

WEST END ROAD, LEEKA



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Application for a Bushwalking Tourism Operation

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1. INTRODUCTION

Planning Tas Pty Ltd trading as Ireneinc Planning and Urban design has been engaged by World Expeditions to prepare this planning report to accompany an application for the use of the site for tourist operation as part of bushwalking expeditions.

This report provides an assessment of the site and application against the relevant provisions of the *Flinders Planning Scheme 1994*.

1.1 SUBJECT SITE

The site is located at West End Road, Leeka (CT 225581/1), described in the following figure:



Figure 1: Site location with topographic plan and cadastral parcels from www.thelist.tas.gov.au © the State of Tasmania

The property is currently vacant and divided north/south by West End Road which runs east/west through the centre of the property. The adjoining land to the east is a residential property, to the south is the foreshore reserve and other boundaries are also Crown land, being the Mount Tanner Nature Recreation Area, which includes the Flinders Trail.

The following figure further describes the site and surrounds:



Figure 2: Site description with State aerial photo and cadastral parcels from www.thelist.tas.gov.au © the State of Tasmania

1.1.1 NATURAL VALUES

The site is vegetated and has a minor waterway running north south through the centre of the property.

The TASVEG 4.0 mapping provided on the LIST indicates the main vegetation community is (NCR) *Callitris rhomboidea* forest, foreshore areas are also mapped as (GHC) Coastal grass and herbfield. This has been confirmed by the accompanying Natural Values Report. The following figure further details the mapped natural values information available:

