

**PLAN OF MANAGEMENT  
PART B  
SECTION FIVE**



**HEADSTONE RESERVE**



**2003**

AS APPROVED BY THE NORFOLK ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ON 21 MAY 2003



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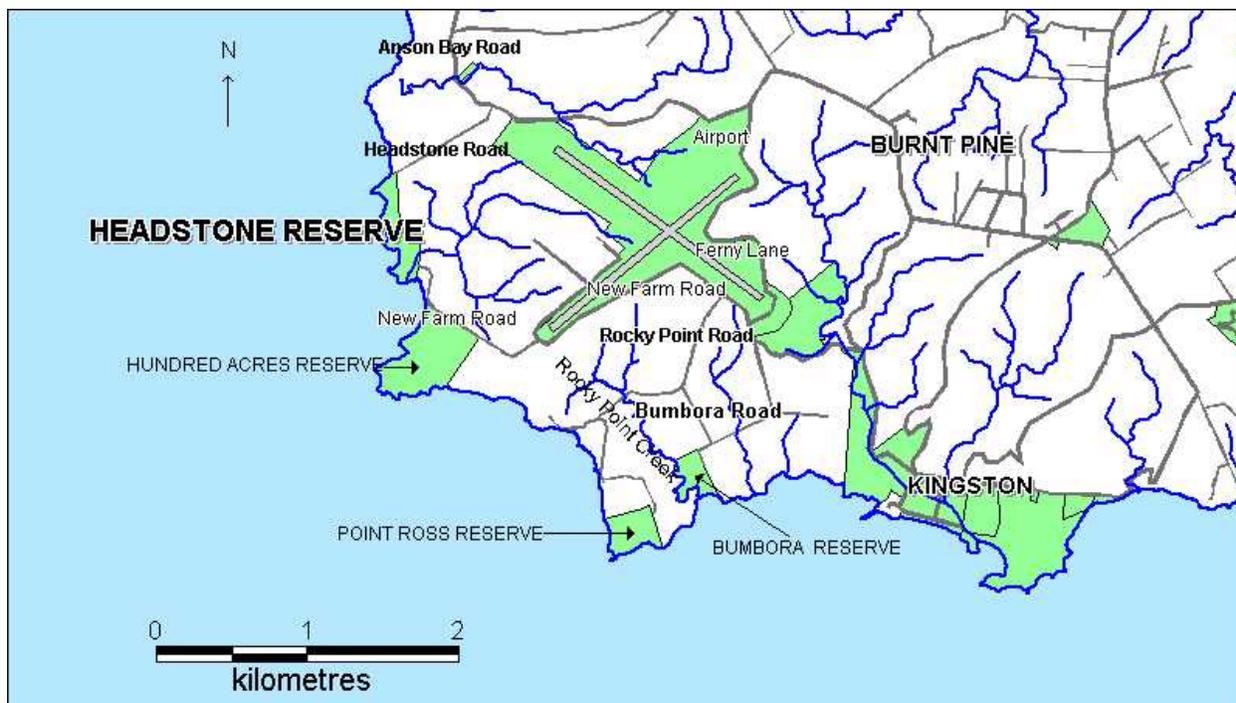


## Section 5: HEADSTONE RESERVE PLAN OF MANAGEMENT PART B

### 5.1 Introduction

This Part B Plan of Management applies to Headstone Reserve.

Headstone Reserve is located on the west coast of Norfolk Island (map 1). The reserve has an area of approximately 11.372 hectares and apart from its present use for community waste disposal it is a popular venue for fishing and sightseeing. The name of this reserve derives from the historic memorial headstone located on the top of the headland at Headstone Point.



**Map 1: Location of Headstone Reserve**

Headstone Reserve was proclaimed under the *Commons and Public Reserves Act 1936* on 4 February 1937 for the purposes of landing, shipping and forestry.

#### 5.1.1 Previous Plans

This is the first Plan of Management prepared for Headstone Reserve.

