

**PROPOSED SOIL SAMPLING PROGRAM**

**HEAZLEWOOD RIVER/ BRASSEY HILL EXPLORATION AREA**

**VEGETATION SURVEY AND ASSESSMENT**

**FOR BASS METALS LTD**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Bass Metals is undertaking soil sampling as the first stage of a mineral exploration program in an area to the west of the Heazlewood River, including Brassey Hill, Burgess Hill and Basalt Hill. The proposed works will involve the cutting of foot access tracks along mapped grid lines running east to west across the exploration area..

The area around Brassey Hill and a linear zone parallel to and east of Roaring Mag Creek are known localities for the Threatened Species, *Epacris glabella*.

Another Threatened Species *Micrantheum serpentinum* also occurs in the locality.

### 1.2 Objectives

The primary focus of this botanical survey was to confirm the presence and extent of the Threatened Species *Epacris glabella* in the vicinity of Brassey Hill and Roaring Mag Creek.

The survey also determined the vegetation types, plant communities, the flora and any other threatened species such as *Micrantheum serpentinum* which occur naturally in the areas of Brassey Hill and Roaring Mag Creek.

A further objective was to determine if there is any evidence of *Phytophthora* in or adjacent to the survey area.

### 1.3 Study Area

The study area covers the southern portion of the exploration area around Brassey Hill and along and to the immediate east of Roaring Mag Creek.

SURVEY 1: Brassey Hill. The survey followed the existing 4WD track which extends from the Heazlewood River crossing to the west and north of Brassey Hill for a distance of approximately 1.3 km.

SURVEY 2: Roaring Mag Creek: This survey followed a separate 4WD track which begins near the Heazlewood River and runs parallel to Roaring Mag Creek for a distance of approximately 1.4 km.

## 2. BOTANICAL SURVEY

### 2.1 Background Research

The Natural Values Atlas data base (GIS Unit, Conservation Branch, DPIW) was accessed for the botanical records and for the vegetation mapping of the study area.

### 2.2 Survey Methodology

This survey was undertaken along and in the vicinity of existing 4WD tracks and the four southern most proposed grid lines and with detailed survey undertaken in the known mapped locations of the Threatened Species *Epacris glabella*.

The field survey was undertaken on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2007.

Vascular plant species were recorded, plant communities and vegetation types were observed and described and cross referenced with the Natural Values Atlas data base.

### 2.3 Assessment of Conservation Significance

The Natural Values Atlas provides the following data.

The vegetation types and communities which occur within or adjacent to the area surveyed include:

