

***Complete Agricultural Consulting Services***

**Agricultural Assessment**

**Relating**

**To**

**Huon Council Planning Scheme  
Zone Classification**

**155 Francistown Road**

**Dover**

**Tasmania**

*Prepared for J & L Clark*

*By*

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## **Report Purpose**

The focus of the report is on the agricultural environment of the subject property to provide information for the Huon Council in making a determination on the correct zone class for the land comprising the farming property at 155 Francis town Road, Dover. It is also to provide for a presentation to the Tasmanian Planning Commission.

The report is not available for other purposes.

## **Introduction**

This report, prepared by Mr Frank W Walker, Manager, Complete Agricultural Consulting Services, was commissioned to provide expert comment to support a submission to Council relating to the Zone Class applying to the land forming the farming property at 155 Francistown Road, Dover, Tasmania

An assessment has been made of the Land Classes and Capability of the land comprising the subject property.

Guidelines for the Classification of Agricultural Land in Tasmania, as prescribed in the Land Capability Handbook have been followed in the assessment process. Land Classes have been identified as per the guidelines.

The report reviews the present Zone Classification and that which should apply in Huon Council Planning Scheme when applying the Tasmanian Planning Commission Zone Application Guidelines, as presented to guide Councils in establishing their new Planning Schemes

*Disclaimer: Complete Agricultural Consulting Services, in drawing on data from various sources to develop the report, does not accept responsibility for the final outcomes as detailed.*

## **Summary**

The property has a constrained farming /agricultural environment, not meeting that of adjacent land in the Agricultural Zone. It does compare well with adjacent land presently zoned Rural Resource.

The principal constraining factors are the acidic and stoney top soils and serious drainage issues across sections of the property.

The Class 5 and Class 6 land forms across the allotments are best utilised as a dryland grazing base and should be classified as Rural as they are unsuitable for cropping.

The capital value and the land types preclude the property as a sound business unit for addition to nearby properties zoned Agriculture.

It is recommended Council recognise the limitations of the land form and support, as is proposed, a Rural classification in the Councils updated Planning Scheme.

**Agricultural Assessment  
Of  
Farming Land at 155 Francistown Road, Dover**

## **1. Background**

Under the Huon Council 2015 Interim Planning Scheme the subject property is zoned Rural Resource. Council propose to zone the land Agriculture whereas an onsite assessment reveals this to be incorrect. The following information provides evidence that it should be zoned Rural under the Council's proposed Planning Scheme.

## **2. Property Location**

The farming land is depicted in Appendix 1 comprising two titles: CT 36624/3 and CT 162543/2 adjoining Francistown and Hopetoun Roads, with the southern portion abutting the Huon Highway.

## **3. Property Environment**

### **3.1 Climate**

#### **3.1.1. Rainfall**

The land is in a medium high rainfall area of approximately 800 mm per annum, with a predominant winter-spring distribution.

#### **3.1.2 Temperatures**

While temperatures experienced throughout the late spring to early autumn are conducive to a range of cool-temperate enterprises, the severe frosts experienced throughout the region over winter and spring limit the type of enterprises that can be successfully undertaken.

#### **3.1.3 Wind**

The land is exposed to prevailing South West, Westerly and North Westerly winds.

### **3.2 Soil Type**

The property straddles three Land Systems as identified in Land Systems of Tasmania Region 6 South East and Midlands (Ref 1) and shown in the map depicted in Appendix 2.

1. Dover Land System No. 468123, with stoney mudstone crests and slopes, shallow duplex soils on the lower slopes and flats. With some very stoney areas, this land forms the mid east section of the holding. Photo No. 1 shows the incidence of surface mudstone across pasture areas.
2. Glendevie Hills Land System, No. 478135, on the upper slopes, with a sandy loam surface This predominant System is noticeably evident on the more undulating to more steeply sloping land on the mid western sections of the property. The System runs towards the eastern boundary, changing to the Dover System that carries the adjacent orchards. However, the orchards occupy a different farm environment, with a north facing aspect, sloping to deeper soil flats.

3. Blue Hills Land System, No. 572243, on the far North Western sector of the property, with a stoney brown soil on the upper slopes and a duplex stoney clay loam over a heavy clay on the lower slopes. Forestry and nature areas are a feature of this System.

These three systems overlap and interconnect unevenly across the property.

The soils are naturally acidic requiring heavy applications of dolomite and agricultural lime. Photo 2 depicts large stone section across pasture in mid to SW sectors.

