



AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENT AND COMPLIANCE REPORT

The Truffle Farm Pty Ltd

844 Mole Creek Road, Needles

July 2025





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Executive Summary

This agricultural assessment report has been prepared on behalf of the proponent, The Truffle Farm Pty Ltd, and covers various aspects of the proposed development on the title 130203/4 which forms part of the Askrigg property at 844 Mole Creek Road, Needles.

The property in question covers approximately 5.5 hectares of Class 4 land.

There is no prime agricultural land on the subject title in question.

The property is zoned Agriculture.

The Askrigg property is used to run cattle and has 2,000 oak trees for the production of black truffles as part of The Truffle Farm agritourism enterprise.

The proposed development on the subject property title includes planting 1,500 oaks trees (already almost completed) and for a visitor centre which is integral and supports the ongoing Truffle Farm Pty agritourism enterprise. The visitor centre is essentially an expansion of the existing small farm shop and would include a much needed expansion of the existing farm shop, café, theatre, private function room and car park. Total area associated with the visitor centre development is approximately 3,500m²

The proposed development is sensitive to the agricultural land use activity to be undertaken on the balance of the subject property title and that of the greater Askrigg property, and presents a negligible risk of conflict, constraint or interference to any current or future agricultural and residential land use on adjacent land and/or neighbouring land.

The proposed development is considered compliant with the applicable clauses of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, including 21.1, 21.3.1, 21.4.1 and 21.4.2.

Contents

Purpose	1
1 General overview	1
1.1 Land capability	1
1.2 Report author	1
1.3 Tasmanian Planning Scheme – meander valley	1
2 Property details	2
2.1 Location	2
3 Land capability	9
3.1 Site Visit	9
3.1.1 Land capability assessment	9
4 Proposed development	12
5 Land use activity	13
5.1 Current agricultural activities conducted	13
5.2 Potential Agricultural Activities conducted	13
5.2.1 Pastoral use	13
5.2.2 Cropping use	13
5.2.3 Perennial horticulture	13
5.3 Adjacent land use activity	14
5.4 Impact of agricultural activity on neighbouring land to the proposed development	14
5.5 Impact of proposed development on agricultural activity of neighbouring land	15
5.6 Nearby Non-agricultural land uses	16
5.7 Water storage and resources	17
5.7.1 Current	17
5.7.2 Future	17
6 Tasmanian Planning Scheme Compliance	19
6.1 Clause 21.0 Agriculture Zone	19
6.1.1 Clause 21.1 Zone purpose	19
6.2 Clause 21.3 Use standards	20
6.2.1 Clause 21.3.1 Discretionary use	20
6.3 Clause 21.4 Development standards for buildings and works	22
6.3.1 Clause 21.4.1 Building height	22
6.3.2 Clause 21.4.2 Setbacks	22
7 Conclusion	24
8 Declaration	25

TABLES INDEX

Table 1 Property identification details	2
Table 2 Land capability class definitions for the property according to Grose, 1999	10
Table 3 Land capability assessment	11
Table 4 Potential risk from agricultural land use activities on neighbouring land	15
Table 5 Potential risk from proposed development on neighbouring agricultural land use and activity	16

IMAGE INDEX

Image 1 The Askrigg property location (red outline), and the associated subject property title (blue outline) (Source: The LISTMap).	3
Image 2 Location of the various individual titles which make up the Askrigg property (red outline) with the subject property title (blue outline). (source the LIST)	4
Image 3 Aerial imagery of the subject property title (blue outline) (Source: The LISTMap).	5
Image 4 Topographic map of the subject property tile (blue outline) (Source: The LISTMap).	6
Image 5 Land tenure of the Askrigg property (red outline) and associated subject property title (blue outline) and land adjacent and nearby to the west, east and south as Private Freehold (yellow shaded), with Permanent Timber Production Zone Land (green shaded) to the north, and a block of Crownland (gold shaded) nearby to the west, and Casement (grey shaded) associated with the various roads in this locale. (Source: The LISTMap).	7
Image 6 Under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, the Askrigg property (red outline) and associated subject property title (blue outline) and nearby to the west, east and south is zoned Agriculture (brown shaded), with Rural zoned land to the north (beige shaded), and Utilities zoned (yellow shaded) land associated with Mole Creek Road. (Source: The LISTMap).	8
Image 7 Land capability of subject property title (light blue lines) is consistent with Class 4 land (The LISTMap).	10
Image 8 The subject property title (outline in blue) with residential dwellings (blue dots), existing Truffle Farm shop (green dot 1) and shearing and machinery sheds (green dot 2) within a 400m radius of the proposed visitor centre (pink square).	17
Image 9 Soil profile of the red brown clay loam ferrosol soil which is present throughout the majority of the subject property title. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.	26
Image 10 Northerly view along Askrigg Lane with the recent oak tree planting on the subject property title and existing shelter belt present along the eastern side of the lane. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.	27
Image 11 Southerly view over the recently plant oak trees towards the proposed location of the visitor centre which would be located in front the establish shelter belt. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.	27
Image 12 Easterly view towards the subject property title with the recently planted oak trees visible. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.	28
Image 13 Westerly view towards the property (title 95395/6) nearby to the west of the subject property title. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.	28
Image 14 Aerial image southerly view over the subject property title. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.	29
Image 15 Aerial image westerly view over the subject property title. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.	29
Image 16 Aerial image northerly view over the subject property title. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.	30
Image 17 Aerial image easterly view over the subject property title. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.	30
Image 18 Proposed development of the subject property. (source: Design Intent Architecture + Management Pty Ltd)	31