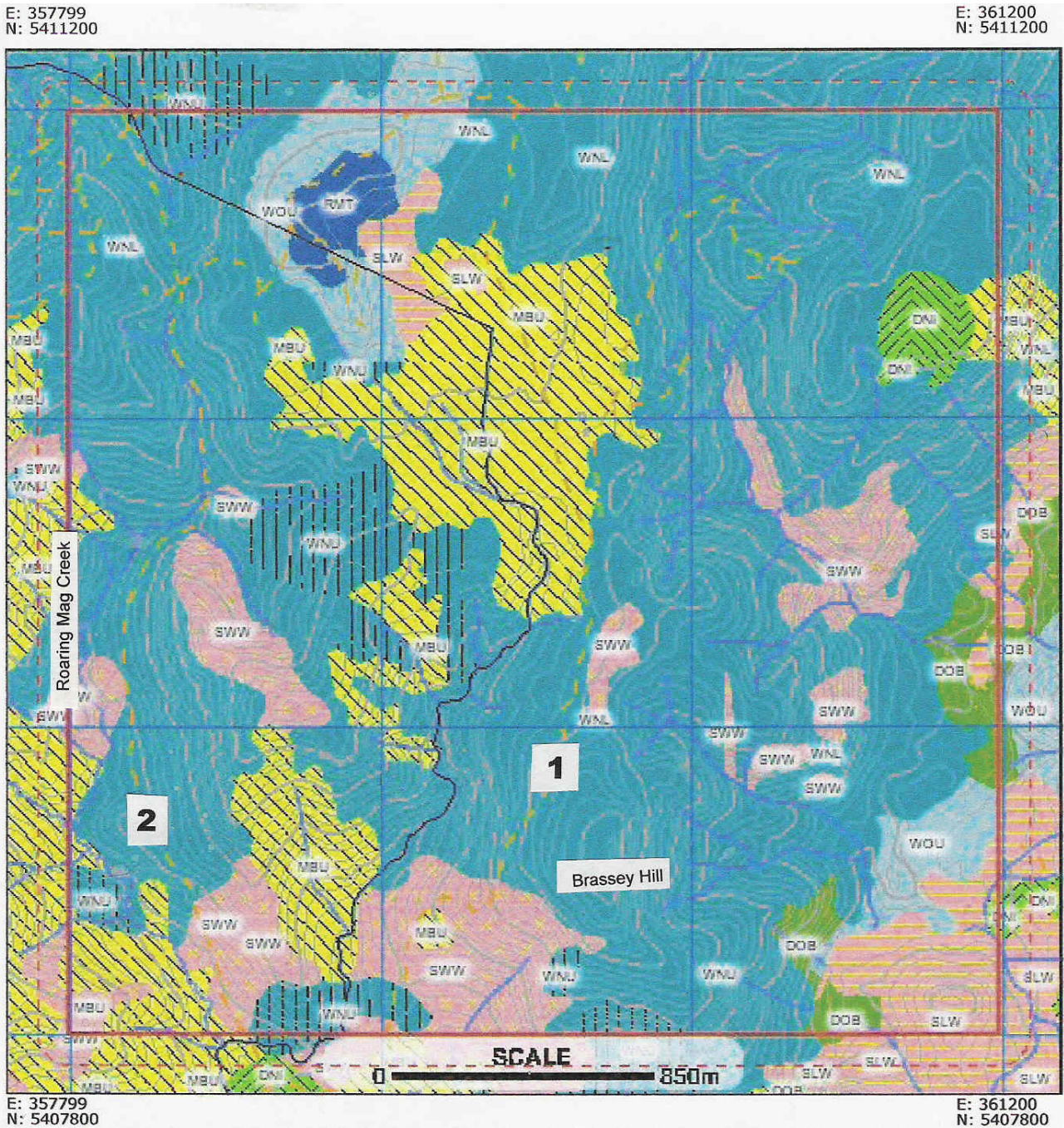
- *Eucalyptus nitida* Over *Leptospermum spp.* (TasVeg Code WNL) is the most widespread community in the study area.
- Western Wet scrub (SWW) is found in small pockets across the study area.
- *Eucalyptus nitida* Wet Forest (WNU) mapped in three disjunct locations.

In addition to the communities detailed above the other communities which occur in the southern portion of the exploration area include;

- *Nothofagus cunninghamii* / *Atherosperma moschatum* Rainforest (RMT) one small area only.
- *Eucalyptus obliqua* Wet Forest (WOU) two locations with one next to above rainforest.
- *Eucalyptus nitida* Dry Forest & Woodland (DNI) one small area only.
- *Eucalyptus obliqua* Dry Forest & woodland (DOB) Three small localized areas.
- *Leptospermum spp.* Scrub (SLW) intergrades and overlaps with WNL and SWW.
- Buttongrass Moorland (MBU) Widespread but discontinuous.

No listed **Threatened Native Vegetation Communities** are known to occur within the study area.