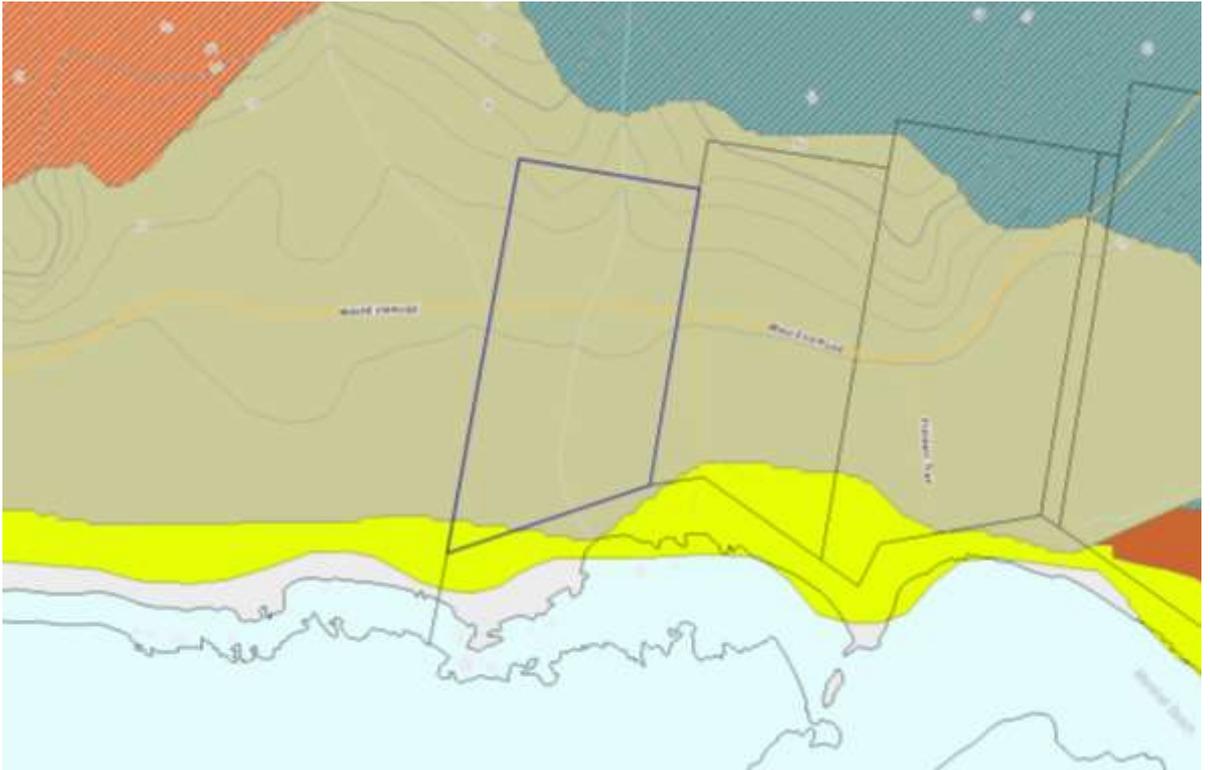


Figure 3: Site with Tasveg 4.0, Cadastral parcels, Rivers & streams, Road names & Centerlines from www.thelist.tas.gov.au © the State of Tasmania

The following further describes the existing conditions in proximity to the foreshore of the property.



Figure 4: Image of vegetation on site

2. PROPOSAL

The proposal is for use of the property as part of multi-day bushwalking expeditions providing interpretive wilderness walking experience of northern Flinders Island. They will provide an overnight base as part of guided wilderness experiences with interpretive talks on native flora, fauna and astronomy, as well as bird watching, and landscape art retreats during the summer season. Enhancing and respecting the natural values of the site is pivotal for the success of the wilderness tourism operation.

Bookings will be exclusively through World Expeditions with groups no larger than 14 persons with 2-3 wilderness guides. Wilderness guides are highly trained in facilitating a wilderness experience which includes abiding by a 'leave no trace' principle, and the business is an eco-certified tourism operator.

The site is uniquely located near iconic walks and will provide a wilderness tourist experience in their vicinity. The site will provide communal pods for group activities and accommodation pods/tents for overnight stays. All the pods/tents will be semi-permanent and will be packed down and removed from the site at the end of each season (October -April).

All services will also be removable including the toilet facilities which are proposed to be an above-ground full capture ablution block. A minimal access track will be constructed to allow for pack up/pack down. Walk participants will be able to walk into the site and therefore vehicle movements will be restricted to supply deliveries and pack up and set down.

2.1 ACCESS

The gravel access will be a total length of 113m with a width of 3m. A passing bay and turning area are provided. It will require 445m² of vegetation to be cleared. The road is setback from the eastern boundary by 3.7-7.2m.

2.2 TENTS

2.2.1 COMMUNAL TENTS

The communal space for activities will be three tents configure in a triangular pattern with sheltered walkways connecting each tent. The dimensions of each tent will be 3032mmx3502mm with a height of 3502mm. The colour will be brown/beige.

These tents will be located below the tree canopy where possible and understorey clearance and selective tree clearance is required. A total area of 116 m² will be impacted. Micro siting in accordance with the recommendations of the Natural Values Report by North Barker.



Figure 5: example of communal tent arrangement

2.2.2 SLEEPING TENTS

The sleeping tents will be 2.4 x 2.4m with a height of 1.8m and be a dark brown/beige colour. They will sit below the tree canopies with some understorey clearance required. There will be total of 7 tent sites. Micro siting in accordance with the recommendations of the Natural Values Report by North Barker.



Figure 6: example of sleeping tent

2.3 ABLUTION BLOCK

The abluion block will be located approximately 750 mm off natural ground level with dimensions of 4980mmx2560mmx area and a height of 3750mm. A low impact, eco-friendly onsite system will be adopted, most likely a composting toilet, with the service chamber located below the finished floor level. The abluion block covering will be made from PVC fabric, with steel framing with a peaked roof. The colour will blend with the environment and likely be brown/ beige.

Some modification to vegetation will be required however where possible tree removal will be avoided. Approximately 16m² of land will be impacted.