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Supporting images	26
Appendix 2	Property development plan	31

Purpose

This report has been undertaken on behalf of The Truffle Farm Pty Ltd (the proponent) to support an application for a visitor centre agritourism development on the property at 844 Mole Creek Road, Needles.

The document provides an agricultural assessment of the property in question and reports on how the proposal complies with provisions of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme. This report reviews the current agricultural usage of the property and the surrounding area in relation to the land capability and land classification. This includes soils, aspect, topography, water resource, economic feasibility, and impact of the development in relation to agricultural activities.

1 General overview

1.1 LAND CAPABILITY

The currently recognised reference for identifying land capability is based on the class definitions and methodology described in the Land Classification Handbook, Second Edition, C.J Grose, 1999, Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, Tasmania.

Most agricultural land in Tasmania has been classified by the Department of Primary Industries and Water at a scale of 1:100,000, according to its ability to withstand degradation. A scale of 1 to 7 has been developed with class 1 being the most productive for agriculture and resilient to degradation and class 7 the least suitable to agriculture. Class 1, 2 and 3 are collectively termed “prime agricultural land”. For planning purposes, a scale of 1:100,000 is often unsuitable and a re-assessment is required at a scale of 1:25,000 or 1:10,000. Factors influencing capability include elevation, slope, climate, soil type, rooting depth, salinity, rockiness and susceptibility to wind, water erosion and flooding.

1.2 REPORT AUTHOR

This report has been authored and reviewed by senior consultant, Jason Lynch. Jason Lynch possesses a Bachelor of Applied Science (horticulture) and is a certified practising agriculturalist (CPAg) with over 25 years’ experience in the agricultural industry in Tasmania. He has previously been engaged by property owners, independent planners, and surveyors to undertake evaluations and studies across various council based interim planning schemes. This work involves the assessment of land for development purposes and potential conflict.

1.3 TASMANIAN PLANNING SCHEME – MEANDER VALLEY

The Tasmanian Planning Scheme¹ establishes the requirements for use and development of land in the Meander Valley municipality in accordance with the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*.

¹ Tasmanian Planning Scheme V13, effective date 16th July 2025.

2 Property details

2.1 LOCATION

The Askrigg property is owned by the proponent and is located at 844 Mole Creek Road, Needles approximately 8.5 km west of Deloraine. (Figure 1).

The Askrigg property consists of eight individual property titles, with title 130203/4 subject to the proposed development.

Table 1 Property identification details

Address	Title reference	Property ID	Hectares (approx.)	Map identifier
Askrigg, 844 Mole Creek Road, Needles.	130203/4	7260585	5.5	A
	130203/2		7	B
	130203/3		6.6	C
	130203/1		6.8	D
	130203/5		11.2	E
	130203/6		7.4	F
	130203/7		27	G
	130203/8		31.4	H

The subject property title is covered by gently sloping and undulating ground with northerly facing aspect.

Recently land on the subject property title has been developed for planting French and English oak trees in preparation for black truffle production, and prior to this the land was entirely covered by pastureland.

The southern area of the subject title is covered by two blocks of native vegetation shelter belts with a combined area covering 1 hectare with a narrow strip cleared for a power line easement.

Land tenure of the Askrigg property and associated subject property title and land adjacent and nearby to the west, east and south as Private Freehold, with Permanent Timber Production Zone Land to the north, and a block of Crownland nearby to the west, and Casement associated with the various roads in this locale.² (Figure 4).

Under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, the Askrigg property and associated subject property title and nearby to the west, east and south is zoned Agriculture, with Rural zoned land to the north, and Utilities zoned land associated with Mole Creek Road.³ (Figure 5).

² The LIST map dataset.

³ The LIST map dataset.



Image 1 The Askrigg property location (red outline), and the associated subject property title (blue outline) (Source: The LISTMap).