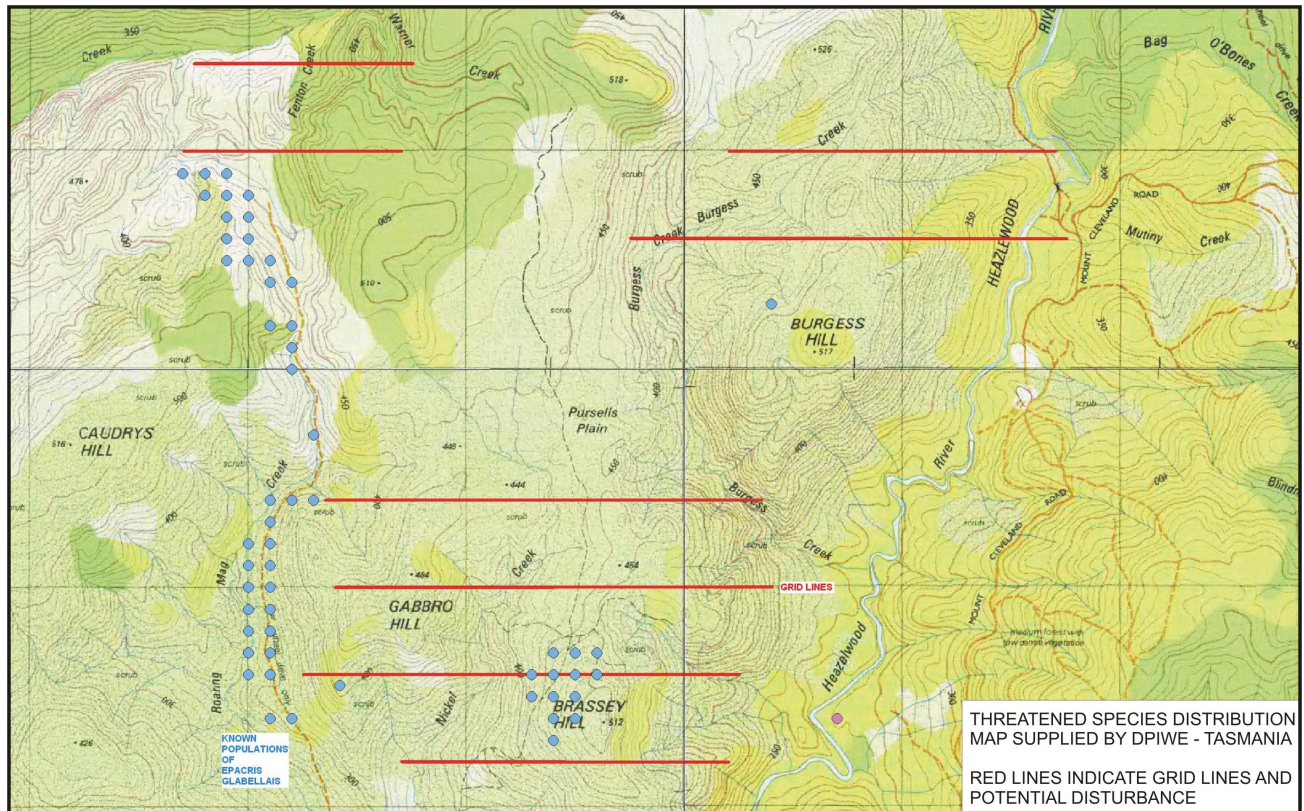


MAP 1..... Vegetation Communities as per TasVeg... Natural Values Atlas



The distribution and occurrence of the **Threatened Species *Epacris glabella*** on and around Bassey Hill as well along and adjacent to the 4WD track which runs parallel with Roaring Mag Creek was surveyed and mapped by D.Keith in 1996. This species is listed as endangered under the Threatened Species Protection Act.

The attached map shows the recorded locations. The extent of the species in the locality was confirmed during this survey.



MAP 2... *Epacris glabella*...Mapped Locations from Natural Values Atlas data base

There were three records of the **Threatened Species *Micrantheum serpentinum*** within the study area by Alec Buchanan in 1990. This species is listed as vulnerable under the Threatened Species Act. This survey determined that the species occurs throughout the study area in association with *Epacris glabella* as well as other locations with an ultramafic substrate.

There is one early record (1930) of the listed as rare Threatened Species *Comesperma defoliatum*. Although the recorded location on the eastern side of the Heazlewood River is within the exploration area it is well clear of any proposed grid lines. The species was not observed during this survey.