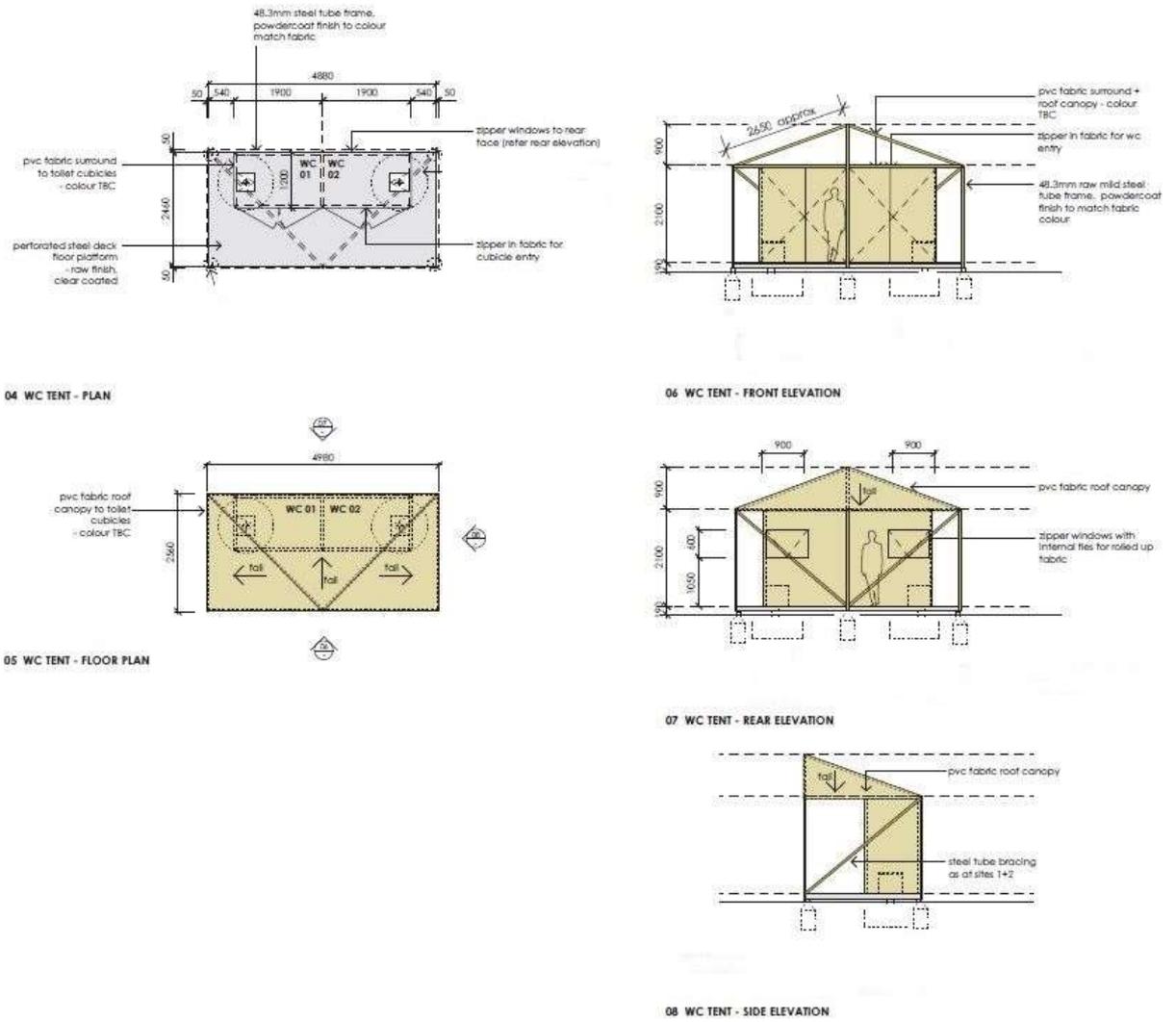


Figure 7: diagram of ablation block (World Expeditions 2021)

3. PLANNING SCHEME REQUIREMENTS

The following is an assessment of the proposal in response to the provisions of the *Flinders Planning Scheme 1994* (the planning scheme).

