

West Culburra.

A European Heritage Assessment.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. Study Objectives.

This report was commissioned by Realty Realisation Pty Ltd on the 30th of November 2010. It is a European heritage assessment to accompany a concept plan for an area being considered for a proposed mixed use subdivision west of Culburra, New South Wales (refer to Figure 1.1). This report includes a brief investigation of the history and landscape development of Culburra and its surrounds, with a particular focus on the area to the west. It evaluates the probable extent, nature and integrity of existing heritage and surface and sub-surface remains within the area proposed for subdivision and discusses the possible impact of future development on the heritage resource if present. The report also details measures which are intended to minimise potential negative impacts presenting options and recommendations in view of heritage significance and statutory obligations.

1.2. The Study Area and its Location.

The subject survey area lies on the western outskirts of Culburra and is referred to as West Culburra throughout this report. West Culburra is located on Culburra Road, 170 kilometres south of Sydney and 22 kilometres east of Nowra in New South Wales (Figures 1.1 and 1.2). It lies in the Parish of Wollumboola, the County of St Vincent and the local government area of Shoalhaven.

Proposed land use area 1 has a size of 8 hectares and is bounded by Culburra Road to the south, Canal Street to the east, a Sewerage Treatment Plant to the northwest and bushland fronting Curley's Bay to the north. Proposed land use area 2 lies adjacent on the south side of Culburra Road, immediately west of a retirement village with Lake Wollumboola further southeast. This land use area encompasses 2.55 hectares. Proposed land use areas 3, 4 and 5 are bounded by an estuary fronting Billy's Island to the north, a catchment divide extending across a ridgeline to the south with Culburra Road beyond, a Sewerage Treatment Plant to the east and open grazing land to the west. Their respective areas are 29 hectares, 11.4 hectares and 43 hectares.

1.3. Methodology.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the NSW Heritage Management System described in the *NSW Heritage Manual* and follows procedures and approaches outlined in *Statements of Heritage Impacts*, *Archaeological Assessments* and *Assessing Significance for Archaeological Sites and 'Relics'*.¹ It supports the principals and practices outlined in *The Conservation Plan* by J.S. Kerr and the *Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (The Burra Charter) and has regard for statutory requirements.²

This report includes:

1. A history of Culburra with a focus on the area to the west of the town;
2. A description of the proposed subdivision area, its physical context and ground disturbance;
3. An evaluation of the probable extent, nature and integrity of existing non indigenous heritage and surface and sub-surface remains within the proposed development site;
4. An assessment of the heritage significance of identified heritage items and the archaeological significance of potential relics;
5. An assessment of the impact of the proposed subdivision and subsequent development on the significance of identified heritage items and potential archaeological relics at the subject site;
6. Measures to mitigate or minimise negative impacts of the proposed subdivision and subsequent development on the heritage values of identified items and the potential archaeological resource;
7. Recommendations in accordance with heritage significance and statutory obligations; and
8. A bibliography of primary and secondary research sources used.

¹ NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. 1996. *NSW Heritage Manual*. HO/DUAP, Sydney. *Statements of Heritage Impact* (update, 2001).
Heritage Office. 2002. *Statements of Heritage Impact*. NSW Heritage Office.
NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. 1996. *Archaeological Assessments*. *Archaeological Assessment Guidelines*. HO/DUAP, Sydney.
NSW Department of Planning (Heritage Branch). 2009. *Assessing Significance for Archaeological Sites and 'Relics'*. NSW Department of Planning.

²Australia ICOMOS. 1999. *The Burra Charter. The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*. Australia ICOMOS Inc.

Kerr, James, Semple. 1996. *The Conservation Plan. A Guide to the preparation of conservation plans for places of European cultural significance*. The National Trust (NSW).

1.4. Author Identification.

Dr. Louise Steding (PhD) and Mr Gerald Steding (MA) of Steding Associates carried out a site survey and recording on the 12th, 13th and 14th of January 2011. This report was written by Dr. Louise Steding.



Figure 1.1. Plan showing the location of Culburra, New South Wales. From *Google Maps*, 2011.



Figure 1.2. Satellite image showing the survey area and Culburra, New South Wales. From *Google Maps*, 2011.