*Westringia rubiaefolia* is a non-threatened species which is considered to be of conservation significance. It occurred in both survey locations and appears to occur in association with both *Epacris glabella* and *Micrantheum serpentinum*. Other species of conservation significance which were observed in the study area included *Baekia leptocaulis*, *Bedfordia linearis*, *Leptospermum glaucescens*, *Pentachondra involucrata*, *Pultenaea gunnii* var. *baeckeoides*, and *Spyridium gunnii*.

## 2.4 Limitations

This survey targeted the known locations of the threatened species *Epacris glabella* which is a relatively localized area within the exploration area as a whole. The results reported here refer to the areas around Brassey Hill and in the vicinity of Roaring Mag Creek and the four southern most proposed grid lines. The surveys followed the two existing 4WD tracks only as difficulty of access precluded surveying the area as a whole.

No botanical survey can guarantee that all vascular plant species will be observed and recorded during a single site visit due to seasonal and annual variation in abundance and the possible absence of fertile material required for identification. Ephemeral species which may have been present include orchids, lilies, grasses and sedges. However, all significant species known to occur in the vicinity of the study area have been considered in this report.

## 3. SURVEY RESULTS

The vegetation and plant communities observed were greatly influenced by the ultramafic geology and serpentine substrate of the locality. The predominant vegetation type in both areas surveyed was closer to a Western Wet Scrub (SWW) community rather than the community shown on the TasVeg map which was *Eucalyptus nitida* Over *Leptospermum* spp (WNL). The Eucalypt was present as an emergent over the scrubby understorey and there were localized occurrences of the Eucalypt community on nearby slopes. Species of *Leptospermum* were also present however it was not observed as a predominating species which excluded other species from the scrub layer. On that basis the predominant community in both survey areas is considered to be Western Wet Scrub. There was a diversity of species in the shrub layer, the composition of which varied in accordance with drainage conditions, soil depth, and the presence of rocky outcrops as occurs on Brassey Hill. The height (1 to 3 metres) and density of this vegetation also varied with these changes in site conditions, from complete ground cover along the Roaring Mag Creek track to spaced shrubs with bare interspaces on the upper slopes of Brassey Hill.

No plant community listed under the Threatened Native Vegetation Communities Act of 2006 was observed in the study area.

Two threatened species *Epacris glabella* and *Micrantheum serpentinum* were observed and were recorded in both areas surveyed.

Seven other species were recorded during the survey which are considered to be of conservation significance. (REF: Natural Values Atlas data base)

A total of 35 vascular plants were recorded comprising 28 woody species (trees and shrubs), 4 herbaceous species, and 3 grass-like plants such as sedges and lilies. No species of orchids or ferns were observed.

### 3.1 Survey 1: Brassey Hill

**DESCRIPTION:** This survey followed the 4WD track from the junction to the immediate north of the Heazlewood River towards and to the west and north of Brassey Hill for a distance of about 1.3 km. This survey crossed the two southern most proposed grid lines.

**RESULTS:** The vegetation type along the route of the survey comes within the definition of Western Wet Scrub (SWW) which is a common vegetation community type in the western areas of Tasmania. The species composition of the community was diverse with no one species predominating to the exclusion of others and although graminoids such as Gahnia and Buttongrass were present they were not predominant either.

*Eucalyptus nitida* was commonly observed as a small emergent tree (- 8m).

The height of the scrub layer varies from up to 3 metres on the lower slopes to an average of just one metre on Brassey Hill itself. Likewise the density varied from the lower slopes up to Brassey Hill where it was quite open with spaces to walk between shrubs over a substrate of exposed fragmented rock.

The threatened species *Micrantheum serpentinum* was widespread in the area surveyed and occurred with the second threatened species *Epacris glabella* on the upper slopes of Brassey Hill. Both species appeared to be more numerous on the rocky upper slopes where the vegetation was more open and there was less competition from more vigorous species.