### 3.3 Drainage

The soils in some areas exhibit poor drainage with Pin Rushes as depicted in Photos 3 and 4. Pugging of wet winter soils is particularly evident across some lower slopes, especially in the South West sector, as shown in Photo 5, where perched water tables are likely. The native vegetation was Tea Tree (*Leptospermum Sp.*) to three metres high in the now “wet” areas.

Stable flow lines exist across the land form as shown in Photo No. 6.

### 3.4. Topography

The land forms comprise extensive areas of undulating ground, as depicted in Photo 7. The more steep and stoney land remain in bush.

## 4. Property Land Format

### 4.1 Current Land Composition

Land Form	Estimated Area (ha)	Effective (ha)
Bush and dense scrub: Class 6 & 7	19.2	00
Dryland pasture: Improved: Class 5& 6	23.8	23
Class 4	3.0	3
Native Class 5 & 6	4.0	1
Pasture with surface mudstone/restricted use	5.3	3
Dense Pin Rushes in flow lines	0.7	0
Poor pasture with Pin rushes	2.8	1
Very wet pasture/bog areas	3.6	2
Run-off/tracks, etc.	<u>0.3</u>	<u>0</u>
	62.7	33
Residence area	<u>0.7</u>	
	<b>63.4</b>	

The effective area represents a standard hectare grazing sward for the locality. The effective pasture/grazing area is estimated as 33ha with a maximum winter carrying capacity of 12 Dry Sheep Equivalents (DSE's) per ha for a total of 400 DSE's.

On the above land form data most of the property cannot be correctly zoned Agriculture.

### 4.2 Present Land Use

The property is well used as dryland grazing base, growing out weaner cattle for sale as prime yearlings.

The stoney areas cannot be effectively cultivated/cropped and the land form is best used as a grazing base.

There is a significant land area of 42 ha fenced to manage deer.

## **5. Land Capability and Classification**

Land capability assessment takes into account the physical nature of the land (eg. geology, soils, slope, stone) and other factors such as climate, erosion hazard, drainage and the land management practices required for sustainable operations.

Land capability assessment should not be confused with a suitability assessment which takes into account economic and social issues in reviewing the best use options.

The Land Capability Survey of Tasmania D'Entrecasteaux (Ref 2) shows the land as Class 5 and Class 6.

In deploying the Tasmanian Land Capability Classification System (Ref.3) an onsite assessment of the land revealed a small area of Class 4, and mainly Class 5 and 6 with some Class 7.

Photo 7 shows Class 5 in foreground and Photo 8 Class 6 running into Class 7

The Tasmanian Land Capability Classification System rates Class 5 land as unsuitable for cropping, although some areas on easier slopes maybe cultivated for pasture establishment or renewal and occasional fodder crops maybe possible. Class 6 land has even more constraints. Class 7 is not at all arable and certainly under any form of analysis is not suitable for general agricultural use.

The subject land is not considered within the Classification System to be prime agricultural land (i.e. Class 1, 2, or 3, well suited to intensive agriculture) as there are serious limitations, notably the climatic environment, soils and drainage.

## **6.Land Value**

The capital value of the land is shown as \$730,000 in the 2022 Council Rates Demand Notice. Applying the Valuer Generals recent adjustment factor, this value is to apply for 2023. The current valuation reveals a DSE value of \$1,920 which is considered expensive.

As a farming unit, with significant improvements, the property is not an attractive business proposition to extend nearby properties.

## **7. Zoning Anomaly**

### **7.1 Present incorrect Zoning**

The soil environment over much of the land under review does not warrant the proposed classification of Agriculture. The Class 5 and Class 6 land is not suitable for cropping. The shallow acidic loams, with stone areas together with the drainage issues, realistically rate the subject land as Rural Resource. Certainly not Agriculture as now proposed under the updated Planning Scheme.

Land on similar adjacent properties is presently zoned Rural Resource and it is proposed they are Rural in the new planning scheme.

Changing the subject property land zoning to Agriculture creates a serious anomaly.

## 7.2 Present Adjacent Property Land Zonings Under the 2015 Interim Planning Scheme :

On the Northern boundary is forest zoned Environmental Management.  
The Western boundary adjoins land zoned Rural Resource.  
The Eastern Boundary joins both Significant Agriculture and Rural Living.

Whereas some land on the Eastern boundary is under orchard, it is within a distinctly different agricultural environment (soils, slope, aspect, drainage). This better farm environment only extends a short distance into the subject property changing in a variable manner to the Glendevie Hills System with a shallower soil characteristic of the rural Resource Zone. In summary, the adjacent orchards occupy a different farm environment to most of the subject property.