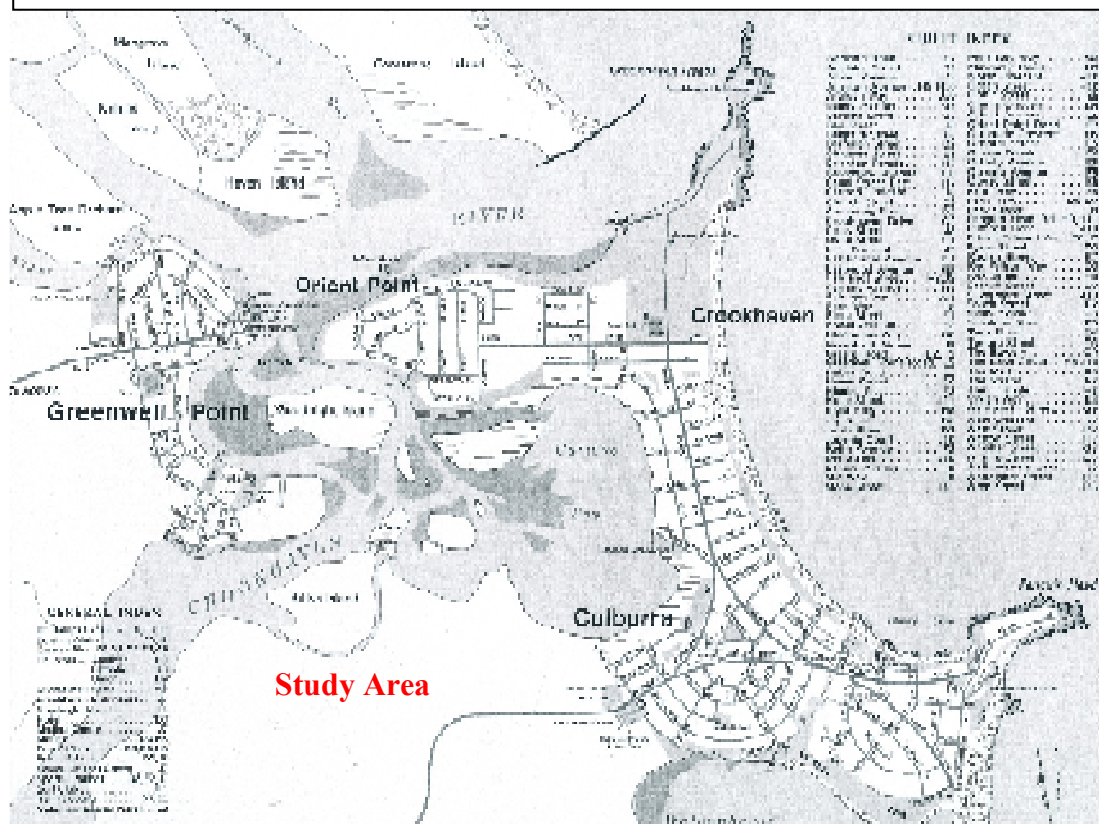


Figure 1.3. Plan of Culburra. From Shoalhaven Street. J.K. Craigie, 1985. 1st Edition.

2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF WEST CULBURRA.

This chapter is a brief history of Culburra and its surrounds. It provides a context for the proposed subdivision of West Culburra and describes the sequence of historical developments and processes of construction which have shaped the area and its landscape. This framework facilitates the prediction of areas of heritage value and potential archaeological sensitivity and facilitates the interpretation and assessment of relics and associated structures that may be impacted by subdivision and subsequent development.

