Point Beach are located. These names are distinctive and memorable. On the other hand, some island residents may not be sure of the location of Emita Beach and might even confuse it with Allports Beach.

(b) The other current name - Old Jetty Beach.
The jetty at Emita Beach was erected in 1912 and officially opened in February 1913. At the time, this beach became known as Jetty Beach. The jetty fell into disrepair by 1935 (Source: The Examiner, page 6 February 2, 1935) and became known as “Old Jetty” when the new jetty started operating at Port Davies in 1939 just a few kilometres away. The name Jetty Beach consequently evolved into Old Jetty Beach.

Today the differentiation Old Jetty Vs New Jetty is no longer relevant or of value as Port Davies and Emita Beach are now both locations where jetties once stood. The “old jetty” reference has become outdated as well as ambiguous and there is no road sign on Flinders Island naming this beach as Old Jetty Beach. The name Old Jetty Beach is no longer unique and distinctive.

Further, Old Jetty Beach is a name that can be easily mistaken for other beaches. Tasmania itself has a beach named Jetty Beach plus another beach named Old Beach. Then there is Jetty Road Old Beach, Tasmania. And to confound things even more … Old Beach Jetty also in Tasmania.

There can even be confusion on Flinders Island itself with three “old jetty” sites in the Emita locality alone … Lillies Beach, Port Davies and Emita Beach. Of the three, Emita Beach is the least identifiable as an “old jetty beach” as it has no visible evidence in the water of an old jetty. See Appendix 1 for a photo each of the three old jetty sites.

These three locations for old Emita jetties are within close proximity, which can make the name even more misleading and give rise to the quandary “which Emita old jetty beach?” In comparison to Emita Beach, Lillies Beach (aka Settlement Beach) has old jetty pylons still visible above water and can easily be confused as “old jetty beach, Emita”.

Bottom line - The names Old Jetty Beach and Emita Beach do not distinguish or differentiate this beach within the Emita locality.

Apart from confusion and safety issues, the name Old Jetty Beach can be misleading. A tourist following a DPIPWE map, travelling to Old Jetty Beach, Emita, on arriving there would be disappointed not to find some trace of an old jetty. Ruins of old structures such as jetty pylons blended into the natural coastline environment are an attraction to tourists as well as locals. The Flinders Island Council acknowledges this attraction with the Council’s web-site showcasing a photo of old jetty pylons on a pristine Flinders Island beach. Emita Beach is a picturesque sandy beach and has absolutely no semblance of an “old jetty beach”.

Notes:
1. The Emita Beach Coastal Reserve (local sign) and the Emita Nature Recreation Area (DPIPWE Maps) are referenced in Appendix 12.
2. Lillies Beach is named by a road sign approaching this beach, not by DPIPWE maps. DPIPWE maps designate this beach as Settlement Beach and within Lillies Bay.
Reason 4. Important history of this beach & area is on the verge of being completely forgotten.

Under the inaugural Flinders Island Council, (elected 1908) surveying was completed for the Emita township located at Emita Beach on 7th February 1911 (Appendix 7). The town plan was drawn up in the Surveyor General's office in Hobart, dated 3rd March 1911 (Appendix 7). This plan identified land blocks and owners, a proposed harbour, a public hall site, a water reserve and a school reserve.

The first house in the town was Stella Maris, erected in 1912 on one land block and still standing today. A general store was opened and a jetty was constructed at the south west end of Emita Beach during 1912-1913. A small private school was built and opened. The Flinders Island wireless station was erected in 1914 only 800 metres from the proposed Emita town.

However, the history of the town has faded with few reminders apart from the 1911 survey map hanging in the Furneaux Museum and one remaining residence from a century ago, Stella Maris. While Emita was officially gazetted and proclaimed as a town on 22 May 1940, the fact that there has been relatively little building activity over the years does not negate its official town status. The proclaimed town is a crucial part of island history, Emita history. It relates to early settlement in a formative period of the island development, the first 25 years of the 20th century.

The telling of this history is not aroused by either of the current names, Emita Beach or Old Jetty Beach. When one first hears the name Old Jetty Beach, most would assume they can guess the origin of the name … simply, it's the site of an old jetty. Or when someone first hears the name Emita Beach, they probably assume they know the source of the name … simply, it's a beach in the Emita locality. In both cases, they are right. And the lead-in to local history stops there.

In contrast, the name of the adjacent beach, Allports Beach evokes questions about this name, which leads to to the role of Dr. Allport, his contribution to the local community and the history of Stella Maris. Similarly, a more pertinent name for Emita Beach will awaken interest in the history of the town, the beach and the area and help to ensure that this history is remembered and perpetuated. Place names are doorways to history.