#### 5.1.2 Boundaries

The reserve's boundaries have recently been extended to the south to include 1.005ha, of vacant crown land Portion 85b(pt), adjoining Hundred Acres Reserve. Two sections of Portion 83(pt) adjoining Headstone Road have also been added to the reserve with a combined area of 5,209m<sup>2</sup>.

Headstone Road is part of Headstone Reserve and not legally a road. That part of Headstone Road that is in Headstone Reserve will be excised from the reserve.

The seaward boundary of the reserve extends to high water mark.

### 5.1.3 Register on the National Estate

Headstone Reserve is not listed on the Register of the National Estate.

### 5.1.4 IUCN Category

Headstone Reserve best fits IUCN Category V – Protected Landscape/seascape: protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation. The definition of this category is an area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinctive character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance, and evolution of such an area.

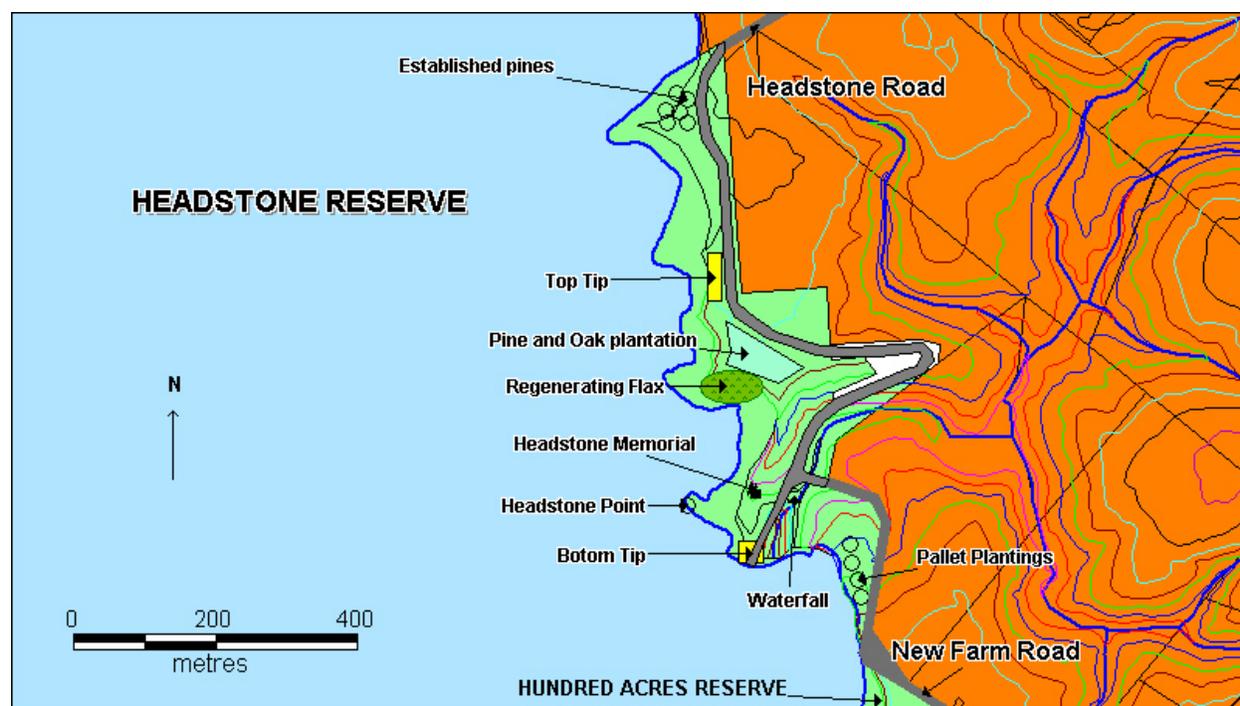
## 5.2 Conservation Significance

Headstone Reserve has significant community, landscape, and conservation values, provides opportunities for recreation and contains native flora and fauna. The coastal views from the reserve are outstanding. The vegetation in the reserve consists mainly of exotic pasture grasses with scattered Norfolk Island Pines and an occasional White Oak on the cliff top areas. The steep cliff faces support some remnant native coastal vegetation and provide breeding habitat for seabirds. Headstone Creek is one of the few perennial streams on Norfolk Island. This creek flows over a small waterfall downstream from Headstone road.