2.1. Early Settlement of Culburra.

The first Europeans travelled through the Culburra area as early as 1805.³ In 1813 a party from the ship *Mathilda* was guided by Jerrinja Aboriginal people across the mouth of Lake Wollumboola as they travelled north.⁴ Cedar cutters soon set up camp in the area and used the river to raft and then ship logs to the Sydney market.⁵

Culburra was originally called Wheelers Point after George Wheeler, one of the first landholders.⁶ Other early landholders included Maurice O'Connell, Alexander Berry, Edward Wollstonecraft and Patrick Caffray. George Wheeler owned 158 acres at Kinghorn Head (now called Penguin Head) as well as some land around Lake Wollumboola.⁷ Edward Maurice O'Connell owned 604 acres extending from Lake Wollumboola in the south and southeast to near Palm Way in today's town of Culburra Beach (refer to Figure 1.3). Some 915 metres of O'Connell's land fronted the beach.⁸ In 1822 Alexander Berry and his partner Edward Wollstonecraft took possession of 10 000

³ Clark, Alan. 1973. *500 Names and Places of Shoalhaven*. Shoalhaven Tourism Board, Shoalhaven City Council. p.12.

⁴ Clark, Alan. 1973. *500 Names and Places of Shoalhaven*. Shoalhaven Tourism Board, Shoalhaven City Council. p.12.

⁵ after Welch, Pat (edt.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. p.75.

⁶ Clark, Alan. 1973. *500 Names and Places of Shoalhaven*. Shoalhaven Tourism Board, Shoalhaven City Council. p.12.

⁷ Public Works Department. No date. *Culburra Beach. Coastal Engineering Advice*. For Shoalhaven City Council. p.3.

⁸ Public Works Department. No date. *Culburra Beach. Coastal Engineering Advice*. For Shoalhaven City Council. p.3.

acres land granted to him by Governor Brisbane and established a settlement near Mount Coolangatta – the Coolangatta Estate, on the north side of the Shoalhaven River.⁹ Patrick Caffray owned 133 acres north of O’Connell’s land to Park Row near Crookhaven Park in today’s town of Culburra Beach.¹⁰ He lived at Orient Point.

In its early years the Culburra region was used for timber getting and sheep grazing, with a wool wash located near the boat ramp at Lake Wollumboola.¹¹ Curley’s Bay was named after an Aboriginal shepherd who looked after Alexander Berry’s sheep.¹² Sheep runs expanded to agricultural farms and dairying emerged as a strong industry.

In 1822 Berry established a settlement of convicts, Aboriginal and Maori farm labourers and other employees at the foot of a mountain that he named “Cullengatty”.¹³ The estate containing convict accommodation, worker’s cottages, stables, coachman’s quarters, harness room, a blacksmith’s shop, a tinsmith’s shop, a hall, offices, grew up around the Berry homestead.¹⁴ Alexander’s brothers John, William and David took on the management of the estate in 1836 when he moved to Sydney.¹⁵ Wollstonecraft’s holdings at Numbaa were added to the Berry’s estate on his death in the 1840’s.¹⁶

Farming in the area continued to grow. Small farmers, often tenants of the Berry brothers, worked the surrounding country. Still the population of the area remained sparse. As early as 1829 Alexander Berry had built a wharf at Greenwell Point.¹⁷ Here, local farmers in the region loaded their produce on board ships bound for Sydney. By the 1870s the district was emerging as a major supplier of farm produce and timber to

⁹ Welch, Pat (ed.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. p.75.

¹⁰ Public Works Department. No date. *Culburra Beach. Coastal Engineering Advice*. For Shoalhaven City Council. p.3.

¹¹ Welch, Pat (ed.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. p.4.

¹² Clark, Alan. 1973. *500 Names and Places of Shoalhaven*. Shoalhaven Tourism Board, Shoalhaven City Council. p.13.

¹³ State Heritage Inventory: Database No.2390185;

Bayley, William A. 1975. *Shoalhaven. History of the Shire of Shoalhaven, New South Wales*. Shoalhaven Shire Council. p.222.

¹⁴ State Heritage Inventory: Database No.2390185.

¹⁵ State Heritage Inventory: Database No.2390185.

¹⁶ State Heritage Inventory: Database No.2390328.

¹⁷ Welch, Pat (ed.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. p.75.

the colony with Greenwell Point as the earliest port in the Shoalhaven region. Many fishermen were also working in the Shoalhaven / Crookhaven estuary. Their catches were taken to the wharf and transported to Sydney.¹⁸ Large ships called from Sydney and Melbourne and smaller vessels brought produce from further up the Shoalhaven River to be exported from the port.¹⁹ In 1852 the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company was established locally to service the transportation of goods and passengers to the Sydney Market.²⁰ By 1872 the southern arm of the Crookhaven River was opened to large steamers and Greenwell Point had become the fourth busiest port in the state after Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle.²¹ By 1879 a large government wharf had been constructed at Greenwell Point.²² A smaller wharf had been built at Crookhaven Heads.