3. Recommendation for renaming Emita Beach.

Firstly, in response to the four reasons identified, we recommend that Emita Beach also known as Old Jetty Beach is renamed.

Secondly, we recommend that Emita Beach is renamed as Huitfeldt Beach to acknowledge the first family to reside there, and to recognise the service that Valentine Huitfeldt provided to the Flinders Island community. Huitfeldt is easily pronounced as “Witfelt”.

Valentine Huitfeldt emigrated from Trondheim, Norway and arrived on Flinders Island with his wife Tilly, another Norwegian in 1890. He was a pioneer of the Emita area, building his first home near Emita Beach in 1891. He later became the first Warden of Flinders Island Council.

The purpose of this proposal is to justify the name Huitfeldt Beach with irrefutable evidence that is specific to this beach and the immediate area, while adhering to the DPIPWE Guidelines for place naming in Tasmania.

Refer to Appendix 10 for background on Valentine Huitfeldt in Norway.
For renaming Emita Beach to Huitfeldt Beach, there are four pillars of evidence that collectively amount to a unique and credible justification.

1. Valentine & Tilly Huitfeldt were the original family to own a house and reside in the town of Emita and the first family to reside right at Emita Beach.

2. Valentine Huitfeldt was the first Warden of Flinders Island Council over 107 years ago.

3. Valentine Huitfeldt was an Emita community leader in the 1890-1920 era, during which he and his direct family provided extensive community service to Emita and to Flinders Island.

4. Valentine Huitfeldt built two Emita historic homes both now over 100 years old, both standing in excellent condition, with one, Stella Maris located right at Emita Beach.

These four pillars of evidence are further described in the next four pages.

Importantly, the name Huitfeldt Beach addresses the four reasons for a name change outlined in the previous pages by giving this beach a unique and memorable identification, overcoming naming confusion, enhancing public safety and having a strong connection with local history. This proposal aims to prove the worthiness of the name Huitfeldt Beach using evidence that has stood the test of time for more than a century. It is evidence that is relevant today and will remain valid and germane for the next century and beyond.

The Nomenclature Board of the Tasmanian DPIPWE gives primary consideration to place names that are (a) in keeping with the character and tradition of the area, (b) with historical or local significance (c) suggestive of any peculiarity of a topographical feature, or (d) a name of Aboriginal derivation that has an appropriate meaning. The name Huitfeldt Beach satisfies DPIPWE naming guidelines (a) and (b), with the name Huitfeldt being significant in both Emita’s history and Flinders Island’s history, as described in the following pages.

Note: There is ample precedent on Flinders Island for naming landmarks and geographical features after early residents. Further, there are a number of Australian beaches named after the first resident or first landowner at or near that beach. For example, Macmasters Beach, NSW. For further examples, Appendix 11 comprises the names of over 80 Tasmanian beaches named after a family name.

Evidence #1 - First Resident of Emita Beach

Valentine and Tilly Huitfeldt were the first residents of the Emita Beach area and the Proclaimed* town of Emita. They lived in the Emita locality for over 32 years. They are both buried in the historic Wybalenna Cemetery, Emita, only 2 kms from Emita Beach.

The Flinders Island Council has identified that “road names on Flinders have historically related to the first family at the end of the road” (letter dated 16 October 2014 from the Mayor to the authors of this document). While this proposal is not about a road, it is reasonable that the name of the first family living at a beach might be considered in a similar manner when naming or renaming that beach.

*At the time (1912) Emita was a proposed township. It was proclaimed on 22 May 1940.
4. Justification of the name Huitfeldt Beach

Evidence #1 - First Resident of Emita Beach (continued)

Overview of Valentine & Tilly Huitfeldt's Emita habitat.

After arriving on Flinders Island in 1890, Valentine Huitfeldt built his first home near Emita Beach in 1891 where he and his family lived for the following 12 years. His next home for 10 years was Throndstad (now Kentdale), also in the Emita locality. Then in 1912, he moved to his third home, Stella Maris which was located right at Emita Beach where the family lived for 15 years. All three homes were within two kilometres of each other.

The location of Valentine Huitfeldt’s first home, built in 1891 was near the boundary of the area that 21 years later became the town of Emita confirmed by the current DPIPWE map on the next page. It was 750m from Emita Beach.

Refer to Appendix 2 for proof of the location of this home, and proof that there were no other homes in the town area when Valentine and his family established their first home.
4. Justification of the name Huitfeldt Beach

Evidence #1 - First Resident of Emita Beach (continued)

Stella Maris was the first home built in the proposed new township of Emita. Valentine and Tilly, having been the first residents in the Emita town area in 1891, then became the first family to reside at Emita Beach within the proclaimed Emita township in 1912.