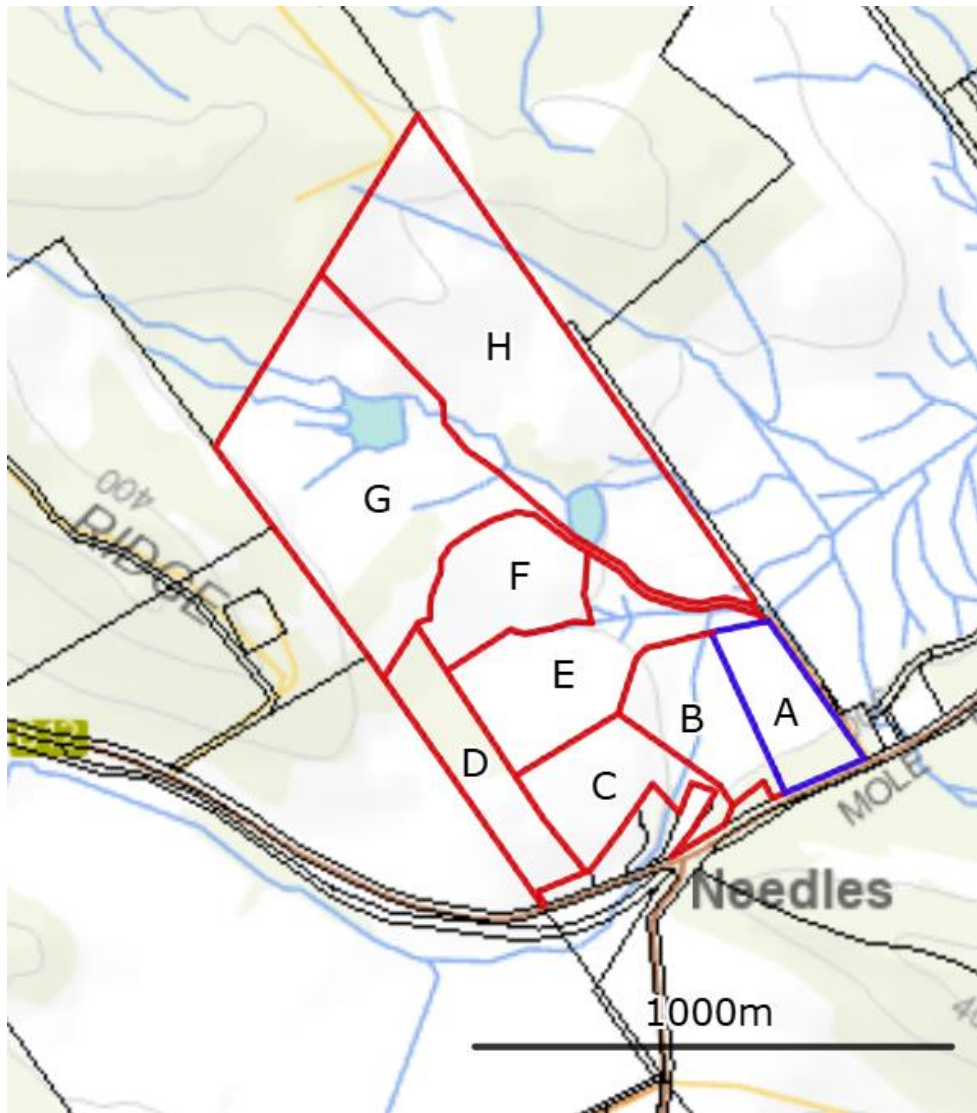


Image 2 Location of the various individual titles which make up the Askrigg property (red outline) with the subject property title (blue outline). (source the LIST)



Image 3 Aerial imagery of the subject property title (blue outline) (Source: The LISTMap).

