The following background paper has been prepared to support the 'Enquiry by Design' process for the Macquarie Point Railyards site, the workshop for which has been scheduled for 29 February 2012.

The redevelopment of the Macquarie Point Railyards represents an important opportunity for the city of Hobart to realise its ambition to become a 'world-class, liveable waterfront city'. Depending on its final composition, the redevelopment of the railyards site will play a pivotal role in the long-term economic, cultural and community growth of Hobart.

A number of strategic and planning documents have been prepared that have examined development options for the railyards site. These documents point to 'mixed use' development as the appropriate future of the site. The task now is to determine what the most appropriate mix of uses should be. Mixed use, in this context, is intended to include some (but not necessarily all) uses, such as residential, retail (including cafés and restaurants), tourism, commercial, educational and recreational.

1.1 Enquiry By Design (EBD)

The EBD process involves an intensive workshop that will provide key stakeholders with an opportunity to have input into the future use and development process for the railyards site. The workshop will include:

- presentation from consultants on their research to date
- investigation of future options for the site.

A key output of the EBD workshop process will be a range of scenarios for further assessment and refinement.

1.2 Site Location

The Macquarie Point Railyards site lies on the western bank of the Derwent River. The Hobart Central Business District (CBD) lies approximately 800 metres further inland (west). Directly to the south of the site lies Sullivan Cove, a small working port area which has grown to become Hobart’s premier tourist, dining, cultural and recreational destination. Sullivans Cove also plays an important role in supporting the Australian and French Antarctic programs, an international cruise terminal (currently under development), the southern fishing fleet and local ferry services.

Figure 1 illustrates the Macquarie Point Railyards site, which is bound by the Tasman Highway to the west; the Regatta grounds to the north, Hobart port to the east and Evans Street to the south.
1.3 Site History

The Macquarie Point Railyards site has had a long association with the Hobart port. The majority of the site sits on reclaimed land, although there have been only marginal changes to the local coastline since 1937, when the existing port facilities were expanded to a configuration resembling today’s layout.

The State Government’s decision to relocate the transport and logistics capability from the site to the Brighton transport hub, provides the opportunity for alternative development on the site. In 2008, the relocation of the Royal Hobart Hospital to the site was considered, and a substantial amount of site assessment work and evaluation was carried out. However, after much deliberation it was resolved the hospital should be redeveloped on the existing site, thereby leaving alternative options for the railyards site to be considered.

FIGURE 1 - SITE CONTEXT

Source: Google Earth 2012
1.4 Site Characteristics

The subject site is an 8.4 hectare parcel of land that is presently used as an intermodal transport hub for shipping, road and rail freight. It is the government’s intention to relocate the existing facilities to Brighton as part of the Brighton transport hub project: http://www.transport.tas.gov.au/infrastructure_projects/brighton_transport_projects/brighton_transport_hub_project

The site also includes a concrete batching plant and coolstore.

As to be expected with a freight handling facility, the topography of the land is predominately flat. The only major elevation around the site incorporates the adjacent Regatta Grounds and Cenotaph.

The site includes a number of large-sized storage facilities and site offices. However, facilities on the site are largely dominated by container storage. The adjacent land uses are all relatively low rise, offering the potential for any new developments to enjoy waterfront vistas.

Following many years of industrial use, some areas of the site contain major contaminants (such as diesel fuel and emissions from the historic gasworks). Remediation of these contaminated areas will be an important consideration in the future development of the site. Other development constraints are expected to include height restrictions along sight corridors leading to the Cenotaph.

1.5 Surrounding Land Uses

Other uses directly adjacent to the site are:

- caustic soda storage facility
- waste water treatment plant
• Hobart port – occupies the adjacent 13-hectare site. In addition to standard maritime functions, portions of this area are also used for storage of rail freight and other goods unrelated to maritime transport.

It is expected that the caustic soda storage facility will be relocated ahead of the site being redeveloped. Relocation of the waste water treatment plant will be an important consideration as part of the future development plans for the site.

Other notable surrounding land uses that require consideration for connectivity include the following:

• **Queens Domain**: a large parkland area that occupies a long stretch of the western coastline of the Derwent River.

• **Cenotaph**: protecting the views from the Cenotaph is an important consideration in the maximum building heights of any new development.

• **Regatta Point**: occupies a section of coastline directly to the north-east of the railyards. This area contains the regatta grounds, and is adjacent to slip yards and the HMAS Huon site.

• **Royal Botanic Gardens**: these are located approximately one kilometre north of the site and are primarily accessible via the Tasman Highway. The gardens form part of the wider urban break created by the Queen’s Domain.

• **Macquarie Wharf Sheds**: these are used primarily as a major cargo handling and distribution centre, although allowable uses include arts, cultural and educational uses under the Sullivans Cove Planning Scheme.

Macquarie Wharf No 2 Shed is now undergoing a redevelopment to accommodate the Australian and French Antarctic programs and an international cruise ship terminal. There could be potential to leverage off the variety of uses contained in these sheds in any new development.