## 5.3 Description

### 5.3.1 Geology and Landform

The dominant landform of the reserve is the coastal cliffs and headlands (Map 2). The basalt lava flows underlying the reserve have been deeply weathered to form ferrosols, or rich clay loams, which supported a dense rainforest. Headstone Creek flows south-westerly through the southern part of the reserve. This perennial stream has cut down to the unweathered basalt close to the coast, before cascading over the cliff about 20m above the sea. A small (about 8m high) waterfall near Headstone Road is cutting slowly upstream.



Map 2: Landform and features

### 5.3.2 Vegetation

Apart from scattered mature Norfolk Island Pines and occasional White Oaks, the forest that originally covered the reserve has been replaced by Kikuyu pasture. Some remnant coastal vegetation, including wind pruned White Oaks and emergent pines, remains on the steep cliff slopes, however some areas are also infested with African Olive, Hawaiian Holly, Lantana. Native Flax appears to be regenerating well on the cliff slope north of Headstone Point. Some New Zealand Pohutukawa, Norfolk Island Pines, and White Oaks have been planted on exposed steep sections to control erosion.

#### 5.3.2.1 *Native Plant Communities*

Wind pruned White Oak, Norfolk Island Pines, Native Flax, Moo-oo, and Coastal Lily dominate the native coastal cliff vegetation that persists on steeper, less accessible cliff faces.

#### 5.3.2.2 *Significant Species*

There are no endangered species currently known to occur in the reserve. Rehabilitation of native vegetation will provide habitat for endangered and rare native flora and fauna.

#### 5.3.2.3 *Weeds*

Kikuyu is the dominant exotic species in the reserve. Dense swards of Kikuyu and Buffalo Grass choke breeding seabird burrows and suppress native flora. There are some patches of wind-pruned African Olive, Hawaiian Holly, and Lantana on the coastal slopes in both the northern and southern sections of the reserve. The exotic New Zealand Pohutukawa that has been used to stabilise some eroding slopes is spreading from the original plantings.

#### 5.3.2.4 *Rehabilitation Plantings*

In 1999, as part of National Tree Day, members of the community planted around 500 native trees in Headstone Reserve: predominantly White Oaks with some Norfolk Island Pines and other native trees. These White Oaks were planted in double rows to create shelter belts for future plantings. A central area has been left unplanted to leave room for a future cliff top picnic area.

### 5.3.3 Fauna

There have been no comprehensive surveys of invertebrates in Headstone Reserve.

During the summer months Wedge-tailed Shearwaters (Ghostbirds) and Red-tailed Tropicbirds nest along the cliffs. Little Shearwater nest in burrows during winter. The loss of forest habitat has displaced the majority of native terrestrial birds and favoured exotic species such as House Sparrows, Common Starlings, and Feral Pigeons, now dominate the avifauna. White-faced Herons and Sacred Kingfishers commonly occur in the reserve. Occasional visitors to Norfolk Island, such as Oriental Cuckoo and Frigatebird, have been observed in or over the reserve.