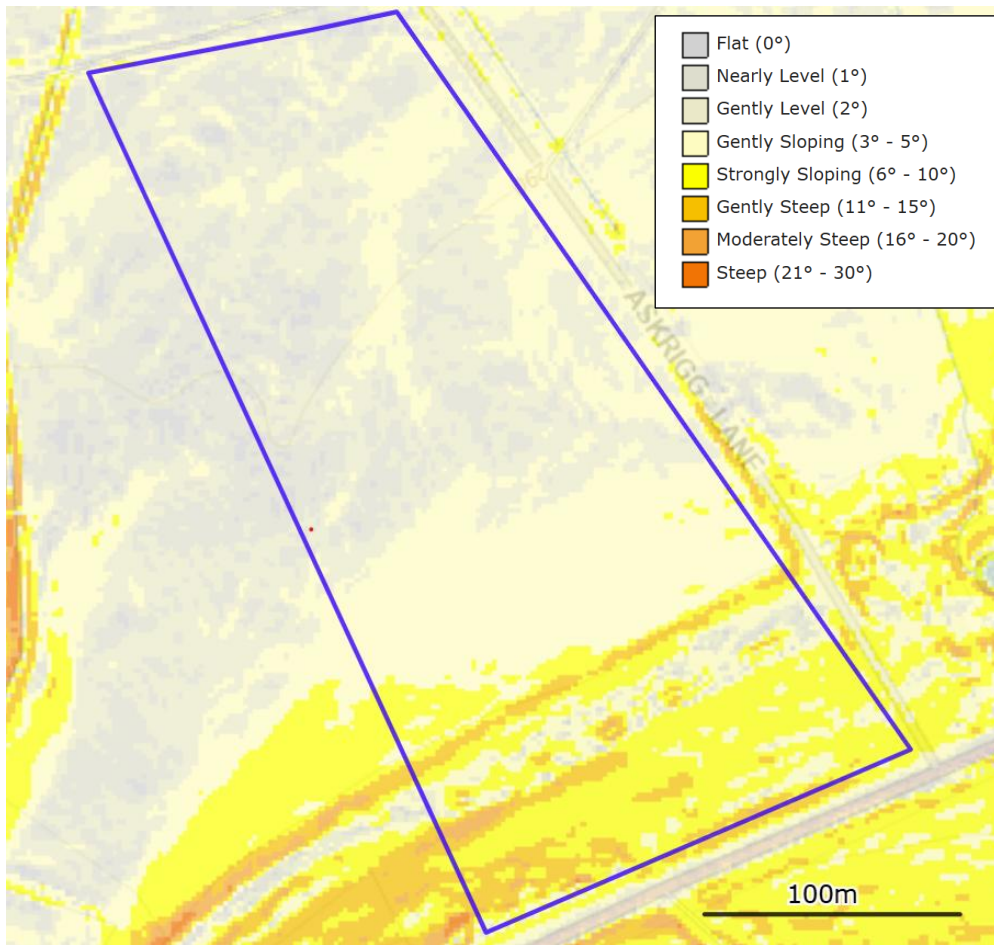


Image 4 Topographic map of the subject property tile (blue outline) (Source: The LISTMap).



Image 5 Land tenure of the Askrigg property (red outline) and associated subject property title (blue outline) and land adjacent and nearby to the west, east and south as Private Freehold (yellow shaded), with Permanent Timber Production Zone Land (green shaded) to the north, and a block of Crownland (gold shaded) nearby to the west, and Casement (grey shaded) associated with the various roads in this locale. (Source: The LISTMap).