One proposed grid line has the potential to impact on the more localized *Epacris glabella*, namely the second grid line from the south on alignment 5408700N, and care will be needed when undertaking grid line cutting on this line.

- No threatened native vegetation community was observed during this survey.
- Two listed threatened plant species were observed in this survey area, *Epacris glabella* and *Micrantheum serpentinum*.
- Non-threatened species of conservation significance recorded included *Pentachondra involucrata* and *Westringia rubiaefolia*.

### 3.2 Survey 2: Roaring Mag Creek

DESCRIPTION: The 4WD track extended from the junction of the previous survey northwards and parallel to Roaring Mag Creek for a distance of approximately 1.4 km to a point where the fourth (from the south) proposed grid line is adjacent to the track.

RESULTS: The Western Wet Scrub community extends from Brassey Hill into this survey area with much the same composition of species but with a greater density on the lower slopes and with more numbers of emergent *Eucalyptus nitida*. The average height of the vegetations is greater also but still only about 2 to 3 metres. The track passes through a mapped population of *Epacris glabella* which was confirmed during the survey. All of the proposed grid lines stop short of the *Epacris* locations and will have no direct impact on the species.

*Micrantheum serpentinum* was commonly observed along this track.

- No threatened native vegetation community was observed during this survey.
- Two listed threatened plant species were observed in this survey area, *Epacris glabella* and *Micrantheum serpentinum*.
- Non-threatened species of conservation significance recorded included *Pentachondra involucrata* and *Westringia rubiaefolia*.

### 3.3 Listed Species: *Epacris glabella*

The occurrence and extent of *Epacris glabella* in the vicinity of Brassey Hill was confirmed by the field survey and the locations and mapping detailed on the Natural Values Atlas data base is accurate. The presence and extent of the population of the species along Roaring Mag Creek was confirmed between Grid Reference points 5408360N – 358222E (which is west of the southern most grid line) and 5409400N – 358177E which is at the western end of the fourth grid line.

There are mapped locations for the species north of this point which were not ground truthed as part of this survey as they are clear of proposed grid lines although there is a possibility that the species could occur at the western end of the grid with the alignment 5411000N.

All proposed grid lines were clear of known locations of *Epacris glabella* except for the Grid Line on the alignment of 5408700N, which passes to the immediate north of the highest point of Brassey Hill itself.

The vegetation around the higher slopes of Brassey Hill is relatively low and open and will require a minimum of track cutting, if any, to provide access for soil sampling. It may be sufficient to just flag that section of grid line for a distance of 400 – 500 metres, i.e. up to 350 metres on the western side of the highest point and 150 metres to the east.

The western extremities of the first four grid lines all terminated before reaching the *Epacris glabella* locations.

This species occurred in association with *Micrantheum serpeninum* and in all recorded locations on Brassey Hill and in some locations in the Roaring Mag Creek area.

The observation and recognition of this species by personnel working in the field will be an important aspect to minimizing impact on this plant during track cutting operations. To the untrained eye this species is relatively non-descript, and particularly so when it is not flowering.

To assist field workers with its recognition a reference plant has been flagged along the 4WD track to Brassey Hill. REFERENCE PLANT LOCATION: 5408725N – 359483E.

Conducting a brief plant recognition workshop for all the field workers would also be a valuable exercise.

*Epacris glabella* RECORDED LOCATIONS:

1. 5408725N – 359483E
2. 5408684N – 359612E
3. 5408360N – 358222E
4. 5408669N – 358085E
5. 5409000N – 358058E
6. 5409400N – 358177E

The proposed grid lines will provide an opportunity to further investigate the area between the two mapped populations of the species. This area is difficult to access at present and there may well be further locations of the species which need to be recorded and mapped should the exploration program advance to a test drilling stage.



