

Browse Liquefied Natural Gas Precinct

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Study 9a - Environmental and Colonial Heritage



2.4.2 Database search results

Protected and unprotected places of historic heritage significance are listed in Tables 5 and 6 in Appendix A. The area searched extends from La Grange Bay 70 km south of Broome to Cape Leveque to the North. It also contains all noted and known offshore places and shipwrecks between La Grange Bay and the eastern side of King Sound. The search area is considerably larger than the BLNG Precinct due to the importance of acknowledging the potential existence of historic places that have not been fully investigated and that may be of heritage significance. An appreciation of the area's historical context and understanding of existing heritage values enables a more informed assessment of potential heritage places of relevance to James Price Point.

The land and sea search area stops at the northern end of the 80 Mile Beach to the south of Broome as this area was not an area of oyster reefs exploited by the pearling industry and reefs further south were mainly exploited by vessels berthing at Cossack and Onslow.

There are 285 protected historic heritage places and 83 unprotected places (Table 3). No historic heritage sites within the area searched are currently listed on the World Heritage List, the Commonwealth Heritage List or the National Heritage List. However, the proposed Kimberley National Heritage Listing is likely to include a range of cultural heritage sites. In all 215 of the 368 entries are located in Broome or the waters off Broome.

Of the heritage places included in Tables 5 and 6, there are 82 protected and 22 unprotected heritage buildings or archaeological sites within the town of Broome. Offshore in the waters of Roebuck Bay, and the seas off Broome, there are 102 protected and nine unprotected shipwrecks. To date none of the shipwrecks thought to have been wrecked near Broome have actually been found. Most of these vessels were associated with the pearling industry which formed the mainstay of the Broome economy from its founding in 1883 to the internment of its Japanese workforce early in World War II. Many were lost in cyclones and losses from a single cyclone could be heavy, as in 1908 when 38 vessels were lost.

Table 3 Summary of database information for cultural heritage places

Total Places	BLNG Precinct	Broome Shire	Broome	King Sound
285 protected	Possible pearling and Macassan fishing sites	10 Possible pearling and Macassan fishing sites	104	
83 unprotected	Possible shipwrecks in proximity to James Price Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 92 shipwrecks, 3 of which are located off the Dampier Peninsula • 3 on Lacepede Islands • 1 pearling camp at Barred Creek 	111	23 shipwrecks

Within the searched mainland area of Broome Shire there are nine heritage sites with statutory protection located across the area from the Roebuck Plains to Cape Leveque. The sites closest to James Price Point are at Willie Creek (**Figure 1**). They are Captain Kennedy's holiday cottage and the Afghan Wells both of which are protected under the Shire of Broome's Local Planning Scheme.

Willie Creek is also a known location of a large pearling lay up camp and there is another such camp at Barred Creek to the south of James Price Point, which could be considered to be within the LNG precinct. It is not known when these layup camps outside of Broome were first used but they came into prominence after the introduction of the White Australia Policy in 1901. Many Asian workers served out their entire contact within these camps when not on board their pearling vessel, never visiting the Broome Township. To date the pearling layup camps in the creeks outside of Broome do not have statutory protection as they have not been archaeologically surveyed and assessed for heritage listing. They are potentially maritime heritage sites under the *Western Australian Maritime Act 1973* and could be eligible for listing as significant places on the Register of Heritage Places under the *Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990*.

In the waters off Broome Shire there are 65 protected and 30 unprotected historic shipwrecks with statutory protection. Consultation with the WA Museum on possible shipwrecks in the James Price Point area provided the following information:

"Shipwreck material has been found in the James Price area in 1976-1978. It was concluded that the material inspected did not represent a wreck site per se. The area is obviously a flotsam catchment area with material washing in from some distance. However, the material described together with persistent wreck stories suggests that a lugger was wrecked in the vicinity. NB the reported location is above the low water mark and therefore in State waters. A number of other reports of wreck sites were made between 1974-1978 in the Barred Creek region at Cape Boileau. There are reports of two luggers lost in this region, neither of which have been located: *Herculese* (1918) and *Mikado* (1918). Given the repeated mention of material in the region of James Price Point WAM recommends that a detailed remote sensing and visual survey be undertaken. Similarly, a pedestrian and magnetometer survey in the intertidal and shoreline zones is of equal importance to ascertain the presence of maritime cultural heritage material. Given that the area has not been investigated since 1982, we should consider that environmental processes (now much better understood) could reveal further material. Similarly some sites, if discovered in Commonwealth waters now fall under the HSA 1976 given the time passed. (C. Souter, pers. comm. 2009b)"

A third shipwreck located about 25 km north of James Price Point is the *Shamrock*, listed as being wrecked at Cape Berthelot. It should also be noted that there is also potential for terrestrial sites associated with the pearling industry or the seasonal Macassan *Bêche-de-mer* fishing industry to be located on the coast at places like James Price Point. These industries utilised the entire Dampier Peninsula coastline and terrestrial activities such as pearl shell cleaning and barrelling for transportation were not limited only to sites with safe anchorages and available fresh water.

Unpublished research on Macassan fishing sites in Western Australia was carried out by the WA Museum in the early 1970s, but this information was not able to be found in time for inclusion in this desktop review. There has also been some recent unpublished research on Macassan fishing sites carried out by Mike Morwood (C. Souter, pers. comm., 2009b) but this research is not available to an on line search and was also not able to be included in this study. There has been no previous research on land-based heritage sites associated with the pearling industry.

Further from James Price Point the desktop assessment indicates that the Lacepede Islands contain the densest concentration of shipwrecks outside the immediate Broome area with 21 protected and 26 unprotected shipwrecks. However a number of these vessels went down in 1935 and therefore will be covered by the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976* from 2010. Only one of these shipwrecks has been located and it has recently been assessed as part of the Kimberley National Heritage Assessment currently in process.

Several of the protected vessels were guano boats, most of which went down in a cyclone in 1877. There is also guano loading settlement area and the accommodation of the guano customs officer stationed on the islands in the 1870s. These sites are all potential maritime heritage sites under the *Western Australian Maritime Act 1973* and given the international incident engendered by the guano industry are likely to be also eligible for listing as significant places on the Register of Heritage Places under the *Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990*.

Later sites on the islands and shipwrecks in the waters around the islands are associated with the pearling industry. In particular the Lacepede Islands were the site of a 'blackbirding' camp where kidnapped Aboriginal people were kept to be sold as pearling divers to visiting pearlers. This camp is a protected site under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1976* but is not currently protected under other legislation. However, it is likely to be a maritime heritage site under the *Western Australian Maritime Act 1973* and given the importance of the pearling industry to the history of Western Australia and the significant role played by indigenous Australians within the early industry it is likely to be also eligible for listing as significant place on the Register of Heritage Places under the *Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990*.