

National Heritage List

The National Heritage List recognises and protects our most valued natural, Indigenous and historic heritage sites. It reflects the story of our development, from our original inhabitants to the present day, Australia's spirit and ingenuity, and our unique, living landscapes.

Each place in the List has been assessed by the Australian Heritage Council as having outstanding heritage value to the nation, and is protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. This means that approval must be obtained before taking any action that may have a significant impact on the national heritage values of the place. In this way, we can retain our heritage for future generations.

To ensure ongoing protection, each listed place should have management arrangements in place to conserve and interpret the heritage values of the site.

The National Heritage List enables all Australians to value, protect, and celebrate our unique heritage.

For further information visit www.heritage.gov.au

Coal Mines Historic Site: Coal Mine Road, Saltwater River, Tasmania, 7186
Web: www.portarthur.org.au | Tel: 1800 659 101



Australian Government

Coal Mines Historic Site



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The ruins of this penal colliery on the Tasman Peninsula provide a grim insight into one extreme of convict life in the Australia colonies during the early 1800s. The Coal Mines Historic Site demonstrates the economic value of convict labour. It was one of several places established on the Peninsula to exploit natural resources, and punish and reform convicts. This significant convict site was included in the National Heritage List on 1 August 2007.

A site of significant events

- The remains of the colliery, including the circular depressions of the former mine shafts, the wharves, jetties and commissariat store, tell the story of how convict labour built colonial economies.
- Coal Mines provided punishment and reform through hard labour, religious instruction and education.

- Convicts were sent to work in the dark, hot, damp tunnels of the mines which operated from 1833–48. The number of solitary cells and floggings indicates a place of severe punishment.
- When Reverend Henry Phibbs Fry ventured down the mine in 1847 he reported: *Having had full evidence of the deeds of darkness perpetrated in the mines, I contemplated the naked figures, faintly perceptible in the gloom, with feelings of horror. Such a scene is not to be forgotten.*
- With its reputation for harshness and homosexual activity, the place contributed to the failure of the probation system and its eventual demise.

A rare example

- This site is the only surviving penal coal mine with remaining surface features relating to extracting and transporting coal.
- Coal Mines represents the contribution made by convicts to the developing colonial economy.
- The alternating solitary cells are the only remaining example of this form of convict punishment accommodation, and reflect the extreme harshness of convict life.

Source of important information

- The ruins, archaeological remains and associated historical documents are a valuable source of information about the working conditions, technical skills, penal administration, and mining technologies used.