Photo 1..... *Epacris glabella*



Photo 2..... *Epacris glabella* with fruit



### 3.4 Listed Species: *Micrantheum serpentinum*

This species is more widespread within the study area than is indicated by the three recorded locations on the Natural Values Atlas data base and was observed on and adjacent to Brassey Hill and in the vicinity of Roaring Mag Creek.

This species occurred with *Epacris glabella* in some of the locations within the study area, particularly in the vicinity of Brassey Hill, however the *Epacris* was not present in all recorded locations of the *Micrantheum*. This species is also rather non-descript when not in flower and can be easily confused with one or two other species which occur in the locality. Some training and instruction of field personnel in recognizing the plant will be necessary also in order to limit the impact on the species during track cutting.

A reference plant has also been flagged in the same location as the *Epacris* to enable track cutters to cross reference with plants they come across along the actual grid lines.

REFERENCE PLANT LOCATION: 5408725N – 359483E

OTHER RECORDED LOCATIONS for *Micrantheum serpentinum*

1. 5408220N – 359050E
2. 5408615N – 359435E
3. 5408684N – 359612E
4. 5409000N – 358058E



PHOTO 3 and 4..... *Micrantheum serpentinum*

**3.5 Non-Threatened Species of Conservation Significance: *Pentachondra involucrata* and *Westringia rubiaefolia***

*Pentachondra involucrata* and *Westringia rubiaefolia* are described as being on conservation significance on the Natural Values Atlas data base. Both species were observed in each of the two surveys and were relatively widespread in the area. Measures recommended to limit impact on the two threatened species will also assist these two species.



Photo 5 ..... *Pentachondra involucrata*



Photo 6..... *Westringia rubiaefolia*



### 3.6 Phytophthora

No evidence of Phytophthora infestation was observed during this survey.

No symptomatic evidence of Phytophthora was observed in plants known to be susceptible to the disease such as genera in the Epacridaceae and Proteaceae families.

Plant species from both families were recorded during the survey.

Standard protocols to prevent the inadvertent introduction of the disease into the exploration area should be observed when accessing the site.

### 4.0 CONCLUSIONS FROM THIS SURVEY

The cutting of grid lines to provide foot access in order to undertake the proposed soil sampling program is a low impact mineral exploration activity. The proposed grid line cutting will not affect any listed threatened native vegetation community and will have minimal impact on the listed threatened plant species *Epacris glabella* and *Micrantheum serpeninum*. *Epacris glabella* has a limited and localized distribution within the study area and only one of the proposed grid lines has the potential to impact on the species. *Micrantheum serpeninum* is more widespread within the study area and it occurs in association with the *Epacris* so that measures taken to safeguard the *Epacris* will also limit any impact on the *Micrantheum*.

The following recommendations will ensure that disturbance to either species and their habitat will be minimized.

### 5. RECOMMENDATIONS TO LIMIT IMPACTS

- Access proposed grid line locations from existing roads and tracks where ever possible.
- The value of having personnel working in the field who have some interest and appreciation of the plants and vegetation cannot be underestimated from the perspective of recognizing the plants and limiting the impact on the threatened species which occur in the exploration area.

#### 5.1 Listed Species: *Epacris glabella*

- To assist personnel in recognizing this species in the field some training will be required as the plant can be somewhat nondescript when not in flower.
- An information sheet which provides a photo of the plant and details of field characters to assist with recognition should be provided to each person.
- A reference plant of the species has been flagged in an accessible location along the 4WD track to Brassey Hill to enable personnel to cross-reference with plants found in other locations.  
REFERENCE LOCATION: 5408725N – 359483E
- Personell working in the field should endeavor to avoid cutting or damaging this species where-ever it occurs in the exploration area.
- A key location of the species is considered to be the second grid line from the south, which extends east wards from REFERENCE POINT: 5408700N for a distance of 400 to 500 metres on Brassey Hill itself. Minimize track cutting or flag only in this location.
- Further surveying of this species will be made possible and is desirable from the grid lines once they have been cut in order to more fully map the distribution of the species in this locality. The area between the two known populations of the species on Brassey Hill and Roaring Mag Creek should be targeted for further survey.