## 8. Zone Purpose and Application Guidelines

In the Tasmanian Planning Commission Guideline No 1, Local Provisions Schedule (LPS) zone and code application, updated 8<sup>th</sup> June 2018 (Ref 5) the following is noted:

### Zone Purpose

As stated in Ref 5 page 14, under Zone Purpose: “The purpose of the Rural Zone is:

- (a) Where agriculture is limited or marginal due to topographical, environmental or other site or regional characteristics.”

### Zone Application Guidelines

As stated in Ref. 5, page 14 under RZ 3: “ The Rural Zone maybe applied to land identified in the ‘Land Potentially Suitable for Agriculture’ layer if:

- (a) It can be demonstrated the land has limited or no potential for agricultural use and is not integral to the management of a larger farm holding that will be within the Agriculture Zone;
- (b) It can be demonstrated that there are significant constraints to agricultural use occurring on the land.”

## 9. Determining Rural Land Zones Correctly.

The new Tasmanian Planning Scheme provides for uniformity in the application of land zones across farming/rural land in Tasmania.

As a practicing agricultural adviser for some 55 years in Tasmania the writer has assessed the land forms/classes/capabilities/zones across many areas of the State.

Of particular concern is the wide variation existing within rural land classification zones applied by Council Planners to farming land within their Municipalities.

Much of the variation is a result of desktop assessments whereas the writer is constantly making on-site/infield assessments of individual properties.

It appears the recent RCMD review was also a desktop assessment.

Applying a zoning to farmland is matter that needs to be assessed carefully by persons with



both appropriate experience and expertise, and not simply following Tasmanian Planning Commission Guidelines with desktop assessments, which appears to be the situation applying to the subject land within this report.

## 10. Review

- (1) The property has a constrained farming /agricultural environment, not meeting that of adjacent land in the Agricultural Zone. It does compare well with adjacent land presently zoned Rural Resource.
- (2) The Department of Primary Industry Water and Environment Land Capability Assessment has determined a Class 5 classification which rates the land as unsuitable for significant cropping. Class 6 is further constrained.
- (3) The onsite assessment has confirmed most of the land the Class 5 and Class 6 with a small area of Class 4 and Class 7. The developed, undulating Class 5 and Class 6 land forms are best utilised as a dryland grazing base being unsuitable for cropping.
- (4) Under the Huon Council 2015 Interim Planning Scheme the property was correctly zoned Rural Resource which translates to Rural under proposed new Planning Scheme.
- (5) The capital value of the subject property is not an inducement for other land owners to adhere it to their holdings. This factor together with the constrained agricultural environment indicates the subject property is not an attractive integral business unit to nearby land owners in the Agricultural Zone.

The above factors meet the Zone Purpose Guidelines in applying the Rural Zone to the subject property within the new Planning Scheme.

## 11. Recommendation

The titles forming the Clark's property at Dover be zoned Rural.



F W Walker HDA, GDE, FAIAST.  
Manager  
Complete Agricultural Consulting Services

Reference 1: Land Systems South, East and Midlands (region 6) DPIWE. A Resource Classification Survey, Dept. Agriculture, 1988.

Reference 2: Land Capability Handbook, Guidelines for Classes of Agricultural Land in Tasmania, second edition, DPIWE 1999.

Reference 3: DeRose R.C. (2001) Land Capability Survey of Tasmania D'Entrecasteaux Report. Department of Primary Industries Water and Environment, Tasmania, Australia.

Reference 4 Tasmanian Planning Commission; Guideline No.1. Local Provisions Schedule (LPS) zones and code application, June 2018.

Reference 5. Tasmanian Planning Commission; Guideline No.1. Local Provisions Schedule (LPS) zones and code application, June 2018.

23-Mar-2023

**Annotations**

**Roads**

- HVC Roads
- State Roads

**Property**

- Property (Pathway)

