

Place No. 15 Dolphin Island Watering Cove Graves



Graves on Dolphin Island

LOCATION	
Name of Place	Dolphin Island Watering Cove Graves
Other Name (1)	
Other Name (2)	
Location/Address	
Other Locational descriptor (text)	West side of Dolphin Island, in Flying Foam Passage 482505 mE, 7734694 mN (MGA94 Zone 50) Latitude: 116.8321 Longitude: -20.487

OWNERSHIP & LAND DESCRIPTION				
Owner	Address	Phone/fax	Status	Item No.
Crown Land vested in Dept of Environment & Conservation	Lot 3 Anderson Road Karratha Industrial Estate KARRATHA PO Box 835 KARRATHA 6714	Ph (08) 9143 1488 Fx (08) 9144 1118		
Reserve No.	Lot/Location No.	Plan/Diagram	Vol/Folio	Item No.
VCL				

LISTING AND ASSESSMENT	
HCWA Reference Number	8667
State Register of Heritage Places (Y/N)	No
Classified by the National Trust (Y/N)	No
Register of the National Estate (Y/N)	Yes
Local Town Planning Scheme (Y/N)	Yes
Management Category	A

DESCRIPTION	
Construction Date (1)	Post 1857 (based on coins)
Construction Date (2)	
Site Type (Place Type)	Historic Site
Use(s) of Place	
Original	MONUMENT\CEMETERY: Graves
Present	MONUMENT\CEMETERY: Graves

<i>Other</i>	
Construction Materials:	
<i>Walls</i>	
<i>Roof</i>	
Condition	
Integrity (how much of the original fabric is intact?):	Five of the six graves have been excavated, and some materials presumably replaced.
Physical Description	
<p>Six graves are located towards the south end of a beach on the western shore of Dolphin Island. The bay is located opposite a well-defined rocky spit on the eastern shore of Angel Island.</p> <p>The graves are parallel and located side by side in a north-south aligned row, each marked by a rectangle of stones placed approximately east-west. They are on a low sandy rise between the sea and the rocky hills behind. Several European inscriptions are located 300 m to 400 m north of the graves. There are many Aboriginal rock engravings in this locality. ¹</p>	
History	
<p>The Flying Foam Passage was a significant focus for the pearling fleet in the late 1800s, and this is the only known burial complex on the Flying Foam Passage.² The bay appears to have been a distinctive location and source of water (it is known as Watering Bay). The journals of the Resident Magistrate in Roebourne (1866-1884) suggest the area was a major watering place for the pearling fleet, which was comprised of European, Asian and Aboriginal people.</p> <p>The identities of the bodies are not known, nor whether they were buried singularly or in a group. Scholl's diaries record the deaths of a number of pearlers, Aborigines and Malays in Flying Foam Passage between 1866 and 1881, but no graves are mentioned.</p> <p>The direct link between these burials and the pearling fleet is an assumption made by past investigators. The site was located in 1970 and a skull taken from one grave to the WA Museum. Examination of the skull described it as either a European or Asian adult male, aged between 30-40 years old at the time of death. Examination of the graves in 1973 (Hutchinson) and 1979 (McIlroy) were equally inconclusive regarding the ethnicity of the individuals. It appears that at least five of the six graves were excavated. The human remains are presumed to be at the WA Museum. No grave goods were described by the excavators.</p>	
Archaeology	
<p>The graves are the most significant elements of the site from a historical perspective. Also found at the site were four coins from the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) dated to 1856-1857. A number of historical engravings were observed in earlier visits including two ships, the initials GV and the name George Vincent. Several items were found at the northern part of the beach, including a clay pipe, a basalt core and flaked olive glass.</p> <p><i>Aboriginal sites:</i> Given the site density of engravings and other sites in the Dampier Archipelago, there are numerous Registered Aboriginal Sites at this location (DAA Site IDs: 11668, 11669, 11670, 11708, 11709, 11710, 11711 and 11712). At this location, there were numerous engravings focused at the rock pool in the creek at the northern end of the beach.</p>	

SIGNIFICANCE	
Historic theme (s)	<p>1. DEMOGRAPHIC SETTLEMENT & MOBILITY 102 Aboriginal occupation 103 Racial contact and interaction</p> <p>3. OCCUPATIONS 305 Fishing and other maritime activities</p> <p>6. PEOPLE</p>

	601 Aboriginal people 603 Early settlers
Statement of Significance:	
<p>The Flying Foam Passage was a significant focus for the pearling fleet in the late 1800s and this is a reliable watering point on the Flying Foam Passage. Historical uses are revealed by six burials, possibly related to the pearling era. The graves are striking visual reminders of life and death on the Flying Foam, and have scientific value for future researchers to determine the ethnicity and lifeways of the deceased, particularly through genetic and isotopic analyses. The historical engravings are rare for the Dampier Archipelago. Additionally, the site is significant for Indigenous cultural heritage, as there is a major concentration of Aboriginal engravings focused on the small rock pools in the creek, with historical uses intimated by flaked glass artefacts.</p>	

ASSOCIATIONS	
Architect/Designer (1)	
Architect/Designer (2)	
Other Associated Person(s)	
MHI - 1996	Assessment undertaken and Place Name Record created as "Dolphin Island Grave Site"
MHI Review – 2012	Entry updated and remained "Dolphin Island Watering Cover Grave Site"



Flaked glass artefact found on Dolphin Island

¹ McLroy, J. 1979, *Dampier Archipelago Historic Sites Survey*, for Australian Heritage Commission.

Paterson, A and C. Souter 2004, *Cultural Heritage Assessment & Management Proposal for Historical Archaeological Sites – Dampier Archipelago, Western Australia*, Karratha: Conservation and Land Management (Karratha).

Souter, C., A. Paterson and F. Hook 2006, 'The Assessment of Archaeological Sites on Barrow Island and the Dampier Archipelago, Pilbara, Western Australia: A Collaborative Approach', *Bulletin of the Australasian Institute of Maritime Archaeology* 30, pp 85-92.

² Paterson, A. 2006, 'Towards a Historical Archaeology of Western Australia's Northwest', *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 24, pp 99-111.