## 5.2 Listed Species: *Micrantheum serpentinum*

- To assist personnel in recognizing this species in the field some training will be required as the plant can be somewhat nondescript when not in flower.
- An information sheet which provides a photo of the plant and details of field characters to assist with recognition should be provided to each person.
- A reference plant of the species has been flagged in an accessible location along the 4WD track to Brassey Hill to enable personnel to cross reference with plants seen in other locations. REFERENCE LOCATION: 5408725N – 359483E.
- Personnel working in the field should endeavor to avoid cutting or damaging plants of this species where ever possible.
- Further surveying of this species will be made possible and is desirable, from the grid lines once they have been cut in order to more fully map the distribution of the species in this locality.

## 5.3 Non-Threatened Species of Conservation Significance: *Pentachondra involucrata* and *Westringia rubiaefolia*

- Both species are described as being of conservation significance on the Natural Values data base.
- Train personnel to recognize both species in the field.

## 5.4 Phytophthora Management

- Although there was no evidence of the presence of the disease in the exploration area it is recommended that procedures be put in place to ensure that the disease is not inadvertently introduced into the area.
- A treatment station should be established at the start of the 4WD track before it enters the exploration area.
- Tim Rudman of the DPIW's Biodiversity Conservation Branch has produced a very useful report titled "Interim *Phytophthora cinnamomi* Management Guidelines" which provides prescriptions for the management of the disease in the field including hygiene and washdown procedures. It is available to download from the DPIW website at [www.dpiw.tas.gov.au](http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au) and go to weeds, pests and diseases. There is also a further report available from the site which provides more detail in regard to washdown procedures.

## APPENDIX 1. PLANT COMMUNITIES & SPECIES RECORDED

### 1. Western Wet Scrub

Western Wet Scrub is a widespread community in the western region of Tasmania from near sea level up to about 750 metres and is common on the serpentine derived sites in the vicinity of the Heazlewood River, Brassey Hill and Roaring Mag Creek.

*Eucalyptus nitida* is present as a small emergent tree over the scrubby understorey which varies in height and density and has a relatively high diversity of woody species with no one species predominating. Graminoids are present but at low densities.

This community intergrades with community WNL where species of *Leptospermum* dominate the scrub layer.

Two threatened species occur in this community in this location, *Epacris glabella* and *Micrantheum serpentinum*.

Two non-threatened species of conservation significance were recorded in this community in this location, *Pentachondra involucrata* and *Westringia rubiaefolia*.

The TasVeg code for this community is SWW.

#### TREES

<i>Eucalyptus nitida</i>	West Coast Peppermint	Common
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#### SHRUBS

<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	Blackwood	Occasional
<i>Allocasuarina monilifera</i>	Necklace She-oak	Occ
<i>Baekia leptocaulis</i>	Slender Heathmyrtle	Occ
<i>Banksia marginata</i>	Silver Banksia	Comm
<i>Bedfordia linearis</i>	Slender Blanketleaf	One record
<i>Bauera rubioides</i>	Wiry Bauera	Comm
<i>Coprosma nitida</i>	Mountain Currant	Uncomm
** <i>Epacris glabella</i>	Smooth Heath	Localized
<i>Epacris impressa</i>	Common Heath	Occ
<i>Hakea epiglottis</i>	Beaked Needlebush	Comm
<i>Leptecophylla juniperina</i>	Pink Mountainberry	Occ
<i>Leptospermum glaucescens</i>	Smoky Teatree	Occ
<i>Leptospermum lanigerum</i>	Woolly Teatree	Comm
<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i>	Manuka Teatree	Comm
<i>Lomatia tinctoria</i>	Guitarplant	Occ
<i>Melaleuca squamea</i>	Swamp Honeymyrtle	Occ
** <i>Micrantheum serpentinum</i>	Western Tridentbush	Comm
<i>Notelaea ligustrina</i>	Native Olive	Uncomm
* <i>Pentachondra involucrata</i>	Forest Frillyheath	Occ
<i>Pomaderris elliptica</i>	Yellow Dogwood	Uncomm
* <i>Pultenaea gunnii</i> var. <i>baeckeoides</i>	Delicate Golden Bushpea	Uncomm
<i>Pultenaea juniperina</i>	Prickly Beauty	Occ
<i>Sprengelia incarnata</i>	Swamp Heath	Occ