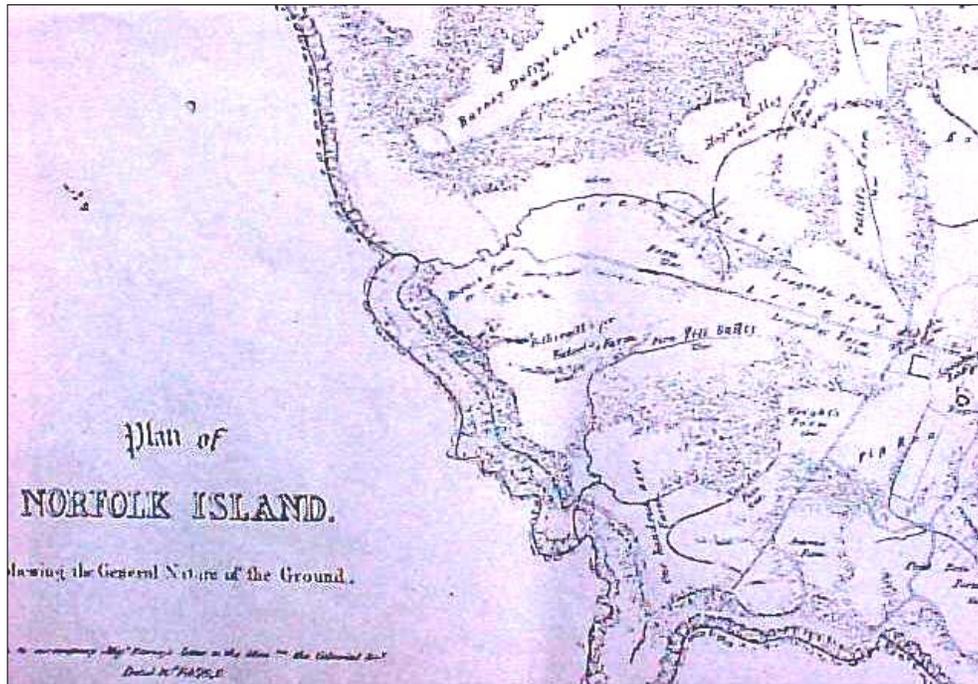
### 5.3.4 Cultural Heritage

No evidence of early Polynesian use of the reserve area has been found; however, as with many other parts of the Island, it is likely that Polynesian people would have visited the area during the long period they inhabited Norfolk Island.

Land close to, but inland from, the present Headstone Reserve were leased or granted during the First Settlement but the coastal strip including the reserve remained unalienated<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Settlers Lots on Norfolk Island 1791 – 1804*: Lot 78 (60 acres ) grant, 28 November 1791 to John Folley (Marine); Lot 79 (60 acres) lease, 1791 to Elias Bishop (Marine) then 1794-6 leased to Henry Hathaway (former convict); Lot 88 (60 acres) grant 1794-6 to Henry Hathaway (former convict); Lot 88 (60 acres) grant, 1792 to John Hayes (Marine), sold 1794-6 to D'Arcy Wentworth (former Surgeon).

The 1840 ‘Arrowsmith’ map (Map 3) prepared by Major George Barney<sup>2</sup> shows the coastal area uncleared. “Feathergill’s or Victoria Farm” inland from the reserve had been cleared. A track ran through the forest in about the same position as the current road. During the following hundred years, the reserve was progressively cleared of larger pines, hardwoods, and oaks.



**Map 3: 1840 Survey Plan of Norfolk Island showing the reserve and Feathergill’s or Victoria Farm**

A memorial headstone was erected on the headland in the last years of the second settlement to commemorate two soldiers who drowned in October 1850 while fishing<sup>3</sup>. The only other structure remaining from the convict settlements is the road bridge at Headstone Creek.

In 1858 and 1859, Norfolk Island was surveyed and divided into lots of approximately fifty acres<sup>4</sup>. The cliff track is not shown on maps after 1887. The reserve was contained within portion 82 and formed part of the Melanesian Mission. When the Mission was closed in 1923-24, the land was vested in the Commonwealth. During that year, a landing and steps were constructed at Headstone to enable ship passengers to be brought ashore. The steps have now eroded but are still used to descend to rock fishing spots.

<sup>2</sup> *Plan of Norfolk Island Shewing the General Nature of the Ground*. Often referred to as the “Arrowsmith” map, 1840. However John Arrowsmith was the lithographer who copied the map prepared or drawn by Major Barney, Royal Engineers Corp. The map accompanied a letter dated 20 February 1840 from Major Barney to the Colonial Secretary and was printed by James and Luke J. Hansard on an order of the House of Commons dated 15 June 1841.