3.1 USE

Schedule 1 of the planning scheme includes the following use definition applicable to the application:

Tourist Operation means the use or development of land specifically for integrated tourist purposes, providing accommodation, recreation and/or entertainment, indoor or outdoor display of historical, natural or other interest, or any other similar attraction. The definition does not include any specific type of recreational use or form of tourist accommodation elsewhere defined.

3.2 ZONE

The site is within the Rural Zone as described in the following figure:



Figure 8: Zone plan with Flinders planning zones, Cadastral parcels, road names and centerlines from www.thelist.tas.gov.au © the State of Tasmania

3.2.1 DESIRED ZONE CHARACTER AND ZONE GUIDELINES

Part 5.8.2 of the planning scheme includes the Zone Character and Zone Guidelines applicable to the Rural Zone, the following are relevant to the application:

...(b) Use or development should enhance the rural character of the zone. Buildings should be substantial distances from the road frontage and apart, unless inappropriate for operational or topographical reasons.

Where land clearance is undertaken it should be visually sympathetic; important trees (or stands of trees) should be retained, important hilltop locations should not be cleared and location of trees and shrubs along fence lines, property boundaries, watercourses and at property entrances is encouraged.

Buildings and structures for aquaculture should be sited with regard to the protection of coastal scenery and compatibility with recreational use of the coastline.

(c) Land use or development and management practices shall be environmentally appropriate and shall avoid contamination or despoliation of the land, ground water, water courses, shore-lines, lagoons and marshes. Sand-dunes and coastal vegetation and ecologically important areas shall be protected from degradation. ...

The use and associated activities will be substantially setback from the frontage. Vegetation impacts will be minimised to that necessary for access and sites for the pods/tents and ablution block and where possible, clearing will be restricted to understory only.

The proposed use is very unlikely to result in contamination or despoliation given the low impact footprint and temporary nature of the on-ground activity. The proposed use only occurs for half the year and will therefore have a lesser impact.

3.2.2 DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Part 5.8.4 of the planning scheme includes development standards relevant to height and setback and external material of buildings, however as no buildings are proposed in the application (being only for temporary tent sites and relocatable facilities, there are no applicable standards to the application.

3.2.3 TABLE OF USE OR DEVELOPMENT

In accordance with part 5.8.5 of the planning scheme, a Tourism Operation is a discretionary Use.

3.3 USE AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

3.3.1 USE

Part 6.1 includes the following applicable to the application:

(a) Use or development shall not unreasonably impact on any existing or intended use of development of neighbouring land.

The neighbouring land is residential and forested land belonging to Parks and Wildlife. There is 130m between the proposed location of use and the dwelling with significant vegetation between the two locations.

Furthermore, as the proposal is for a wilderness experience, patrons will be required to walk into the site and therefore vehicle movements will be restricted to supply deliveries and pack up and set down. The use is complementary to the adjoining parks land which hosts several walks.

3.3.2 CHARACTER

Part 6.2 includes the following applicable to the application:

- (a) Use and development shall adequately respect the character of, and future intentions for the area in which it is to be located.*
- ...(c) Use or development (including public facilities and services) should adequately respect the surrounding streetscape and neighbouring use or development, particularly in relation to scale, setbacks, form (including roof shape), landscaping, materials, colours and fencing.*
- (d) Landscaping of use or development shall be of a type, form, variety(s) and character which is suited to the intention of the zone, the area and the nature of the use or development.*
- (e) Where trees are an important element in the character of an area they should be retained...*

The use is complementary to the surrounding natural environment. The future intention, based on the Council's Draft LPSs, is for the site and surrounding land to become the Landscape Conservation Zone. The intent of this future zone is:

22.1.1 To provide for the protection, conservation and management of landscape values.

22.1.2 To provide for compatible use or development that does not adversely impact on the protection, conservation and management of the landscape values.

