

SORELL HERITAGE SURVEY

Address: Tasman Highway Sorell 7172		UPI: _____	PID: 0
Name: SORELL CAUSEWAY & BRIDGE			
Feature Type: Causeway	Structure Type	Dating: 1874	1957
	Site Feature Type	Access Restrictions: Unrestricted	
		Inspection Date: D Parham	December 96
		Style: Not applicable	
		Grid ref: 5426	542830 5260400
Indication of Significance: High probable significance		Theme: Roadways	
Material: Stone & concrete		Listings:	
Condition: Good			
Integrity: Altered, extended sympathetically			
National Estate Criteria: A4 B2 C2 F1		Photograph Index: 21: 33-34	
Risk:	Excavation: ☐	Development: ☒	Maintenance: ☐ Vandalism: ☐

SITE DESCRIPTION:

Two sections of causeway across Pitt Water and Orielton Lagoon. The causeway is constructed on stone rubble foundations capped with a modern sealed road (Tasman Highway). The north-eastern section of the causeway across Pitt Water is spanned by a pre-stressed concrete bridge. The plaque on the bridge reads:

This pre-stressed concrete bridge
was constructed for
The Department of Public Works by
John Holland & Coy. Pty Ltd, Melbourne
with Hume Ltd, Hobart as sub-
contractors for piles and beams.
The structure is 1500ft in length in 34 spans with a roadway
width of 24ft and is the first
major work of its type completed

HISTORY:

Prior to the construction of the Sorell causeway, the district's economic progress was limited by its isolation from Hobart. Agitation for a causeway began early and continued in a desultory fashion until 1860. The House of Assembly passed the Sorell Causeway Act in 1862, noting that it was 'an important structure which will materially aid the development and add to the prosperity of a large agricultural district'. Initial plans for a drawbridge on the western side were scrapped soon after work commenced in 1866. The causeway, which cost 27, 500 pounds was opened with great fanfare by Governor Du Cane on June 22 1874 although roadworks at either end of the causeway took several more years to complete.

It was refurbished in 1906 and again in 1957 with the longest and largest pre-stressed concrete bridge in the British Commonwealth. Difficulties were experienced in the refurbishment with the strong winds and tidal flows in and out of the Coal River and Orielton Lagoon.

The causeway was Sorell's first major government infrastructure investment. It gave easy access to the town for services such as the newly developed telegraph and was largely responsible for Sorell's establishment as the major east coast market town for a century. However, it also had unforeseen ecological effects. Reduced tidal flows resulting from the position of the causeway have been implicated in algal blooms which occurred in Orielton Lagoon in the 1980s and 1990s.

BOUNDARY:

The listing boundary is formed by both sections of causeway (including the associated bridge west of Midway Point).

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COMMENTS:

The causeway is significant as the link between Sorell and the major population centre of Hobart. The pre-stressed concrete bridge is also historically significant as the largest bridgework at that time undertaken in Australia and possibly the British Commonwealth.

The Sorell Causeway and Bridge meet criteria A4, B2, C2 and F1 for inclusion in the Register of the National Estate. They should be included in Schedule 3 of the Sorell Planning Scheme and should be nominated for inclusion in the Tasmanian Heritage Register and the Register of the National Estate.

BIBLIOGRAPHY + PREVIOUS STUDIES:

Journals and Papers of Parliament XIII, 1866, no 34.

Mercury 22/01/1957

NEWITT, Lyn. 1988. *Convicts and Carriageways: Tasmanian Road Development Until 1880*. Department of Main Roads, Hobart.

REID, Owen. 1979. *The South East*. Curriculum Centre, Education Department, Hobart.

Tasmanian Mail 16/03/1878, p15.

SORELL HERITAGE STUDY



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