<sup>3</sup> Local legend has it that the two soldiers who drowned at Headstone in October 1850 took part in capturing “Barney Duffy”, an escaped convict who had reputedly lived in a hollow tree for seven years. As “Barney Duffy’s Gully” is shown on the Arrowsmith map of 1840, this part of the legend cannot be true.

<sup>4</sup> Treadgold, M.L., (1988), *Bounteous bestowal: The economic history of Norfolk Island*, National Centre for Developmental Studies, Pacific Research Monograph no. 18. The Australian National University, Canberra.

## **5.4 Issues**

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### **5.4.1 Public Use**

The reserve is a popular venue for rock fishing, tourism, and sightseeing. The waste disposal facility in the reserve has constrained recreational activities such as picnics and barbecues. When waste disposal ceases, the scenic beauty of the area and easy access will provide an excellent community resource.

The northern section of the reserve has similar coastal views to Puppys Point and a view of sunsets over the ocean. The reserve could be an alternative to Puppys Point for evening fish fry tours.

### **5.4.2 Access and Facilities**

Headstone Road runs through the reserve and links with New Farm Road. A sealed road parallel to Headstone Creeks provides access to the bottom tip. A small sealed parking area is located at the access to the headstone memorial, to which pedestrians can walk via a wooden stile and narrow wooden steps and a grass track.

No recreational facilities are provided in the reserve.

### **5.4.3 Traditional Craft**

A number of traditional craft species, such as Native Flax, Ti, Norfolk Island Palm, and Drain Flags are available in only a few locations on the Island. These species are likely to have been present along Headstone Creek. Removal of stock from Headstone Creek would enable these species to be re-established and available for traditional crafts.

### **5.4.4 Habitat Rehabilitation and Development**

Because of the open, exposed nature of most of the reserve, there is a relatively high rate of loss of the remaining mature trees.

Exclusion of stock from the cliff slopes and most of the cliff top west of Headstone Road has enabled Native Flax to re-establish on some cliff slopes. Re-establishing native plant communities, including flax fields, on the steep slopes in the reserve will help to stabilise areas that are actively eroding and eventually replace the introduced Kikuyu.

Headstone Creek is one of the few perennial creeks on Norfolk Island and would have supported a variety of native flora, contributing significantly to the Island's biodiversity. This habitat could be re-established in the lower section of the creek below the bridge and waterfall. As the White Oaks and Norfolk Island Pines that have been planted in the reserve become established an increasingly diverse native forest can be expected to develop.

### **5.4.5 Breeding Seabird Habitat**

Seabird nesting habitat along the cliff edge, particularly for White Terns and possibly Black Noddies, has been reduced by the removal of native forest. Replacement of coastal forest by dense swards of Kikuyu may also have reduced the area available to Ghostbirds and Little Shearwaters.

### **5.4.6 Pest Species**

#### **5.4.6.1 Weeds**

The major weed infestations in the reserve are in cliff areas that are difficult to access. Although there are no significant stands of woody weeds such as African Olive, Porpieh, and Hawaiian Holly, these weeds are widely distributed throughout remnant coastal cliff vegetation. African Boxthorn has become

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established on the steep cliff slopes at the southern end of the reserve and towards Rocky Point. Exotic grasses, especially Kikuyu and Buffalo grass, have invaded the cliff slopes.

#### **5.4.7 Stock Management**

Grazing maintains grassed areas, but can also spread weeds, especially Porpieh. Cattle grazing is not compatible with habitat development and rehabilitation, cliff stabilisation, or forestry plantations.

Cattle have been excluded from parts of the reserve to enable native forest and Norfolk Island Pine plantations to be established. Native Flax is re-establishing on the cliff slopes that have been fenced off from stock.

Stock grazing Headstone Creek are damaging the stream. Trees that are planted in unfenced parts of the reserve need to be protected from stock by pallets.

#### **5.4.8 Waste Disposal**

The Island's two solid waste disposal facilities are located in Headstone Reserve<sup>5</sup>.

