

# HERITAGE PLACE

**NAME OF PLACE:** PETER FRANCIS POINTS ARBORETUM

**ADDRESS/LOCATION OF PLACE:** Top Hilgay Road COLERAINE

**STUDY NUMBER:** 018

**HERITAGE OVERLAY NUMBER:**

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**OTHER NAME/S OF PLACE:** PETER FRANCIS RESERVE, THE POINTS, PETER FRANCIS ARBORETUM

**PRECINCT:** Coleraine

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** Southern Grampians Shire

**PARISH:** PARISH OF COLERAINE

**ACCESS DESCRIPTION:**

CFA 430J, Located off an unmade road running directly west from Top Hilgay Road, approximately 5 kilometers south of the centre of Coleraine.

**SIGNIFICANCE RATING:** State



Peter Francis Points Arboretum, Top Hilgay Road, Coleraine. Entrance.

**Image Date:** 09/02/02

**EXTENT OF LISTING:**

To the extent of: 1. All of the botanical collection and all of the reserve, but excluding the built structures.

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## **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

The Peter Francis Points Arboretum is a modern botanical collection of Australian native plants. There are 200 different species of Australian natives, including different species of Eucalyptus, Banksia, Grevillia, Hakea, Melaleuca, Prostanthera, Correa, Calistemon, Acacia, Persoonia, Brachysema, Eremophila, Lambertia, Leptospermum, Beaufortia, Tristania, Casurina, Lagunaria, Angophora as well as a range of native wildflowers, grasses, sedges and other native plants. The collection is best known as Australia's official collection of the Genus' Eucalyptus and Banksia.

The reserve on which the Peter Francis Points Arboretum is located is known as "The Points", and encompasses an area of 16.2 hectares on the hillside to the immediate south of the township of Coleraine. "The Points" refers to two granite 'points' located within the reserve, one of which today forms the scenic lookout. The site is considered to be unusual in that it contains several different soil types, drainage patterns and nutrient levels within the one area. These rare qualities have been attributed to Glacial movement, the geological development of the area and its former use as a quarry. The unique geological and geomorphologic history of the site has allowed the diverse collection to exist within the same location.

The botanical collection is mainly located to the southern portion of the reserve, the lower areas toward the north and west of the site are still undergoing planting and development. A small artificial water body is also located in the northern part of the reserve. The Arboretum has several simple buildings including a shade house constructed with treated pine and shade mesh, manager's office and plant nursery. Gravel tracks for pedestrians and vehicles follow the contours of the reserve, allowing access to the majority of the collection.

## **HISTORY:**

Arthur arrived in Australia at Portland in 1840, he then made his way to Coleraine, where he selected his pre-emptive right Hilgay later that year. Hilgay was occupied by Alfred Arden from 1854, and finally cancelled in 1880 when owned by Donald Cameron. The Peter Francis Arboretum was once a small part of this pre-emptive right. The natural landscape of this area as described when surveyed in 1852 were densely covered with dry native tussock grassland (Department of Crown Lands and Survey, 1873). This area formed one of the small, suburban agricultural holdings located around Coleraine which started to be sold as early as 1854. In the late nineteenth Century, the area was Gazetted as a water catchment reserve (HS 15/07/89). A brief exploration for brown coal was undertaken some time later in a gully toward the far south west of the site, but found the coal to be of inferior quality.

The area on which Peter Francis Points Arboretum is located was used by the Shire of Wannon as a quarry, and denuded of gravel and loam for road making from the early to mid twentieth century. After the quarry was abandoned, the area was treated as a general rubbish dump for the township until 1966.

In 1966 Joe Wright, the Wannon Shire Engineer, asked local plant enthusiast, Mrs. Mary Hope to assist him to plant out an area at the Points Reserve as he felt it was important to have a place where school children could study and learn about Australian trees and shrubs. Wright had fought hard to convince the Wannon Shire Council to agree to spending money to re-vegetate the disused quarry, which in 1966 was a bare hillside with one remaining She oak (*Casurina stricta*) and one Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*). With assistance from the Shire Council and local volunteer groups, the first trees were planted along the south boundary of the site.

Sourcing appropriate plants for the projected planting proved to be difficult, as local nurseries grew and sourced a very limited amount of stock, and had little knowledge of native plant varieties and species. Mary Hope enlisted the assistance of Mr. Boddy of Eastern Park Nursery in Geelong, a pioneer of the Native plant movement. Eastern Park Nursery were able to provide a planting plan and list of species which they could supply. The original plan was relatively simple. It consisted of nine groups of plantings; 84 shrubs in a row of west - east; 58 shrubs in a row of west - east; 8 Medium Trees 25 - 30 feet in order west - east (at a later date

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shrubs may be planted between these trees); 9 Bold Large Trees in order west - east; 10 Large Bold Trees; 45 Shrubs in the following order west - east, approximately three hundred and thirty feet - shrubs at approximately seven feet six inches; 24 Trees and shrubs at approximately fifteen feet intervals in order west east ;19 trees at twenty feet intervals in order east - west; 13 trees at thirty feet intervals in order west - east (Boddy correspondence,1-5).