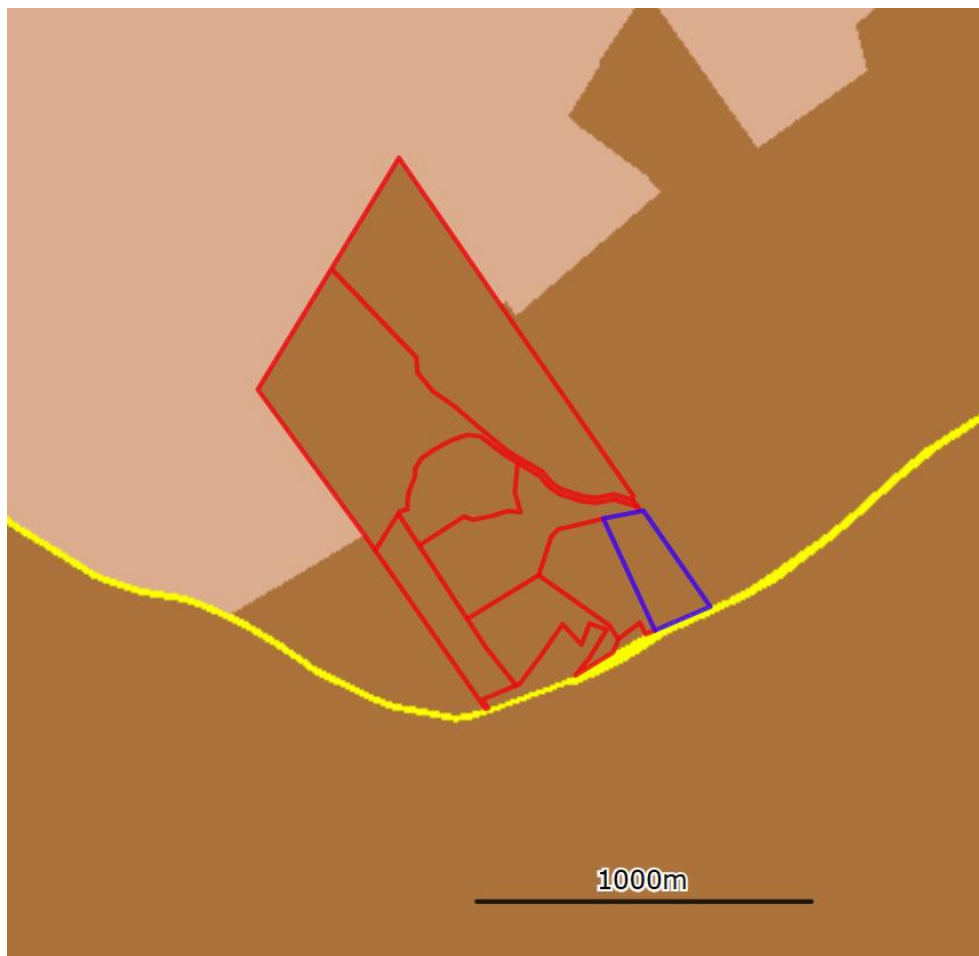


Image 6 Under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, the Askrigg property (red outline) and associated subject property title (blue outline) and nearby to the west, east and south is zoned Agriculture (brown shaded), with Rural zoned land to the north (beige shaded), and Utilities zoned (yellow shaded) land associated with Mole Creek Road. (Source: The LISTMap).

3 Land capability

Land capability of the property was assessed according to the Tasmanian land capability classification system (Grose, 1999)⁴. Land is graded according to its ability to sustain a range of agricultural activities considering the chances of degradation of the land resource. Class 1 land is prime agricultural and Class 7 land is unsuitable for agriculture due to severe limitations. A wide range of limitations are considered, and the most significant limitation determines the final classification. For example, limitations can be in relation to soils and could include stoniness, topsoil depth, drainage and erosion hazard. Limitations to topography could include slope angle and associated erosion hazard.

3.1 SITE VISIT

Desktop research was conducted to review available data associated with geology, topography, presence of threatened native vegetation, land capability, soil information and climatic data of the property and surrounding area. Pinion Advisory consultant, Jason Lynch conducted a site visit on the 22nd July 2025 to ground-truth the information. The site assessment included inspection of the soil profile (to spade depth), an evaluation of the topography and vegetation as well as examination of land use on the subject property and neighbouring properties. These assessments consider the planned setbacks and potential impacts of the proposed development on agricultural activities.

3.1.1 Land capability assessment

The official land capability map for the area was produced by the DPI at a scale of 1:100,000 and reported in their Meander Report⁵ in 1993. The majority of ground within the subject block was classified as class 4.

A detailed inspection of the property was undertaken by the author in July 2025, and determined the property is covered by Class 4.

Land class definitions can be found in Table 2. Land capability assessment details can be found in Table 3.

Supporting images (Images 7 to 17) are listed in the report Appendix 1.

The key land capability limitations associated with this property are:

- Erosion (e): associated with the risk rill and sheet erosion caused by surface water movement on bare and exposed soil and potential for degraded soil structural due to pugging from livestock movement on waterlogged soils and/or inappropriate and excessive ground cultivation activities.

⁴ Grose C.J. (1999) Land Capability Handbook: Guidelines for the Classification of Agricultural Land in Tasmania. 2nd Edition, DPIWE, Tasmania.

⁵ Noble, K. E. (1993) Land Capability Survey of Tasmania. Meander, 1:100 000 map. Department of Primary Industry, Tasmania, Australia.

Table 2 Land capability class definitions for the property according to Grose, 1999⁶

Class	Definition
4	Land well-suited to grazing, but which is limited to occasional cropping or to a very restricted range of crops. The length of cropping phase and/or range of crops are constrained by severe limitations of erosion, wetness, soils or climate. Major conservation treatments and/or careful management are required to minimise degradation. Cropping rotations should be restricted to one to two years out of ten in a rotation with pasture or equivalent to avoid damage to the soil resource. In some areas longer cropping phases may be possible but the versatility of the land is very limited.



Image 7 Land capability of subject property title (light blue lines) is consistent with Class 4 land (The LISTMap).

⁶ Grose C.J. (1999) Land Capability Handbook: Guidelines for the Classification of Agricultural Land in Tasmania. 2nd Edition, DPIWE, Tasmania.

Table 3 Land capability assessment

Land capability class	Land characteristics							
	Geology & soils	Slope (%)	Topography & elevation	Erosion type & severity	Soil qualities	Agricultural versatility	Main land management requirements	Climatic limitations
4e (5.5ha)	Ferrosol soils developed from Cambrian volcanics and dermosol soils formed from Quaternary alluvium sediments. Red/brown clayey soils, and areas of light brown/grey clay loam.	3-10	Gently sloping undulating ground, 290-310m ASL	Low/moderate risk of erosion due to surface water movement leading to rill and sheet erosion.	Imperfect to moderately well drained soils with slow permeability. The northern low lying ground would be potentially susceptible to waterlogging, however drainage has been installed to reduce the incidence and severity soil waterlogging.	Suitable for occasional cropping (2-in-10-year rotation) and a severely restricted range of suitable crops. Land suitable for grazing, with moderate limitations, which includes reduced grazing pressure when soils are waterlogged and/or when soil moisture is limiting and when pasture covers are reduced.	Avoid situations that lead to the exposure of bare soil, therefore maintain sufficient ground cover. The risk of compaction in winter from soil cultivation, machinery and stock movements increases significantly during periods of soil waterlogging.	Low climatic limitations. This region experiences cool/cold winters and warm summer conditions. The area receives an average of 980mm annual rainfall, can experience up to 40 frost days annually, 850 growing degree days (October to April) and 1,285 chill hours (May-August).