The "bottom tip" is located on the cliff adjacent to Headstone Creek. This site consists of a steel mesh cage in which combustible household refuse is burned; a steel slide over which non-combustible inert waste such as glass, steel, and clean rubble is disposed of to the sea; and a small wooden hut to accommodate the waste site attendant. Water from a concrete tank in Headstone Creek above the waterfall is used to flush ash from the burning cage into the sea and keep the site clean.

The "top tip" consists of a pit into which combustible garden prunings, combustible building materials, and combustible non-putrescible household waste are deposited for burning, and a small timber hut to accommodate the waste site attendant. Litter from the top tip and vehicles travelling along Headstone Road is a constant problem in the reserve<sup>6</sup>. Litter, together with material that has blown from the slide, such as sheets of roofing iron, is also a problem in Headstone Creek near the cliff. From time to time, loads of garden waste and rubble are illegally dumped in the reserve opposite the top tip, presumably when that site is closed.

Waste disposal practices and facilities on Norfolk Island are being reviewed. It is expected that as a result of that review the top tip will be closed and the bottom tip substantially upgraded.

Treated sewage effluent is piped along Headstone Road, through the reserve and is discharged into the sea through an underground pipe immediately north of the top tip site.

#### **5.4.9 Forestry**

The exposed nature of most of Headstone Reserve makes tree establishment difficult and slow, requiring a high level of replacement planting. Following repeated failures of Norfolk Island Pines, double rows of White Oaks have been planted in the plantation between the cliff and Headstone Road. It is expected that as they grow the oaks will protect the pines from the strong onshore winds.

While it may be appropriate to remove individual dead or dying trees for timber, the reserve is too exposed and too small to sustain forestry operations.

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<sup>5</sup> Both sites have been used for waste disposal since the late 1970's and were approved for this purpose, subject to specific conditions, by the Conservator of Public Reserves on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2000 (Gazette No. 33).

<sup>6</sup> Wind-blown litter is also a problem for neighbouring landowners and the marine environment.

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## 5.5 Management Objectives

**Vision:** To conserve and enhance the scenic quality and biodiversity of the reserve for the enjoyment of current and future generations of Norfolk Islanders and visitors and for the ongoing survival of its flora and fauna.

### 5.5.1 Cultural Heritage Management

**Aim:** To maintain the scenic quality and character of the reserve and protect important cultural heritage values.

**Objectives:**

- Preserve the essential landscape elements of Headstone Reserve.
- Protect and preserve the historic fabric of the Memorial Headstone and improve public access to the memorial.

### 5.5.2 Natural Heritage Management

**Aim:** To establish native forest habitat in the reserve and enhance and conserve native coastal cliff vegetation.

**Objectives:**

- Rehabilitate native vegetation along Headstone Creek below the Headstone Road bridge.
- Protect and enhance native coastal cliff vegetation and breeding seabird habitat.
- Establish native forest and enhance the diversity of existing forest plantings.
- Increase the number of trees in areas of the reserve grazed by cattle.
- Control invasive woody weeds in the reserve.

### 5.5.3 Pest Species Management

**Aim:** To reduce the negative impacts of pest species in the reserve.

**Objective:**

- Control invasive introduced weeds in accessible areas in the reserve.

### 5.5.4 Recreation Management

**Aim:** To provide for appropriate public recreation and commercial use.

**Objectives:**

- Provide and maintain appropriate picnic facilities and amenities.
  - Manage impacts associated with public use of the reserve.
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### 5.5.5 Stock Management

*Aim:* To minimise the negative impacts of cattle grazing in sensitive areas.

*Objectives:*

- Exclude cattle from Headstone Creek.
- Exclude cattle from all cliff slopes.

### 5.5.6 Education and Interpretation

*Aim:* To promote knowledge and understanding of Norfolk Island's cultural and natural history and issues related to conserving and managing Headstone Reserve.

*Objectives:*

- Define and develop interpretation/education resource material specific to the reserve.
  - Encourage scientific and educational activities in the reserve that contribute to the community's understanding of and public support for environmental conservation and management.
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## **5.6 Management Strategies and Actions**

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### **5.6.1 Cultural Heritage Management**

Maintaining and enhancing coastal views will be an important component in planting designs and vegetation management.