Several vessels were wrecked on the rocks in the vicinity of the Greenwell Point and Crookhaven Heads. In the early 1860s the schooner “Ceylon” ran aground on the south southeast side of Lighthouse Hill. The barque “Pacific” ran ashore on the neck of the peninsula in about 1870. Then, in the early 1880s, the schooner “Henrietta” was wrecked on the reef northeast of Lighthouse Hill. The Steamer “Brooklyn” ran onto the outer reef at the Crookhaven River entrance in 1911.²³

With the rapid growth of river and coastal shipping in 1870s, a Pilot Station was built at Crookhaven Heads (then referred to as Shoalhaven).²⁴ It was commissioned by the NSW Maritime Board on the 1st of February 1872.²⁵ The Pilot Station was run by Marine Captain John Craig (Pilot) and four boatmen: W. Sparkes, W. Armstrong, John

¹⁸ Clark, Alan (edt.). 1994. *Villages of Shoalhaven*. Shoalhaven Tourism Board, Shoalhaven City Council. p.15.

¹⁹ Clark, Alan (edt.). 1994. *Villages of Shoalhaven*. Shoalhaven Tourism Board, Shoalhaven City Council. p.15.

²⁰ Welch, Pat (edt.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. p.77.

²¹ Welch, Pat (edt.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. p.77.

²² Welch, Pat (edt.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. p.89.

²³ Welch, Pat (edt.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. p.79, 83, 87, 100.

²⁴ Shoalhaven City Council and Department of Lands. 2006. *Plan of Management. Crookhaven Headland*. For Shoalhaven City Council. p.13.

²⁵ Fleming, A.P. 1973. *White Towers. The Illawarra Lighthouses. Crookhaven Heads to Cape Baily*. Illawarra Historical Society. p.14.

Armstrong and R. Baxter.²⁶ A new lighthouse was erected in 1904 at which time the Stations name was changed to Crookhaven.²⁷ Its light was lit by Captain Eddie on the 15th of September 1904.²⁸

By 1858 the Princes Highway had been extended to Bomaderry,²⁹ making the area far more accessible to overland travellers and settlers. With the death of David Berry in 1889, the Coolangatta Estate which he had inherited began to break up. Additional small dairy farms emerged as this industry flourished.³⁰ Complementing the growing rural community, Nowra developed as the principal urban centre. The Parish of Wollumboola was proclaimed on the 7th May 1887.³¹ Soon after, in 1893, the railway arrived from Sydney to Bomaderry, further opening the region to rural and urban development.³² It also marked the end of the passenger steamship service.

In 1891, 233 acres of land adjacent to the Crookhaven headland were notified as a recreation reserve (Welch p.89). Soon after, the Aboriginal Protection Board decided to relocate Shoalhaven Aboriginal people from the Berry Estate. Twenty seven acres were excised from Crookhaven Park at Orient Point as the Roseby Park Aboriginal Reserve in 1900.³³ With over 100 people in the reserve, including 42 children, in 1903 the area's first school opened - Roseby Park Aboriginal School.³⁴ In 1907 the Aboriginal Reserve was expanded by a further 39 acres by the Aboriginal Protection Board.³⁵

²⁶ Welch, Pat (ed.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. p.87.

²⁷ Shoalhaven City Council and Department of Lands. 2006. *Plan of Management. Crookhaven Headland*. For Shoalhaven City Council. p.13,
Dunn, Cathy. 2011. *Bringing Progress to Culburra Beach and Surrounds*. For Culburra Beach Progress Association. (Internet site).

²⁸ Fleming, A.P. 1973. *White Towers. The Illawarra Lighthouses. Crookhaven Heads to Cape Baily*. Illawarra Historical Society. p.15.

²⁹ Welch, Pat (ed.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. p.77.

³⁰ State Heritage Inventory: Database No.2390328.

