

Lower Derwent Cultural Landscape Considerations

Kangaroo Bay Hotel Major Project

Kangaroo Bay should be understood as part of a broader Aboriginal cultural landscape extending across the lower Derwent, including Kangaroo Bay, Bellerive/Kangaroo Point, Kangaroo Bluff, Rosny, the eastern shore ridgelines, freshwater corridors, foreshore margins, and the wider estuarine system.

Before European settlement, this landscape supported Aboriginal movement, seasonal hunting, shellfish gathering, freshwater access, gathering places, cultural knowledge transmission, and ongoing responsibility to Country. These places were not separate or isolated features. They formed a connected living landscape shaped by waterways, ridgelines, open hunting grounds, tidal edges, wetlands, and movement corridors.

The name “Kangaroo Bay” itself points to the importance of this landscape as open hunting Country. The surrounding place names, including Kangaroo Point and Kangaroo Bluff, suggest that early colonists recognised visible kangaroo activity across the eastern shore. For Aboriginal people, these areas would have formed part of a wider cultural and subsistence system, not merely a shoreline location.

Since colonisation, the Kangaroo Bay foreshore has been significantly altered by reclamation, filling, road construction, drainage modification, sporting infrastructure, urban development, and commercial redevelopment. These changes mean the current ground surface does not necessarily reflect the original Aboriginal landscape. Earlier shorelines, wetlands, freshwater lines, movement corridors, and cultural surfaces may now be concealed beneath modern fill or modified ground.

For the Kangaroo Bay Hotel Major Project, the key issue is therefore not only whether individual artefacts or isolated heritage places are present. The broader consideration is that the project area sits within a culturally significant landscape where Aboriginal occupation, movement, food systems, shoreline use, and colonial transformation are all connected.

A respectful project response would recognise this deeper landscape context and incorporate it into design, interpretation, public space, and engagement.

Recommended project considerations include:

- engaging early and respectfully with Tasmanian Aboriginal Persons;
- recognising Kangaroo Bay as part of the wider lower Derwent Aboriginal cultural landscape;
- interpreting pre-contact Country, including foreshore, freshwater, hunting and estuarine systems;
- acknowledging that modern reclamation and urban development have altered and concealed earlier landforms;
- considering geoarchaeological advice where ground disturbance may intersect with old shoreline, wetland, or fill areas;
- designing public interpretation that connects Kangaroo Bay with surrounding cultural places rather than treating the hotel site in isolation;

- embedding Aboriginal cultural landscape principles into open space, walking routes, naming, storytelling, planting, materials and visitor experience.

A suitable interpretation theme could be:

“Kangaroo Bay: Living Country, Changing Shoreline”

This theme would allow the project to explain how the bay has changed over time while acknowledging that Aboriginal connection to the lower Derwent landscape continues. It would also help the proponent move beyond minimum compliance and toward a more meaningful place-based cultural response.

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