The memorial Headstone will be kept clear of woody weeds and vegetation to prevent mechanical damage by roots. The surrounding fence will be replaced by a timber post and rail fence and access will be improved by modifying the stile and access track. Advice will be sought on the conservation of the fabric of the headstone.

Headstone Road Bridge will be examined and a strategy for its conservation developed. Due to the extreme danger and difficulty of accessing the landing site and steps, public access is discouraged.

Availability of traditional craft plants will be increased by including native craft species in habitat rehabilitation along Headstone Creek.

### **5.6.2 Natural Heritage Management**

Headstone Reserve contains only scattered remnants of the original vegetation communities. Rehabilitation of coastal cliff vegetation will enhance the scenic qualities of the reserve, protect cliff stability, and improve habitat.

#### **5.6.2.1 Habitat Rehabilitation**

A fence will be erected to prevent cattle grazing the Headstone Creek waterfall, the eroded slope behind it, and cliff edge to the south-east. The eroded slope will be filled and after stabilising with introduced grasses will be planted with Native Flax and Moo-oo.

The central section of the reserve has been fenced and planted with Norfolk Island Pines and White Oaks. The cliff to the south-east of this area has a moderate slope that would support a coastal forest community. Long-term rehabilitation of this slope will rely on natural regeneration of Native Flax, Moo-oo, and native trees. Enhancement planting of White Oaks will be undertaken if necessary. Pohutukawa that has been planted to arrest erosion at the top of this slope will be retained until White Oaks on the cliffs are established. The Pohutukawa will then be removed.

Coastal cliff vegetation that provides breeding habitat for seabirds will be enhanced by the selective removal of exotic species to promote the establishment of natives, in particular Native Flax and other coastal cliff species.

#### **5.6.2.1.1 Rehabilitation Plantings**

Individual and small groups of Norfolk Island Pines and White Oaks will be planted in pallets in areas grazed by cattle. These will be protected from cattle and exposure to the elements by timber pallets, and maintained with regular weed control.

After the top tip has been closed the area will be rehabilitated with White Oaks and Norfolk Island Pines.

### **5.6.3 Pest Species Management**

#### **5.6.3.1 Weed Control**

Removing large woody weeds from cliff slopes is difficult, likely to exacerbate erosion and expose nearby native plants. Selective control techniques such as basal-bark spraying will be trialed to control weeds on steep slopes and cliffs.

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Where practical, weeds (such as Kikuyu, Lantana, African Olive, Porpieh and Hawaiian Holly) in the reserve will be removed by hand clearing.

The long-term weed control strategy in the reserve will be based on:

- maintaining a healthy native forest cover;
- removing young weeds by hand;
- appropriate herbicide and minimum disturbance control techniques;
- mulching in some areas to prevent exposure of bare earth to fluctuations in soil moisture and temperature, also to reduce erosion and prevent weeds reinvading treated areas;
- intensively controlling weeds along the creek and in tree fall clearings, with supplementary planting of native species; and
- mechanised weeds control in plantation areas.

Grass in the picnic area will be maintained and weeds controlled by slasher and whipper-snipper. Cattle grazing will continue to maintain grass in unfenced areas and along Headstone Road.

#### **5.6.3.2 Fungus Control**

In a diverse, healthy native forest, the root-rot fungus *Phellinus noxius*, may occur as a natural part of the forest ecosystem and is not likely to cause undue damage to the forest. The incidence and effect of *P. noxius* in the reserve will be monitored and minimised by enhancing forest diversity and minimising disturbance and damage to tree butts and roots.

### **5.6.4 Recreation Management**

#### **5.6.4.1 Vehicles**

Vehicle access to the fenced cliff top area in the northern most section of the reserve will be prevented by the erection of a vehicle control barrier along the western side of Headstone Road.