³¹ Clark, Alan (ed.). 1994. *Villages of Shoalhaven*. Shoalhaven Tourism Board, Shoalhaven City Council. p.13.

³² Shoalhaven City Council and Department of Lands. 2006. *Plan of Management. Crookhaven Headland*. For Shoalhaven City Council. p.13.

³³ Shoalhaven City Council and Department of Lands. 2006. *Plan of Management. Crookhaven Headland*. For Shoalhaven City Council. p.12.

³⁴ State Heritage Inventory: Database No.2390323.

³⁵ Welch, Pat (ed.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. p.89.

The emerging coastal town itself was named Culburra after an Aboriginal word meaning sand by developer Henry Halloran in c.1916.³⁶ Culburra Estate was first subdivided in 1921 and land was sold by Halloran.³⁷ However, development was slow, though the district was becoming known as a holiday place. In 1928 a 13 bedroom guesthouse was built by Halloran to encourage visitors to the area.³⁸

Culburra developed as a quiet seaside tourist village in the 1920s.³⁹ It was the second suburb of the initial plan for St. Vincent City (refer below to Section 2.2). Land sales commenced in 1922 and the town gradually became known for its beaches, swimming, surfing, sailing, boating, prawning and fishing. As the town grew, holiday cottages were built with ocean views and shops, businesses and sporting clubs were established.⁴⁰ Still in its early years, only a dirt road led to Culburra and fresh water had to be pumped from the well above Culburra Beach. Furthermore, many early travellers to Culburra had to open and close farmer's gates so that cattle and sheep did not stray.⁴¹

During the years of World War II, Culburra Guesthouse became uneconomical to run. The house was sold in 1952 and its new owners Jordan and Quiggen transported the buildings to Nowra for use as part of the Riverhaven Motel.⁴² The Moongate beach pebble arch entrance and Norfolk Island Pines are the only visible physical evidence of the former guesthouse at 198 Penguin Head Road.⁴³ Also during World War II passenger boats on the Shoalhaven and coastal steamers ceased operations. Since this

³⁶ Clark, Alan. 1973. *500 Names and Places of Shoalhaven*. Shoalhaven Tourism Board, Shoalhaven City Council. p.12.

³⁷ Welch, Pat (ed.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. pp.4, 89, 95.

³⁸ Welch, Pat (ed.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. pp.4, 95.

³⁹ Billett, W. and Hale, J. 1986. 'More on Culburra House'. *The Shoalhaven Chronograph*. Newsletter for the Shoalhaven, Berry & Kangaroo Valley Historical Societies. pp.2-3.

⁴⁰ Clark, Alan (ed.). 1994. *Villages of Shoalhaven*. Shoalhaven Tourism Board, Shoalhaven City Council. p.13, Welch p.4.

⁴¹ Welch, Pat (ed.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. p.57.

⁴² Billett, W. and Hale, J. 1986. 'More on Culburra House'. *The Shoalhaven Chronograph*. Newsletter for the Shoalhaven, Berry & Kangaroo Valley Historical Societies. p.2; Welch, Pat (ed.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. pp.4-5.

⁴³ State Heritage Inventory: Database No.2390656 and Database No.2390326.

time, generally only fishing craft and private pleasure boats have used the facilities at Greenwell Point.⁴⁴

Following the war, in the late 1940s development was intermittent. By 1949 the general layout of Culburra township had been established with Prince Edward Avenue, the main road, running alongside the beach.⁴⁵ At this time a few dwellings had been built on the east side at Tilbury Cove and to the north adjacent to the Crookhaven River entrance. Several cul-de-sacs off Prince Edward Avenue had been cleared between Park Row and The Mall.⁴⁶

Rapid growth and a boom period as a tourist destination began in the 1950s and 1960s.⁴⁷ In 1956 the bitumen road was extended from Nowra and electricity arrived in the region.⁴⁸ The Culburra surf life saving club was formed the same year, though their club house on Warrain Beach did not arrive until 1965.⁴⁹ At this time, the local community was petitioning for a permanent town water supply.⁵⁰ The main roads through Culburra had been further improved by 1961, with the main road through the town being sealed in 1969.⁵¹ By c.1960 around 70 dwellings had been built along the cul-de-sacs between the beach and Prince Edward Avenue.⁵² Within five years, in 1965, a committee was formed to create a Bowling Club. Land was donated by Mr and Mrs

⁴⁴ Welch, Pat (ed.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. pp.29, 89.