**Planning Scheme 2015 Zone**

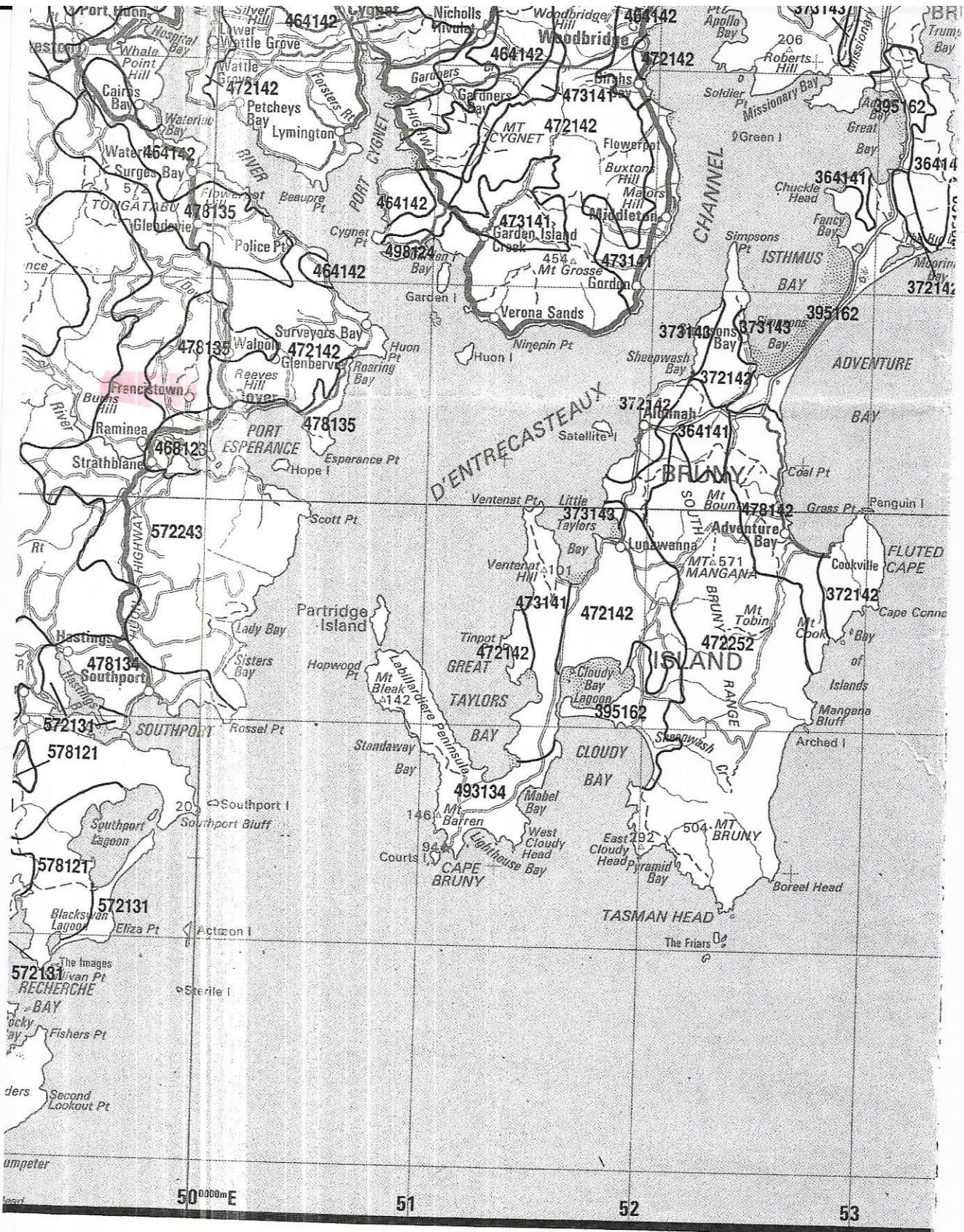
-- Planning Boundaries

**Planning Scheme Zones**

- 10.0 General Residential
- 12.0 Low Density Residential
- 13.0 Rural Living
- 14.0 Environmental Living
- 16.0 Village
- 17.0 Community Purpose
- 18.0 Recreation
- 19.0 Open Space
- 20.0 Local Business
- 21.0 General Business
- 23.0 Commercial
- 24.0 Light Industrial
- 25.0 General Industrial
- 26.0 Rural Resource
- 27.0 Significant Agricultural
- 28.0 Utilities
- 29.0 Environmental Managem
- 32.0 Particular Purpose
- 33.0 Particular Purpose
- 34.0 Particular Purpose
- 35.0 Particular Purpose







Map from Land Systems of Tasmania, Region 6: South, East and Midlands.

Francistown area Land Systems.





Photo No. 1

Surface mudstone incidence restricting management options.



Photo No. 2



Photo 3

Large areas with Pin Rushes across slopes and lower land.



Photo No. 4

Class 5 Land in SW Sector; boggy areas with Pin Rushes.



Photo 5

Typical deep pugging in rank pasture areas.



Photo 6.

Stable flow lines in Class 4 area.





Photo 7

Class 5 in foreground sloping to other properties.



Photo 8

Class 6 running into Class 7 stoney bush.