Peter Francis, a retired local bridge builder became interested in the idea of creating this small planting into a larger flora reserve, and with community support applied to the Shire of Wannon to have the 37 hectares fenced, and declare the site permanent reserve. In 1968 the site was re-named 'The Points Reserve'. Between 1968 and 1980, plants and seeds from all around Australia were grown and planted at the Points Reserve, to result in what is now the most extensive collection of Australian Eucalyptus and Banksia species. In 1980, a barbecue area, gravel tracks and a lookout were created through a grant from the Tourist Authority Victoria, and The Points Reserve was officially opened as The Points Arboretum by Professor Carrick Chambers, Head of Botany, Melbourne University.

In 1983, a bushfire destroyed one third of the collection, and an extensive replanting strategy was undertaken by volunteers and community groups, supported by donations of seeds and plants were received from all over Australia. In 1984, it was decided to hand the site over to the Department of Conservation, Forest and Lands to ensure permanent funding and reach the long term goal of recognition of the site as a National Arboretum. In 1985, Mr. Neville Bonney surveyed and indexed the entire collection, this resulted in the Eucalypt collection being recognised as nationally significant in 1989. The Banksia collection was also recognised as a nationally significant collection in 1999. As the last wish of Peter Francis was fulfilled in 1991, when a shade house was opened to display a collection of tropical plants (Eucalyptus discovery centre, 4).

## **THEMATIC CONTEXT:**

Theme 8. Developing Australia's Cultural life  
8.1.3 Developing public parks and gardens  
8.1.4 Enjoying the natural environment

## **CONDITION:**

The condition of the main collection is excellent. The condition of the structural elements such as the manager's office and shade house is fair. The condition of the walking tracks and vehicle access is good.

## **INTEGRITY:**

The Eucalyptus and Banksia Collections are extremely intact. The site retains its integrity and reflects its original purpose of a flora reserve of the proportions originally laid out in 1966.

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

What is Significant?

The Peter Francis Points Arboretum is a modern botanical collection of Australian native plants, particularly representative of Eucalyptus and Banksia species. The Arboretum is located in a sixteen hectare reserve known as "The Points", on a hill to the immediate south of the Coleraine Township. The reserve is unique for its deposits of a variety of different soil types deposited by Glacial movement. The Points Arboretum was started in 1966 by Mr. Joe Wright, Shire Engineer, Mrs. Mary Hope and Mr. Peter Francis, and is recognised as the official genus Eucalyptus and genus Banksia collection for Australia. There are 2 200 different species of native plants within the Arboretum, including 500 different species of Eucalyptus and 63 rare and endangered species. The name 'Peter Francis Points Arboretum' was given to the Arboretum in recognition of the contribution of Peter Francis, a founding member who continued his work until his death on 12 July 1989.

How is it Significant?-

Peter Francis Points Arboretum is of botanical and scientific significance to the State of Victoria.

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## Why is it significant?

The Peter Francis Points Arboretum is of botanical significance to Australia as the largest and most diverse collection of Eucalyptus and Banksia species in Australia. It has been officially recognised as a rare and unique collection of Australian Native plants, unusual because the species and provenance of the plants range from all over Australia. The Peter Francis Points Arboretum is of scientific significance to the State of Victoria for its unusual and rare deposits of a variety of different soil types within a relatively small area (16 hectares) allowing for such a diverse range of genus and species to exist in the same reserve.

To a lesser extent, the Peter Francis Points Arboretum is of social significance to the township of Coleraine and the Southern Grampians Shire its associations with Peter Francis, and as a physical representation of community and volunteer achievement.

## COMPARISON:

No comparative examples in the study area

**ASSESSED BY:** AEN

**ASSESSMENT DATE:** 30-Jul-01

## EXISTING LISTINGS:

## HERITAGE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

**Include in VHR**  **Include in RNE**  **Include in Local Planning Scheme**

**No Recommendations for Inclusions**

## REFERENCES:

Author	Title	Year	Page
	Hamilton Spectator, 15 July 1989	1989	
	Hamilton Spectator, 4 November, 1986	1986	
	Hamilton Spectator, 21 October, 1980	1980	
	Hamilton Spectator, 8 July, 1976	1976	
Department of Lands and Survey	Township of Coleraine (Parishes of Coleraine and Konong Wootong County of Dundas)	1873	
Department of Lands and Survey	Township of Coleraine (Parishes of Coleraine and Konong Wootong County of Dundas)	1955	
E.M.M Boddy	Correspondence to Mrs. Mary Hope re: Planting at Coleraine	1966	
Eastern Park Nursery (E.M M, G. M & E. R Boddy)	Correspondence between Boddy's Eastern Park Nursery and Mrs. M. Hope, 21/09/1966	1966	
Eucalyptus Discovery Centre	The Peter Francis Points Arboretum Coleraine, Victoria, founded 1966 - An Arboretum of National Significance	1996	6
Eucalyptus Discovery Centre	The Peter Francis Points Arboretum	2001	4
Mary Hope	Correspondence	n.d	