4 Proposed development

The proposed development on the subject property title includes planting 1,500 oaks trees (already almost entirely completed) and for a visitor centre to support the ongoing Truffle Farm Pty Ltd agritourism enterprise.

The Truffle Farm Pty Ltd operates the Truffle Farm, which is a multi-award winning agritourism enterprise and operates:

- Farm tours with visitors undertaking guided tours to hunt for black truffles from December to September.
- A small farm shop that sells a range of products (e.g. fresh truffles, and salt, oil and vinegar infused with truffle) which includes truffles sourced from the Truffle Farm.

The proposed development would consist of:

- A visitor centre, which would include:
 - A much needed expansion of the existing farm shop
 - A café
 - A theatre
 - Private function room to provide a venue for cooking classes and other hospitality uses.
 - Car park.
 - Total area associated with the visitor centre development is approximately 3,500m² (subject to survey).
- Planting of 1,500 French and English oak trees to support the product of black truffles.
 - French and English oak trees would be planted to produce black truffles
 - Provides the venue for undertaking the truffle hunt tours
 - Production of black truffles which are either sold directly at the farm shop and processed to produce various produce such as salt, oil and vinegar.
 - Total area associated with the oak tree plantings is approximately 3 hectares.

Appendix 2 Image 18 provides a draft plan of the development on the subject property title.

5 Land use activity

5.1 CURRENT AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

The Askrigg property is used to run cattle and has 2,000 oak trees for the production of black truffles as part of the Truffle Farm Pty Ltd agritourism enterprise.

5.2 POTENTIAL AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

5.2.1 Pastoral use

The pastoral area on the subject property title covers approximately 4 hectares and would be anticipated to have a total potential carrying capacity of approximately 80 DSE⁷.

Overall, the Askrigg property has approximately 80 hectares of pastureland, would be expected to have a carrying capacity of approximately 1,650 DSE, of which the subject title contributes approximately 80 DSE.

The number of cattle which could be run on the property will vary with the class and performance expectations, but for example 1,650 DSE would have the potential to run approximately 135 prime finishing cattle, of which the subject title would be able to run approximately 6 prime finishing cattle.

It would be reasonable to expect some supplementary feeding would be required to ensure optimal liveweight gain performance when pasture growth is limited during winter and mid/late summer.

Running 135 prime finishing cattle would be consistent with a small commercial scale cattle herd.

5.2.2 Cropping use

The Askrigg property and that of the subject property title could be used to for cropping.

However, due to the absence of access to sufficiently large volumes of irrigation water any cropping would need to be undertaken as dryland production and this severely restricts the potentially cropping options to dryland cereals (e.g. wheat and barley).

5.2.3 Perennial horticulture

The Askrigg property has an existing 2.6 hectare block of oak trees for the production of black truffles.

As part of the proposed development an additional 1,500 oak trees have been planted and will further increase the production of black truffles.

⁷ DSE is a standard unit used to compare the feed requirements of different classes of livestock to assess the carrying capacity of a farm or paddock. One DSE is defined as the amount of feed required by a two-year-old 50 kg 'dry' Merino sheep (wether or non-lactating, non-pregnant ewe) to maintain its weight.

5.3 ADJACENT LAND USE ACTIVITY

The land use activity on adjacent land titles includes:

- North:
 - Property title 130203/5 (11.2 hectares), zoned as Agriculture zoned, forms part of the greater Askrigg property and is largely covered by pastureland which is used to graze livestock with an oak tree truffery (0.5 hectares),
 - Title reference 130203/303 (0.05 hectares), zoned Agriculture, which is an LGA subdivision road associated with Askrigg Lane.
- East:
 - Title reference 130203/301 (0.7 hectares), zoned Agriculture and is an LGA subdivision road associated with Askrigg Lane.
 - Road reserve (1.6 hectares), zoned Agriculture, and is associated with Askrigg Lane.
- South:
 - A road reserve, Utilities zoned and is associated with the Mole Creek Road.
- West:
 - Title reference 130203/2 (7 hectares), zoned as Agriculture zoned, forms part of the greater Askrigg property and whilst it has been recently partially cultivated it has a history of being covered by pastureland and is used for grazing livestock.

