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# RHYLL FORESHORE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRECINCT

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## Location

BEACH ROAD RHYLL, BASS COAST SHIRE

## Municipality

BASS COAST SHIRE

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7921-0125

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 15, 2021

Detailed assessments of the significance of Dorwards Slipway, the Mooring Dolphin and the Genista shipwreck is provided in the accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment completed by Cosmos Archaeology Pty Ltd. As follows:

Dorwards Slipway - There is potential for further timber remains and artefact material associated with Dorwards slipway and jetty under the foreshore and current Boat Ramp. The place has been present on the foreshore from the 1920's, having undergone repairs and reconstruction.

Mooring / Dolphin-There is low potential for timber remains and artefact material associated with the timber dolphin structure to be present on or in the seabed.

The Genista sank at its moorings on the landward side of the dolphin at Rhyll while being dismantled and remained in situ until 1966, when Ports and Harbours removed the boiler and used explosives on the wreck to flatten the vessel. The history of the vessel and its basic details are known. There is little known about the working life of this vessel. Due to the damage to the vessel after being blown up, it is likely that the remains would have low integrity. As there are gaps in the historical record of this vessel, archaeological remains may be able to shed light on Genista's working life.

The history of the vessel and its basic details are known about the Ventnor. As the vessel was partially dismantled however Initial assessment rated the archaeological significance of the vessel as low (see attached Heritage impact assessment completed Cosmos Archaeology 2020) however Test excavation of the site in December 2020 has revealed that approximately two thirds of the lower hull section remain in place and is in a good state of preservation. The Ventnor has potential to provide construction details for a relatively unusual (flat bottom) hull form. In addition, being built in Footscray (albeit relatively recently) Ventnor is one of a relatively rare group of Australian-built shipwrecks available for study

Interpretation of Site

The land includes prograded shoreline and because of its relatively undisturbed nature is likely to contain archaeological deposits associated with a range of maritime activities conducted from the late 1800's to the mid 1920's, including: fishing, oyster, farming, boat building and repair, and cargo and ferry operations. The precinct is known to contain the fragmentary remains of the passenger ferry Genista (VHR S1017) and the cargo ferry Ventnor (VHR S690). The precinct also contains artefacts associated with the former Dorwards Slipway and a former mooring dolphin used the the passenger ferry Genista. Currently the land is used as a public recreation reserve and contains car parking for the Rhyll boat ramp, a children's playground, buildings housing the Rhyll Angling Club, a small vessel slipway and repair and maintenance yard. Although the site is a busy hub for recreational activities, the subsurface deposits, especially on the landward side are likely to be relatively undisturbed. Any archaeological deposits are therefore likely to be intact. The area below the low tide mark is subject to strong tidal flow and, in the area containing the remain of the Genista and it's mooring dolphin, is known to have been blasted by port authorities in order to maintain navigable water depth. Any remaining archaeological deposits in this area will be fragmentary at best.

Hermes Number 207023

Property Number

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## History

From the late 19th century into the early 20th century the jetty and foreshore were continuously used by fishing boats, trading ketches, ferries, and people involved in cray fishing. The area was also used for vessel maintenance. With no slipway, oral accounts recalled that, "boats were pulled out by hand with a block and tackle made fast to a post dug into the sand. The boats came up on long planks and wooden rollers and were held upright by guy ropes from the mast to anchors or posts each side. Later wooden cradles with wooden rollers attached were built."

The settlement at Rhyll underwent various maritime infrastructure developments. In 1928, George Dorward built a slipway to the north of the Jetty. It is said he had piles for the slipway, "lashed together in rafts of 15 and towed to Rhyll with a 40 h.p. fishing boat."<sup>18</sup> The slipway was built from timber and piled into the seabed (Figure 8) and a jetty, large workshop and manager's residence were built on the site. A lack of business due to economic depression caused the area to be abandoned several years after it was built. The manager's residence was moved to a local farm and fisherman Jim and Ted Richardson and Frank Jansson took over use of the jetty. Local residents recorded that the jetty was removed when the current boat ramp was built.

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*