The proposal is intended to minimise clearance and works to the minimum necessary to support the use and development. The use will operate for only six months of the year and is temporary in nature resulting in minimal impact on any future intention for the site (if any).

The proposal will be located over 100m from West End Road (excluding the access). The neighbouring land is largely vegetated land with small openings to accommodate access into the surrounding sites. The proposal will be consistent with the character of the area with only a small opening proposed to accommodate access and the use and development will be located to the south of the property, over 100m from the road. The pods and tents are temporary, of a small scale and can be packed down at the end of the season. They will be darker colours (brown/beige) to blend with the surrounding environment.

Given the retention is that natural vegetation is to be retained apart from the absolute minimum footprint for tent sites and facilities additional landscaping is not considered necessary. In particular, trees will be retained wherever possible and all recommendations from the Natural Values report will be adopted.

3.3.3 AMENITY

The use is for a tourist operation of a small scale and semipermanent (active for 6 months of the year) and as such none of the guidelines are relevant to the application.

3.3.4 ENVIRONMENT

Part 6.4 includes the following applicable to the application:

- a) Use or development shall not be allowed to detrimentally affect the environment. All areas, and sensitive ecological and/or visual areas in particular, shall be developed in a manner and to an extent which is consistent with the protection of the values of the area.*

(b) Use or Development and land management practices shall be directed towards achieving environmental sustainability, biodiversity and ecological balance, and avoiding environmental damage such as soil erosion, coastal dune erosion, loss of important animal and plant species and increases in vermin populations.

(c) Use or Development shall not be located in areas of unacceptable risk (eg. from fire, flood or landslip). In situations where risk may exist, use and development shall be appropriately sited and designed to provide an acceptable level of protection and safety for future users. In particular.

(i) Lands subject to flood risk are those subject to a greater than one in a 100 year flood interval (1% probability), and land, the natural surface level of which is below 3 metres Australian Height Datum (AHD); and

(ii) Land which comprises soils of known or suspected instability, has a slope greater than 1 in 4, or is filled or reclaimed land, are deemed to constitute an unstable land hazard; and

(iii) Use and development in bushfire prone areas will comply with the provisions of Schedule 7 Development in Bushfire Prone Areas or some other provisions acceptable to Council and the Tasmania Fire Service.

...(f) Use or development shall be of a suitable form and siting to avoid any adverse impact on any watercourse and vice versa. Use or development (including the siting of effluent disposal systems) shall be setback a minimum of 40 metres, or such distance as is required, from a watercourse to avoid degradation of water quality.

(g) Use of land in the vicinity of those watercourses identified in Schedule 3 shall provide Riparian Reserves in an appropriate location and form.

The proposed development has a very small footprint and will only operate for 6 months of the year which will mitigate any erosive impact caused by increased use of the property. The proposed colours and materials will blend with the environment and the impact is considered to be minimal and no detrimental effects on the environment are anticipated to occur. All recommendations from the Natural Values Report will be adopted.

Based on the information available there is no risk from landslip or flooding and no bushfire hazard management is required.

The abluent block and onsite system will be located in excess of 40m from the coast and from the waterway through the site.

3.3.5 ACCESS AND PARKING

Part 6.6 includes the following applicable to the application:

(a) All new lots must be provided with satisfactory pedestrian and vehicular access to a public street.

(b) All Use or Development shall provide satisfactory pedestrian and vehicular access which is suited to the volume and needs of future users.

...(d) Road widths shall be appropriate to the road function, expected traffic type and volume, and future subdivision potential of the subject and surrounding land.

...(f) Road intersections shall be kept to a minimum with the use of existing roads, service roads and/or shared driveways being encouraged where appropriate.

(g) Intersections of roads, footpaths and foot crossings and driveways shall provide adequate safety for all users and shall satisfy the relevant requirements of Schedule 4.

(h) New Use or Development shall provide a suitably constructed driveway of a width to provide for the safe ingress and egress of the anticipated volume of traffic associated with the Use or Development

(i) New Use or Development shall provide adequate car parking to provide for the demand it generates and shall be capable of being safely accessed.

