

## Major Projects Undertaken in Tasmania

### Midlands Water Scheme Assessment

The Midlands Water Scheme project comprises two irrigation schemes that deliver a combined annual total of 47 500 megalitres of water to the Southern and Northern Midlands regions of the State. Infrastructure components of the project include supply and distribution pipelines, power and pumping stations and dams. River sections are also used by the schemes for transmission of water. The location of the schemes is in a recognised biodiversity hotspot and is the stronghold for the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1995* (EPBCA) listed Lowland Native Grassland of Tasmania. The project is being delivered under the National Partnership Agreement on Water for the Future (COAG 2009). The Commonwealth Government has agreed to provide up to \$140 million of funding from the Water for the Future initiative to assist Tasmania in undertaking sustainable irrigation infrastructure projects, including the Midlands Water Scheme.

The assessment and approvals framework for this project spans both State Government and Commonwealth Government regulatory systems, including State sector specific legislation (*Water Management Act 1999*), land use and access, development/planning, cultural heritage and environmental laws, with the responsibility for decisions under these Acts falling to various levels of government. Commonwealth Government requirements under funding arrangements included consideration under the EPBCA; this consideration was through the strategic assessment provisions of the Act.

The strategic assessment evaluated a Program, which describes the policies, regulatory framework and processes in Tasmania that will govern how irrigation water is made available to the Midlands region, while meeting commitments and undertakings for the protection and management of the matters of national environmental significance. The determination of issues for assessment was based largely around risk assessment processes tailored to the irrigation industry.

### Shree Minerals – Nelson Bay River

Shree Minerals Ltd proposed to develop an open pit magnetite/hematite mine and processing plant near Nelson Bay River, approximately 7 kilometres east of Temma in North West Tasmania. The proposed mine will target 4 million tonnes of the resource over a 10 year period producing 150 000 tonnes of product per year.

A Development Application was lodged with a supporting Development Proposal and Environmental Management Plan (DPEMP) to the Circular Head Council, which was then referred to the Board of the Environment Protection Authority (the Board) for assessment under the *Tasmanian Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994*.

The Nelson Bay River project was also deemed a controlled action under the EPBCA, with the Australian Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities requiring a separate assessment process at the Commonwealth level.

## **Basslink**

Basslink was a major project initiated in the late 1990s to link the Tasmanian and Victorian electricity grids by a combined subsea and overland high-voltage, direct current interconnector. This enabled Tasmania to join the national electricity market.

Basslink was declared a Project of State Significance (PoSS) under the *Tasmanian State Policies and Projects Act 1993*. On 19 April 1999, the then Resource Planning and Development Commission (now the Tasmanian Planning Commission) received a direction from the then Tasmanian Premier to undertake an integrated assessment of the Basslink Pty Ltd proposal.

Also in April 1999, the Victorian, Tasmanian and Commonwealth Governments executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to ensure a joint assessment of the Basslink proposal and an integrated assessment report that would satisfy the requirements of all jurisdictions. The MOU contained an agreed Combined Assessment/Approvals Process. The assessment was undertaken by a Joint Advisory Panel, which was established pursuant to the MOU, with members from each jurisdiction.

The PoSS process enabled an integrated assessment and issue of all permits required irrespective of jurisdiction or legislative bias.

## **Parliament Square Redevelopment**

In 2008, the Tasmanian Government made the decision to sell, via a three stage tender process, the site known as '*parliament square*' in Hobart. The sale was subject to a range of development conditions, including a long term office accommodation lease by the State Government. The project objectives and design principles were developed prior to the tender process with extensive input from the then planning authorities, the Sullivans Cove Waterfront Authority and Heritage Tasmania.

In April 2009, the Tasmanian Government shortlisted three proposals for the redevelopment of the area. An open consultation process was undertaken along with extensive tender evaluation to decide on the most appropriate design for the area. The majority of respondents to the public consultation process favoured the Citta Property Group Pty Ltd scheme, which included the demolition of 10 Murray Street.

In August 2009, the Government announced Citta Property Group Pty Ltd as the preferred developer to undertake the redevelopment project.

Following litigation and delays, in December 2012 Royal Assent was received

for the *Parliament Square Planning Permit Act 2012*. The legislation validated the planning permit issued by the former planning authority, the Sullivans Cove Waterfront Authority. The legislation also provided that all current appeals in relation to the planning permit were extinguished, and that there can be no further appeals in relation to the permit.

### **Bridgewater Bridge Replacement**

The Bridgewater Bridge Replacement is a major project (estimated cost of \$800 million) requiring extensive forward planning to define the road corridor and the bridge form.

Land acquisition for the road corridor has commenced, with first stage project planning completed and Commonwealth Government funds sought for the second stage of planning. Construction is expected to commence in 2019, subject to funding.

The project falls within multiple planning schemes. While the proponent has yet to determine what assessment and approval process to use, an option is to use legislative provisions for a Project of Regional Significance (PoRS) process. The PoRS process was introduced in 2010 and is as yet untested for major infrastructure projects.

## Tarkine Forest Drive Project ('Tarkine Tourist Road')

The Tarkine Forest Drive Project, otherwise known as the 'Tarkine Tourist Road', was proposed to be developed in the North West of Tasmania by the Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources. The proposal sought to seal and improve 92.7 kilometres of existing road, replace two bridges and improve tourism facilities to support greater visitation by tourists.

The Tarkine Tourist Road project required approval from the Commonwealth Government under the EPBCA, with approval conditions relating to Tasmanian Devil and other road kill species.