Nearby by the subject property titles is agricultural land, and this includes:

- East:
 - property title 60995/1 (1.2 hectares), zoned Agriculture, consists of a small area of open pasture land and gardens, has a residential dwelling and is best described as a lifestyle block which is used for residential purposes. This property is separated form the subject title by the Road Reserve associated with Askrigg Lane.
 - property title 118379/1 (100 hectares), zoned Agriculture, consists of pastureland (89 hectares) and native vegetation (11 hectares), and is used for grazing livestock. This property is separated form the subject title by the Road Reserve associated with Askrigg Lane.
- South:
 - Property title 19368/2 (0.4 hectares, Utilities zoned and is associated with the Mole Creek Road.
 - Property title 118379/1 (323 hectares), zoned Agriculture, consists of pastureland (193 hectares), native vegetation (115 hectares) and a gravel mining lease (ID 2058P/M) which covers 15 hectares, and is used for grazing livestock and the quarrying enterprise. This property is separated form the subject title by the Mole Creek Road.

5.4 IMPACT OF AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY ON NEIGHBOURING LAND TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Land use activity on neighbouring and nearby properties adjacent to the subject title property includes a combination of lifestyle block used for residential purposes, agricultural land and road reserves, and nearby is agricultural land.

Normal operational activities associated with agricultural use on neighbouring land are not expected to have any unreasonable impact on or interference with the proposed development on the subject property. An assessment of the key risks is summarised in Table 4.

Table 4 Potential risk from agricultural land use activities on neighbouring land

Potential risk from neighbouring agricultural land activity	Extent of risk & possible mitigation strategy
1. Spray drift and dust	Risk = low. The scale and nature of agricultural land use activity and the associated use of agricultural chemicals on land adjacent and/or nearby the subject property is minimal. The subject title has native vegetation shelter belts located to the south and east, and 1,500 oak trees have been planted on the central and northern areas of the block, and a shelter belt would be planted to the west of the visitor centre. Spraying events should be communicated in a timely manner to the inhabitants of the dwelling. The proponent operates and manages the agricultural land adjacent to the west and north. The application of all agricultural chemicals must abide by the Tasmanian Code of practice for ground and aerial spraying 2014 and any applicable agricultural chemical label requirements.
2. Noise from machinery, livestock and dogs	Risk = low. Some occasional machinery traffic will occur when working and undertaking general farming duties on adjacent land which is expected to be periodic and infrequent. The presence of the Mole Creek Road (a category B road) and the main thoroughfare to the western area of the Meander Valley municipality close by the south is already a source of noise emissions generated in the Needles locale.
3. Irrigation water over boundary	Risk = low. Irrigated agricultural land use activity is practiced on the adjoining land to the north on the property title 130203/5 which is part of the greater Askrigg property, as per low pressure dripper irrigation used for the existing oak tree truffery. There is no risk of irrigation spray crossing the property boundaries.
4. Stock escaping and causing damage	Risk = low. Provided boundary fences are maintained in sound condition and livestock are checked regularly.
5. Electric fences	Risk = low. Mitigated by the proponent attaching appropriate warning signs on boundary fencing if required.

5.5 IMPACT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY OF NEIGHBOURING LAND

The proposed development, in consideration with the almost complete lack of agricultural land use activity of adjacent properties has been assessed as low risk impact to agricultural activity on neighbouring land. These potential impacts are usually manifested as complaints which could be made by residents of nearby dwellings.

Other risks to neighbouring agricultural activity are outlined in Table 5 and some of these risks rely on an element of criminal intent.

Table 5 Potential risk from proposed development on neighbouring agricultural land use and activity

Potential risk to neighbouring agricultural land activity	Extent of risk & possible mitigation strategy
1. Trespass	Risk = low. Mitigation measures include installation and maintenance of sound boundary fencing, lockable gates and appropriate signage to warn visitors about entry onto private land, report unauthorised entry to police.
2. Theft	Risk = low. Ensure there is good quality boundary fencing on neighbouring properties and appropriate signage to deter inadvertent entry to property, limit vehicle movements, report thefts to police.
3. Damage to property	Risk = low. As for theft.
4. Weed infestation	Risk = low. Risks are expected to be low with weed management undertaken and ongoing with routine weed control activities performed. The proponents would operate and manage the subject title and adjacent agricultural land and part of this includes routine weed management activities.
5. Fire outbreak	Risk = low. Fire risk can be mitigated by careful operation of burn-offs, outside barbeques and disposal of rubbish. In summer, mowing and grazing of long grass is important and routine part of the property management undertaken on the Askrigg property.
6. Dog menace to neighbouring livestock	Risk = low. Mitigated by ensuring good communication is maintained between the proponent and residents of the neighbouring properties. Dogs would be managed as per the guidelines determined by the Meander Valley council.