<i>*Spyridium gunnii</i>	Forest Dusty Miller	Localized
<i>Telopea truncata</i>	Waratah	Uncomm
<i>*Westringia rubiaefolia</i>	Stick Westringia	Comm
<b>CLIMBERS</b>		
<i>Cassytha pubescens</i>	Downy Dodderlaurel	Uncomm
<b>HERBS</b>		
<i>Drosera binata</i>	Forked Sundew	Localized
<i>Lobelia gibbosa</i>	Tall Lobelia	Localized
<i>Utricularia dichotoma</i>	Fairies Apron	Localized
<i>Viola hederaceae</i>	Ivy-leafed Violet	Uncomm
<b>GRASSES &amp; GRAMINOIDS</b>		
<i>Gahnia grandis</i>	Cutting Grass	Comm
<i>Gymnoschoenus sphaerocephalus</i>	Buttongrass	Comm
<i>Lepidosperma sp.</i>	A Swordsedge	Comm
<i>Stylidium graminifolium</i>	Triggerplant	Occ

## APPENDIX 2

### Checklist of Vascular Species Recorded by Family in Western Wet Scrub Community

Dicotyledonae	
ASTERACEAE	Status / Conservation Significance
<i>Bedfordia linearis</i>	Endemic
CAMPANULACEAE	
<i>Lobelia gibbosa</i>	
CASUARINACEAE	
<i>Allocasuarina monilifera</i>	Endemic
CUNONIACEAE	
<i>Bauera rubioides</i>	
DROSERACEAE	
<i>Drosera binata</i>	
EPACRIDACEAE	
<i>Epacris glabella</i>	Endemic & Endangered
<i>Epacris impressa</i>	
<i>Leptecophylla juniperina</i>	
<i>Pentachondra involucrata</i>	Endemic
<i>Sprengelia incarnata</i>	
EUPHORBIACEAE	
<i>Micrantheum serpetinum</i>	Endemic & Vulnerable
FABACEAE	
<i>Pultenaea gunnii</i> var. <i>baeckeoides</i>	Endemic
<i>Pultenaea juniperina</i>	
LAMIACEAE	
<i>Westringia rubiaefolia</i>	Endemic
LAURACEAE	
<i>Cassytha pubescens</i>	
LENTIBULARIACEAE	
<i>Utricularia dichotoma</i>	
MIMOSACEAE	
<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	

MYRTACEAE

<i>Baeckea leptocaulis</i>	Endemic
<i>Eucalyptus nitida</i>	Endemic
<i>Leptospermum glaucescens</i>	Endemic
<i>Leptospermum lanigerum</i>	
<i>Leptospermum scoparium</i>	
<i>Melaleuca squamea</i>	

OLEACEAE

*Notelaea ligustrina*

PROTEACEAE

<i>Banksia marginata</i>	
<i>Hakea epiglottis</i>	Endemic
<i>Lomatia tinctoria</i>	Endemic
<i>Telopea truncata</i>	Endemic

RHAMNACEAE

<i>Pomaderris elliptica</i>	
<i>Spyridium gunnii</i>	Endemic

RUBIACEAE

*Coprosma nitida*

RUTACEAE

<i>Philotheca virgata</i>	Endemic
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STYLIDIACEAE

*Stylidium graminifolium*

VIOLACEAE

*Viola hederaceae*

Monocotyledonae

CYPERACEAE

*Gahnia grandis*  
*Gymnoschoenus sphaerocephalus*  
*Lepidosperma sp.*

Pteridophyta

No ferns or allied plants were recorded in the survey area.