Four of their six children were born at their 1st home. Their eldest daughter Emilie was the first child born in the area that later became the town of Emita (For proof, refer to Appendix 3). Years later, all six of their children grew to adulthood living at Stella Maris, alongside Emita Beach and Allports Beach through 1912 to 1927. Refer to Appendix 8 for documentation of Valentine’s land ownership of the Stella Maris block at Emita Beach, dated 4th December 1911.

Valentine & Tilly Huitfeldt and their family were the first people to reside at Emita Beach (Old Jetty Beach on the map below) and to live a full family life there for a number of years. Further evidence of Huitfeldt family life at Stella Maris as the first residents of Emita Beach is contained in Appendix 4, including an article from the Launceston Examiner describing the first wedding at Emita Beach and in the town of Emita, that of Emilie Huitfeldt in 1913.

[Map showing Huitfeldt home locations]
Evidence #2 - The First Warden

Valentine Huitfeldt was elected as the inaugural Warden of the first Flinders Island Council in 1908. His name warrants acknowledgement for this contribution to the community.

No landmark, road or geographical feature on Flinders Island has yet been named after him.

Many communities recognise their first Warden or Mayor through naming a landmark, a road or a geographical feature after them. Refer to Appendix 6 for examples including King Island which has named Munro Road and Munro Place after their first Warden who served from 1908, the same year as Valentine. A number of other Tasmanian councils have also named landmarks after their first Warden, for example Launceston, Devonport, Latrobe, Wynyard, St Helens (Break O’Day Council), Sheffield (Dorset Council), and others.

As Warden of the Flinders Island Council, Valentine had a strong connection with Emita Beach through the Council’s role in the surrounding land being subdivided, sold and an official plan drawn up for the proposed township of Emita. He was a leader of this new development.

Evidence #3 - Sustained community service

Valentine Huitfeldt was a leader of the Flinders Island community for a number of years and along with his family, provided extensive community service during this period.

Service to Flinders Island Council by Valentine Huitfeldt and his family

Following on from Valentine’s service as Warden, two of his son-in-law’s Cyril Robinson and Bert Grist represented the North Ward, including Emita and Emita Beach, as Councillors. His grandson James Huitfeldt Robinson served as a Flinders Island Councillor for the North Ward for 10 years, again including the Emita Beach area. In total, Valentine and his direct family contributed over 35 years of service as Flinders Island Councillors representing Emita and the North Ward.

Service to Flinders Island progress

The pre-WW1 era was a period of progress on the island and in the Emita locality. Valentine was a supporter and driver of this progress. Some examples for which documentary evidence has been compiled in Appendix 5 include:

- Valentine lobbying for a jetty to be built at Emita Beach, (1911). e.g. His letter to the Editor of The Mercury, August 1911.
- Valentine’s wife, Tilly, opening the new jetty at Emita Beach (30 January 1913)
- Valentine & Tilly supporting Walter Lyall’s new school at Emita Beach (February 1913) with two of their children attending.
- Some of Valentine’s land being made available for the wireless station at Emita (1913)
- Valentine opening a general store in the Emita town (June 1914)
- Valentine leading the way with the first residence built in the proposed Emita township (1912)
- Valentine as Warden being a champion of the new Emita township before he lived there.

Other known examples for which documentary evidence has not yet been located have not been included in this proposal or the appendices.
Evidence #3 - Sustained community service (continued)

Valentine & Tilly’s community service is further demonstrated by them making their home available for church services and community dances. They also hosted many Tasmanians and Victorians, many Flinders Islanders and a number of international travellers.

On 6th January 1911, Valentine hosted a visit by the Governor of Tasmania and the Premier at his home at Emita. They were accompanied by the Minister of Lands, the Surveyor General and a party of 14, along with other Flinders Island Councillors. Refer to Appendix 5, page 16.

That day, the Governor and his party were transported from their steamer at Lillies Beach to Throndstad with their route passing Emita Beach and through the proposed area for the Emita township. And again on their return to their steamer. This is documented in Arild Huitfeldt’s memoir in the Furneaux Museum.

The official survey for the Emita township was completed exactly one month after this visit to Throndstad (See Appendix 7). The town map on the right was then compiled, drawn and authorised by the Surveyor General on 3rd March 1911, less than two months after the above visit to Valentine’s home.

Based on this map, Emita was officially gazetted and proclaimed as a town in 1940, and while there has been relatively little building activity over the years it still remains an official town. A full page copy of this town plan is included in Appendix 7. A much larger version hangs on a wall in the Furneaux Museum.
Evidence #4 - Emita historic homes of character.

Valentine Huitfeldt contributed to the history of Emita through having built what are now regarded as two of the historic homes of Emita and Flinders Island, one of which is located at Emita Beach. This house, Stella Maris, still stands today 103 years after it was built, overlooking both Emita Beach and Allports Beach, just 250 metres from each. It is the oldest home in the area. Refer to Appendix 9.

