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French Heritage Values Not Assessed for East Cockle Creek Resort Development, Recherche Bay

The Tasmanian National Parks Association (TNPA) has been shocked to discover that the heritage values associated with the 1792 and 1793 French Expeditions to Recherche Bay have not been assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the East Cockle Creek resort development, according to TNPA Spokesperson and professional archaeologist Anne McConnell.

'It appears that this oversight has not come to the attention of either the state government or the Huon Valley Council' Ms McConnell said. 'The TNPA advised the developer, David Marriner, of this oversight two weeks ago, but has received no response to these concerns and the development is continuing unabated.'

Ms McConnell said that the TNPA was extremely concerned that the current resort development will impact on cultural values associated with the French Expeditions. 'Although the nearby north-east Peninsula was the focus of the 1792 Expedition, the general resort area is known to have been the focus of activities of the subsequent 1793 Expedition which established another two observatories, various shore facilities, possibly a third garden, and located the first European burial in Tasmania in the area'.

'Although this area potentially has cultural heritage values of state, national and even international significance, none of the physical remains have been relocated or assessed and there has been no assessment of the cultural landscape values of the area.'

'It's imperative that urgent action be taken to ensure that the potential heritage values of the area are protected' Ms McConnell said, 'This area is National Park, if cultural heritage cannot be protected from development in a National Park, then where can they be protected?'

In view of the current bulldozing and other disturbance by the resort development, the TNPA is also concerned that local historian Greg Hogg's nomination of three French sites in the area to the Tasmanian Heritage Register in late 2004 has not yet been assessed.

"The TNPA has written to the Minister for Parks and Heritage, Judy Jackson, requesting her to declare the East Cockle Creek area a Heritage Area under the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act* 1995 and that development activities be suspended until the values are properly assessed" Ms McConnell stated.

"The TNPA has also advised the Tasmanian Heritage Council and the Parks & Wildlife Service of our concerns and hope that the Minister and the state government will act immediately to stop further works until the matter is fully considered" Ms McConnell said.

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Russell Hawkins has shot DV Cam footage of the road works inside the South West National Park which he is willing to make available.