(j) On site turning shall be provided for development involving significant traffic volumes, heavy vehicle types and/or on roads which carry significant amounts of traffic.

(k) New Use or Development in Bushfire Prone Areas will require access that complies with the provisions of Schedule 7, Development in Bushfire Prone Areas.

The intention of the site is for patrons to walk in and out with vehicle traffic restricted to pack up and pack down. The development does not require parking for these reasons only access is proposed. Only one access route is proposed and therefore road intersections are minimised. Sufficient manoeuvring space has been provided on-site allowing vehicles to exit and enter in a forward direction.

3.3.6 SERVICES

No inground services are proposed. Wastewater will be disposed of through a low impact eco-friendly on-site solution, most likely a composting toilet. Water will be supplied through refillable containers and no power is required.

3.3.7 SOCIAL INTEREST

Part 6.8 includes the following applicable to the application:

- 1. Use or Development should demonstrate how it suits the community interest.*
- 2. Use or Development shall have adequate and appropriate types and levels of access to social facilities and services (eg. shops, government agencies, telecommunication, health services and educational facilities).*

The proposal is of a very small scale as part of the recreational tourism offering of guided walks including within the adjacent Mount Tanner Nature Recreation Area. The packaged tourism offering provides all the services and provisions participants require during their walk.

3.4 SPECIAL AREA PROVISIONS

3.4.1 VISUAL SENSITIVE AREAS

The western half of the subject land is mapped as being within a Visual Sensitive Area and therefore the provisions of Part 7.2 of the planning scheme are applicable:



Figure 9: Mapped area with Visually sensitive area, Cadastral parcels, road names and centerlines from www.thelist.tas.gov.au © the State of Tasmania

The objectives of the Visually Sensitive Areas are:

- (a) *To retain the natural appearance of each Area;*
- (b) *To minimise the visual impact of Use or Development;*
- (c) *To retain and restore where possible the natural vegetation cover.*

Considerations:

- (a) *The objectives listed in Clause 7.2.2*
- (b) *The siting, orientation, setbacks, bulk, form, height, scale and external finishes of buildings and structures.*
- (c) *The visual impact of buildings, clearing, excavation, access, construction, fences, firebreaks or the deposition of fill.*
- (d) *The adequacy of proposed landscaping and whether any special works or practices are required to protect the scenic values of the site.*
- (e) *Whether development is proposed to be located on skylines or ridgelines.*

The proposal is designed to meet the required objectives and is not located on a skyline or ridgeline. No buildings or works are proposed in the visual sensitivity area apart from a narrow walking path and 4 of the sleeping tent sites. These works and tents will be located within the retained natural vegetation and will not, therefore, be visible from outside the site.

3.4.2 ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

The entire site as with all of the Mount Tanner and Marshall Bay area is mapped as being an Ecologically Sensitive Area and therefore the provisions of Part 7.3 of the planning scheme are applicable:

The objectives of the Ecologically Sensitive Areas are:

- (a) *to promote the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity;*
- (b) *to protect and enhance ecosystems, habitats and biological communities which enable the survival of indigenous flora and fauna and assist to maintain biodiversity;*
- (c) *to identify and protect habitats which support threatened, rare or endangered species;*
- (d) *to ensure that planning decisions incorporate consideration of the ecological impacts of Use or Development.*
- (e) *to encourage land management practices, based on expert advice, that will sustain the natural and ecological values of the land.*

Considerations:

...Council shall consider the following matters:

- (a) The objectives listed in Clause 7.3.2;*
- (b) The effect of the proposed Use on the natural values of the land;*
- (c) The siting of buildings, structures, works and effluent disposal systems in relation to natural vegetation, watercourses and wetlands;*
- (d) The likely ecological impact of building, clearing, excavation, drainage works, access construction, vehicular traffic, fences, firebreaks or the deposition of fill;*
- (e) The adequacy of proposed management and whether any special works or practices are required to protect the ecological values of the site;*
- (f) Whether access to particular sites should be restricted on a seasonal or more frequent basis in order to conserve the reproductive potential of species;*