⁴⁵ Public Works Department. No date. *Culburra Beach. Coastal Engineering Advice*. For Shoalhaven City Council. p.3.

⁴⁶ Public Works Department. No date. *Culburra Beach. Coastal Engineering Advice*. For Shoalhaven City Council. p.3.

⁴⁷ Public Works Department. No date. *Culburra Beach. Coastal Engineering Advice*. For Shoalhaven City Council. p.3.

⁴⁸ Bayley, William A. 1975. *Shoalhaven. History of the Shire of Shoalhaven, New South Wales*. Shoalhaven Shire Council. p.222.

⁴⁹ Bayley, William A. 1975. *Shoalhaven. History of the Shire of Shoalhaven, New South Wales*. Shoalhaven Shire Council. p.222;

Antill, Robert G. 1982. *Settlement in the South. A record of the discovery, exploration and settlement of the Shoalhaven River Basin 1803-1982*. Weston & Co. Publishers. p.244.

⁵⁰ Bayley, William A. 1975. *Shoalhaven. History of the Shire of Shoalhaven, New South Wales*. Shoalhaven Shire Council. p.234.

⁵¹ Public Works Department. No date. *Culburra Beach. Coastal Engineering Advice*. For Shoalhaven City Council. p.4.

⁵² Public Works Department. No date. *Culburra Beach. Coastal Engineering Advice*. For Shoalhaven City Council. p.4.

Warren Halloran for this purpose and the Bowling Club obtained its licence the following year.⁵³

By 1969 growth had continued with some 120 houses built east of Prince Edward Avenue. Most were low cost holiday cottages. By 1978 this number had increased to over 240 houses.⁵⁴

Again, the Halloran family donated land for a community facility. In 1987 funding of \$1,326,200 was reserved for the construction of a 40 bed nursing home and a 20 unit hostel on the donated land at Culburra.⁵⁵ The Culburra & Districts Retirement Village now stands adjacent to the Culburra & Districts Senior Citizens Centre.

A few years earlier in 1984 the Culburra/Orient Point Sewerage Scheme was commenced. Augmentation of the scheme was necessary due to town growth and the planned expansion of Culburra with a new development area proposed to the west Culburra.⁵⁶ Presented in 1995, in a new proposal, residential development was planned for 400 hectares west of Culburra as part of the expansion of Culburra.⁵⁷ This development was extend to the east and south of the Sewerage Treatment Plant.⁵⁸

2.2. Henry Halloran and Culburra in the 20thC.

Henry Ferdinand Halloran was a land speculator, real estate agent and surveyor. He was born in Sydney in 1869 as the eldest child of Edward Roland Halloran and Adeline Burgess (née Reuss).⁵⁹

⁵³ Welch, Pat (ed.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. pp.97, 239.

⁵⁴ Public Works Department. No date. *Culburra Beach. Coastal Engineering Advice*. For Shoalhaven City Council. p.4.

⁵⁵ Welch, Pat (ed.). c.2010. *History in the Making. Culburra Beach, Orient Point, Crookhaven Heads*. Culburra Beach Progress Association Inc. p.221.

⁵⁶ Shoalhaven City Council (General Manager, Policy & Planning Committee). 1995. *Proposed Subdivision at Long Bow Point Culburra. Assessment Report*. For Shoalhaven City Council. p.1.

⁵⁷ Shoalhaven City Council (General Manager, Policy & Planning Committee). 1995. *Proposed Subdivision at Long Bow Point Culburra. Assessment Report*. For Shoalhaven City Council. p.4.

⁵⁸ Shoalhaven City Council (General Manager, Policy & Planning Committee). 1995. *Proposed Subdivision at Long Bow Point Culburra. Assessment Report*. For Shoalhaven City Council. p.13.

⁵⁹ Atchison, John. 1983. 'Halloran, Henry Ferdinand (1869 - 1953)'. In *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Melbourne University Press. Vol. 9. p.171.