• **Sullivans Cove**: aside from being an operational port for fishing, local ferries, recreational boating and other maritime activities, the Sullivans Cove precinct contains a number of shops, restaurants and other tourist amenities. The integration of this area with the railyards site will be an important consideration.

• **Fringe CBD**: contains a number of restaurants and small retail outlets in the area, some hotel and residential accommodation, along with cultural assets such as the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, the Federation Concert Hall and the Theatre Royal. Increasing the scale of residential development in the area, along with further development of cultural assets and cafés and restaurants, has the potential to create a vibrant and active precinct at the eastern end of the CBD.
1.6 **Planning Constraints**

Under the current planning scheme, the railyards site is prohibited from being used for an educational centre, major sports and recreation centre, residential accommodation and visitor accommodation (Sullivan’s Cove Waterfront Authority, 2011). It is expected that this scheme require amendment to allow alternative development (for example, residential use) should it be necessary.

1.7 **Accessibility**

One of site’s most favourable attributes is its accessibility. It is directly accessible to Hobart’s major road networks through its proximity to the Tasman Highway and Brooker Avenue. These major arterial routes provide excellent access from both the north and west respectively. Nonetheless, development of the site will still require close attention to traffic movement in and out of the site, particularly as the point of entry is currently at the confluence of these major arterial roads and adjoining roads.

The relocation of the existing freight facilities to the north of the city will improve accessibility, as it will result in a decrease in the number of heavy vehicles using Brooker Avenue, which is one of the most congested sections of road in the state during peak periods.

Pedestrian access from the Hobart CBD is more of a challenge. The creation of a safe and convenient pedestrian route to the site across the heavily used Macquarie and Davey Streets will be paramount to the success of the site if it is to have certain uses (such as retail). The failure to adequately connect the site to adjacent locations and existing networks will severely restrict the potential uses on the site and mean the site will become a destination in its own right rather than forming part of an integrated CBD/waterfront precinct.

Documents relating to the site have also identified access and parking as one of the most important challenges for development on the site. Each report generally recommends a minimum of two access points be provided to allow separation of activities and better traffic flow.

1.8 **Document Review**

There are several key documents that have guided the planning and design of the Macquarie Point Railyards site. These are briefly detailed below:

- **Sullivans Cove Master Plan**: prepared by the State Architect in August 2010, the plan provides a vision for how Sullivans Cove will develop over the next decade and beyond, and provides context against which proposals for development or public space may be considered. It directs the railyards site to be developed as a mixed-use site, possibly containing research, education, car parking, a public transport hub, residential, hotel, retail or commercial buildings.
**Hobart 2010 Public Spaces and Public Life (Inner City Development Plan):** prepared in 2010 by Gehl Architects, this document assesses the way in which Hobart residents use and move within the inner city region. It provides a series of recommendations relating to improving the public open space realm, including the city’s interaction with the waterfront, the role of public transport and parking and the development of the Macquarie Pont Railyards.

**Sullivans Cove Planning Scheme:** prepared in 1997, the scheme provides a strategic framework governing development in the Sullivans Cove area. This area includes the railyards site, Macquarie Wharf, the Domain, Victoria and Constitution Docks and Battery Point.

**Hobart Railyards Urban Design Strategy:** prepared by the Sullivans Cove Waterfront Authority in December 2008, the document outlines the vision and some the key principles and strategies that should guide the future design of the site. Some of the principles it outlines include activation of street fronts, integrated parking and transport and improved access to the water’s edge.

**Royal Hobart Hospital Redevelopment- Assessment of Railyards Site:** prepared for the Department of Health and Human Services by Pitt and Sherry in February 2008, the document was a site assessment for the relocation of the Royal Hobart Hospital to the railyards site. The findings, however, are still relevant for any other development on the site. It found that the only major issue was soil contamination and this will need to be remediated before any development can occur.

### 1.9 Issues For Consideration

Some of the currently-identified issues for consideration in developing the railyards site to include:

- site contamination and remediation
- relocation of adjacent uses that are not compatible with a possible mixed-use development
- future use of Hobart port and its integration with the railyards site
- protecting views from the Cenotaph and building height restrictions
- accessibility both from a pedestrian and vehicle perspective
- integrating this site with the surrounding land uses, the CBD and Sullivans Cove. Care needs to be taken not to detract from these established destinations.
- broader integration with surrounding precincts and points of interest, for example, Salamanca Place, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Princess Wharves, Macquarie Wharves, Elizabeth Street Pier and Brooke Street Pier, Institute of Engineers building and the Theatre Royal.
Where to from here..?

Please review this document and consider the issues it raises. Discussion of these and other requirements and constraints will be facilitated at the EBD workshop to be held 29 February 2012.

The objective of the EBD workshop is to gather input regarding the future potential use options for the site and how these may be realised.

The EBD workshop will create a precinct concept plan (or concept plans) NOT a detailed masterplan.

This work will then feed into site development alternatives for consideration by the Tasmanian Government. The concept options will also form the basis of a benefit costs analysis in support of a submission to Infrastructure Australia for funding to assist in remediating the site, as part of the Hobart: a world-class, liveable waterfront city initiative.

We look forward to your constructive input.

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