- (g) The identification of natural values, including the presence of any rare, threatened or endangered species and what management requirements may be necessary;*
- (h) The need for management approaches to prevent the importation of weeds, soil diseases or toxic substances that may contaminate the land.*

The site is vegetated with a minor waterway running north-south through the centre of the property. The TASVEG 4.0 mapping indicates the vegetation community is *Callitris rhomboidea* forest. This is a threatened vegetation community. There is potential for threatened fauna within 100m of the site which are detailed in the Natural Values Atlas search which accompanies this application, however, there are no verified sightings of any of the potential threatened fauna.

The use is low impact in that it only operates for 6 months of the year and the use requires temporary installation of tents and an ablution block. Patrons will be required to walk in and out of the site, and minimal vehicle movements will occur in the area.

No buildings, structures or effluent systems are proposed. The works which are involved are exclusively the clearance and maintenance of the cleared areas prior to the season commencing to facilitate the use of the site as a tourist operation.

Weed mitigation spread can be ensured through walking hygiene practices such as ensuring boot and equipment are clean prior to entering the site and that works are undertaken in a manner that does not involve the spread of soil and vegetation beyond the site and that any equipment is cleaned prior to use on the site. Vehicle movements will be restricted to daylight hours to ensure minimal impacts arising from roadkill.

For further details please refer to the Natural Values Report that accompanies this application, and all recommendations will be adopted.



Figure 10: image of vegetation on site (World Expeditions 2021)

3.4.3 SHORELINES, WATER BODIES AND WATERCOURSES AREAS

The southern edge of the subject land is mapped as being a Shoreline Waterbody Area and therefore the provisions of Part 7.5 of the planning scheme are applicable:



Figure 11: Mapped area with Shoreline waterbody area, Cadastral parcels, road names and centerlines from www.thelist.tas.gov.au © the State of Tasmania

In accordance with 7.5.2 applications need to address:

- (a) Contours and levels of the natural surfaces in relation to the range of water levels likely to occur in the vicinity of the proposed Use or Development.*
- (b) Existing water quality, including seasonal variations;*
- (c) Quantities and qualities of water that are proposed to be abstracted from or discharged to the sea, a water body or a watercourse listed in Schedule 3;*
- (d) The likely impact of the proposed Use or Development on the quality of waters by reason of off-site effects such as erosion, siltation, salination chemical spray drift, nutrient seepage, seed dispersal, or other emissions;*
- (e) The natural, ecological, cultural, recreational and aesthetic qualities of the site.*

Considerations:

- (a) The siting, orientation, setbacks, bulk, form, height, scale, materials and external finishes of buildings and structures;*
- (b) The impact upon water quality, foreshore or streamside vegetation and wildlife habitat of building, clearing, excavation, effluent disposal, access construction, fences, firebreaks or the deposition of fill;*
- ...(d) Whether additional fencing or any other special works or practices are required to protect the items listed in Schedule 3; ...*

No building or structures are proposed. Very minimal clearing is proposed in the protected area, only the clearance of the understorey for tent locations and paths. The understorey is largely made up of fallen bark, trees and leaves, interspersed with bracken. Where possible, tents will be sited in locations not requiring significant understorey clearance.

4. CONCLUSION

The application is seeking approval for the use of the site for multi-day bushwalking expeditions providing interpretive wilderness walking experiences of northern Flinders Island located at West End Road, Leeka. The use falls within the use class of a tourist operation which is discretionary in the zone.

The associated works include the development of an access road and minor clearance to facilitate the sites for the tents and ablution block. Where possible this will be restricted to understorey clearance and selective tree/limb removal within the *Callitris rhomboidea* forest.

This report provides an assessment of the site and application against the relevant provisions of the *Flinders Planning Scheme 1994*.