#### **5.6.4.2 Picnic and BBQ Facilities**

There are no picnic or BBQ facilities in the reserve. The northern section of the reserve may be an appropriate site for a picnic area with similar attributes to Puppy's Point. This site would require vehicle access and parking. Cattle will continue to be excluded from this area to enable protective vegetation to establish. Development of picnic facilities will depend on the closure of the top tip.

#### **5.6.4.3 Public Toilets**

There are no public toilet facilities in the reserve, nor is it intended to provide such facilities. The need to provide public toilet facilities will be reviewed periodically by the Conservator of Public Reserves.

#### **5.6.4.4 Rubbish**

The number, type, and location of rubbish bins in the reserve will be reviewed periodically by the Conservator of Public Reserves.

### **5.6.5 Education and Interpretation**

Headstone Reserve provides opportunities to observe a variety of natural processes, including coastal erosion. The former landing place and steps, the old bridge, and Headstone Road provide an opportunity to interpret the Island's settlement, transport and communication links.

#### **5.6.5.1 Interpretation Strategy**

An Interpretation Strategy and interpretive material for Headstone Reserve will be developed as resources become available. The principal interpretation and education themes in the reserve will be:

- natural habitats;
- conservation, land management and the environment;
- impacts of human activity and sustainable resource use;
- cultural heritage: transport, settlement, waste disposal; and
- significance of the memorial Headstone.

Community involvement in the development and delivery of the Interpretation Strategy is encouraged.

#### **5.6.5.2 Signs**

Signs will be designed and erected in appropriate locations to provide visitors with information about special natural and cultural features of the reserve if required by the Interpretation Strategy. These may include public safety warnings, location, and direction signs.

#### **5.6.5.3 School Visits**

The Norfolk Island Parks and Forestry Service will encourage, and where possible assist with, appropriate school visits to the reserve that are designed to provide an understanding of Norfolk's natural and cultural heritage and aimed to encourage students to participate in environmental protection, research and rehabilitation.

#### **5.6.5.4 Walking Tours**

The Norfolk Island Parks and Forestry Service will encourage, and where possible assist with, appropriate walking tours in the reserve that are designed to provide visitors with an understanding of Norfolk's natural and cultural heritage.

#### **5.6.5.5 Community Group**

A community interest group will be encouraged to assist in the development and implementation of management programs in Headstone Reserve.

### **5.6.6 Forestry**

Trees will not be taken for timber from the reserve, unless to do so is considered by the Conservator of Public Reserves to be in the interests of the conservation and management of the reserve.

### **5.6.7 Illegal Rubbish Disposal**

Illegal rubbish dumping will be discouraged by the erection of a vehicle control barrier to prevent unauthorised vehicle access to the area of the reserve opposite the top tip.

## **5.7 Research and Monitoring**

The Conservator of Public Reserves will develop a strategy for conducting research and for monitoring the effectiveness of management programs in the reserve. Photopoints will be established in significant areas. A photographic record will be kept of all stages of project implementation. Where practical, alternative techniques will be trialed to assess management strategies and effects.

## **5.8 *Controlled Activities***

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This Section shall be read in conjunction with Section 11 of the Plan of Management (Part A) and the *Public Reserves Act 1997*.

Section 11 of the Plan of Management (Part A):

- approves specific controlled activities, with respect to all public reserves;
- provides general guidelines in respect of granting approvals and permits for controlled activities, with respect to all public reserves;
- specifies activities<sup>7</sup> in accordance with section 47(2) of the *Public Reserves Act 1997* that shall not be undertaken in any public reserve without a permit; and
- provides general guidelines in respect of granting permits for activities specified in accordance with section 47(2) of the Act.

This section of the Plan of Management (Part B) specifies controlled activities in accordance with Section 47 of the *Public Reserves Act 1997* in relation to the use of Headstone Reserve.

### **5.8.1 Camping**

Camping shall not be permitted in Headstone Reserve.

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<sup>7</sup> The activities specified are additional to the Controlled Activities prescribed in Part V of the *Public Reserves Act 1997*.

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