Historic homes contribute to a community’s sense of heritage and character. They become beacons to tourists alerting them that there is history worthy of exploring. Stella Maris does this.

Importantly regarding this proposal, Stella Maris is located right at Emita Beach. Importantly regarding this proposal, it is a Huitfeldt house. Designed by and built for Valentine & Tilly Huitfeldt. It was the home of the first family to live in the town of Emita and in the Emita Beach area. It is an endorsement of the name Huitfeldt Beach.

Prior to Stella Maris, Valentine had engaged Harold Walker to build Thondstad now known as Kentdale, also in the Emita area and located only 1.7 kms from Emita Beach, and still standing after a century. The Huitfeldt family lived there for ten years before moving back to Emita Beach.

Historic homes in an island community are unique and worthy of preservation particularly because of the challenges in that era of transporting building materials to remote locations such as this. Motor vehicles or trucks on the island available to transport building materials were a rarity at the time (1902 through 1912). This meant transporting timber and other materials by boat to nearby beaches and then by horse to the building sites. Refer to Appendix 9.

Note:
The address of Stella Maris at the outset was Emita Beach rather than Allports Beach. The Emita town plan was centred around Emita Beach, not Allports Beach, and Stella Maris was built as part of the proposed Emita town. Allports Beach did not take its name until at least 15 years after Stella Maris was built, i.e. after the home was acquired by Dr. Allport in 1927.
5. Summary, DPIPWE Guidelines & Key Benefits

Based on the four reasons identified in Section 2, we recommend that
- Emita Beach is renamed to achieve increased name clarity, name recognition and safety for this picturesque beach while enhancing preservation of the history of the Emita township and surrounding area, and

Based on the evidence and justification presented in Section 4 we recommend that:
- Emita Beach be renamed as Huitfeldt Beach.

The renaming of Emita Beach to Huitfeldt Beach satisfies DPIPWE naming guidelines giving preference to names that are (a) in keeping with the character and tradition of the area, and (b) with historical or local significance. The name Huitfeldt Beach is in keeping with the character and tradition of Emita Beach through being directly linked to the area’s history including the proclaimed town, the first house, the wireless station, the old jetty and more. Further, the name Huitfeldt has both historical and local significance for Emita. It is an integral part of the history of this beach and the Emita township, making Huitfeldt Beach a fitting and meaningful name.

The four pillars of evidence presented individually satisfy DPIPWE’s guidelines:

1. Valentine and Tilly Huitfeldt were the first residents of Emita Beach area in 1891. Then over a century ago in 1912 they were the first residents in the Emita township and at Emita Beach.
2. Valentine Huitfeldt was the first Warden of Flinders Island Council, elected 107 years ago.
3. Valentine Huitfeldt, Tilly Huitfeldt and their family provided sustained community service to Emita and Flinders Island. This included 35 years of service as Councillors by their family,
4. Valentine Huitfeldt was the first owner and first resident of two of Emita’s historic homes, with one of these homes situated right at Emita Beach. Stella Maris was the first home built and occupied in the proclaimed Emita township over 100 years ago and still stands strongly today.

Importantly, a renaming to Huitfeldt Beach addresses the DPIPWE requirement for public safety: “The assignment of place-names must promote public safety and not cause confusion for emergency services, transport, communication, mail services or the general public.”

Renaming Emita Beach as Huitfeldt Beach enables the following key benefits for the community
a) Improving safety for beach-goers as there will be absolutely no confusion with an emergency call about “which beach are you at?”.
b) Removing ambiguity and confusion for tourists and beach-goers regarding “where is that old jetty beach?” or “which old jetty beach in the Emita locality?”.
c) Giving this beach a more unique and more memorable identity.
d) Providing a name that connects directly to an informative narrative about this beach and the history of the Emita township. The name provides a direct link to the local history,
e) Expanding the Emita narrative from a tourism viewpoint with a name that is another connection to the early European heritage of Flinders Island. European names which did not originate from Great Britain, add further interest to place naming in Australia. Often tourists are captivated by such place names and how these names are relevant to a place.

Closing thought.

Emita Beach aka Old Jetty Beach and the “Old Jetty” - A new chapter.
Valentine Huitfeldt campaigned for a town and a jetty to be built at Emita Beach. By 1912 Valentine and Tilly were living alongside Emita Beach, just before this new jetty was completed. Then in January 1913, Tilly Huitfeldt officially opened the new jetty. They were the early champions of this jetty.
The jetty was operational at least 27 years before the name “Old Jetty Beach” evolved when it was superseded by the new Port Davies wharf in 1939. Now, it’s an appropriate closure to the “old jetty” chapter for this beach to be renamed and take its new name from the family who had a direct involvement with the jetty being built there in the first place.