

LEX LOCI'S TRAVELS

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An irregular one-pager from The Public Land Consultancy

Lex is Landlocked at the Port Fairy Coastal Reserve

Most roads lead either from somewhere, or to somewhere. Your typical cul-de-sac is a dead-end, but only at one end. In subdivisions, it's taken for granted that the internal roads need to link up to some external roads.

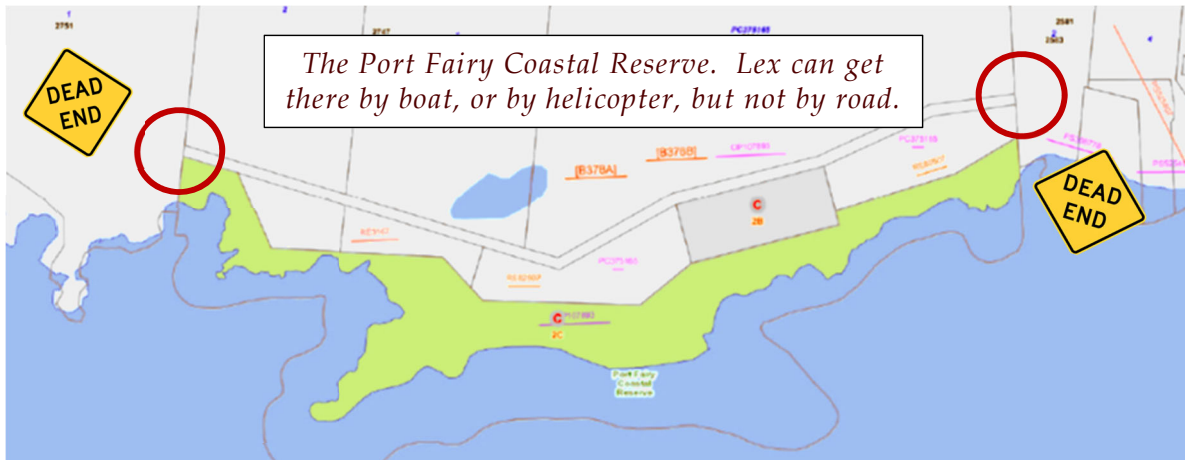
If a Council is discontinuing a back lane and selling bits of it to abutting owners, it's conceivable that we could be left with landlocked bits of lane - but we'd try not to let that happen.

So Lex is surprised when he finds a totally landlocked length of road - what's more, it's a government road. Yes, a Crown land road reserve which leads from one dead end to another dead end. It's at the Port Fairy Coastal Reserve.

The Belfast Parish plan provides evidence of the on-going policy tensions. In 1867 half of this remnant coastal strip was also sold off. It wasn't until the 1880s that what little Crown land remained was deemed to be 'permanently reserved for public purposes.'

At places like Port Fairy this sequence of events is reflected in today's coastal cadastre. Here's a coastal reserve with no road access. Or rather, there is a road reserve, but it leads from nowhere to nowhere. Unsurprisingly, it's a road reserve containing no physical roadway.

The State Government is celebrating its new Great Ocean Road Authority, and its Great Ocean Road Action Plan - which extend as far west as Port Campbell and Peterborough. But as they'll tell you in Warrnambool and Portland, there's more coastline beyond that!



The anomaly is a relic of changing policies in the Nineteenth Century. In the 1830s and 1840s, starting with Edward Henty's appropriation of Gunditjmara land at Portland, coastal land was seen as being available for white settlers - right down to the water's edge.

By 1850 this policy was changing, and new freehold boundaries were set well back from the coastline - leaving a nice wide coastal strip which included a road reserve.

Perhaps one day we'll get a Great Ocean Road all the way through to the SA border. It will cost a heap of money, but the mistakes of the 1840s will be rectified. Then our unfortunate double dead-end road might actually be brought to life.

See you there! *Lex Loci*



Port Fairy is in Eastern Maar country