5.6 NEARBY NON-AGRICULTURAL LAND USES

The Needles locale is lightly populated and there are only two residential dwellings located within a 400m radius of the proposed visitor centre on the subject property title.

The nearest residential dwelling would be located approximately 180m to the east of the proposed visitor centre, and within this setback there are substantial areas of native vegetation present and approximately a 10m altitude difference.

The existing Truffle Farm shop would be located approximately 370m to the north and a set of farm sheds approximately 360m to the north west.

The nearby mining lease, as per ID 2058P/M, would be located approximately 1.1 km to the south east, and this setback mostly consists of native vegetation and approximately a 100m altitude difference.



Image 8 The subject property title (outline in blue) with residential dwellings (blue dots), existing Truffle Farm shop (green dot 1) and shearing and machinery sheds (green dot 2) within a 400m radius of the proposed visitor centre (pink square).

5.7 WATER STORAGE AND RESOURCES

5.7.1 Current

The subject property title is not serviced by TasWater for the provision of water and sewerage services (The LISTMap).

The subject property title is severely constrained for access to irrigation water, with no waterways, groundwater bores or dams present on the property.

The subject property title is not located within an irrigation district and is not serviced by an irrigation scheme.

5.7.2 Future

Irrigation water for the recently planted oak tree truffery on the subject property title would be sourced from either of the two irrigation dams (dam ID 4213 and 4212) which have a combined total storage capacity of 35 ML located to the north on the Askrigg property.

This area of northern Tasmania is recognised for groundwater to be present within porous sedimentary and fractured sandstone geology, and the average groundwater bore yields obtained from these local aquifers ranging from 1.30-2.8 L/s which would be considered sufficient for gardening, stock and domestic use.⁸

⁸ M Latinovic and W Matthews (2008) Northeast Tasmania Groundwater Map. Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources.

Within a 1km radius of the subject property there are 2 groundwater bores, although only one bore is active with an average yield of 1.9 L/s.

It is reasonable to consider that if a bore was installed on the subject title that it would yield groundwater and yields of up to 3 L/s would be considered achievable and hence sufficient to meet the needs for domestic, stock, garden and small area irrigation (e.g. market garden scale) uses.

6 Tasmanian Planning Scheme Compliance

6.1 CLAUSE 21.0 AGRICULTURE ZONE

6.1.1 Clause 21.1 Zone purpose

Zone purpose statements

The purpose of the Agriculture Zone is:

21.1.1 To provide for the use or development of land for agricultural use.

21.1.2 To protect land for the use or development of agricultural use by minimising:

- (a) conflict with or interference from non-agricultural use
- (b) non-agricultural use or development that precludes the return of the land to agricultural use, and
- (c) use of land for non-agricultural use in irrigation districts.

21.1.3 To provide for use or development that supports the use of the land for agricultural use.

Response

21.1.1 The subject property title and that of the greater Askrigg property will continue to be used for agricultural land use activity, which includes both grazing cattle and growing oak trees for black truffle production and to host the existing Truffle Farm agritourism enterprise. The subject property title would be used to grow oak trees for black truffle production, with approximately 1,500 trees recently planted. The proposed visitor centre would support the truffle production enterprise and is effectively an expansion of the existing farm shop which has been outgrown in terms the visitor experience and associated amenities.

The proposed visitor centre development would increase the tourism experience and offerings for the Truffle Farm agritourism enterprise, and lead to increased tourist visitation to the Meander Valley municipality.

21.1.2

- (a) The proposed development has been sensitively designed and located in order to minimise the potential for conflict and interference with agricultural land use activity on the greater Askrigg property and that which occurs on adjacent and nearby properties. The proposed location of the visitor centre (southern end of the subject property title) in conjunction with the new oak tree plantings (north of the proposed visitor centre) as well as the new shelter belt (west of the proposed visitor centre car park) and existing well established shelter belts (to the south and east), nature of the use of the visitor centre on the subject property title is considered to have a negligible impact on the current and future agricultural land use activities which could be undertaken on the balance of the Askrigg property. Section 5.4 provides extensive details on the low potential for negatively impacting adjacent and nearby agricultural land use activities. There is sufficient setback aided by distance, topography and vegetative buffers to prevent conflict and interference from any agricultural land use on surrounding properties.
- (b) The proposed visitor centre building, car park and recently planted oak trees could be removed and the land rehabilitated to allow its return back to agricultural use, such as pastureland to graze cattle.
- (c) The subject title and that of the greater Askrigg property is not located within a declared irrigation district.

21.1.3 The proposed development includes the recently planted 1,500 oak trees which would be used to grow black truffles. The visitor centre supports the Truffle Farm agritourism enterprise, and this includes a farm shop (selling truffle products sourced from the Truffle Farm), base of operations for the truffle hunt farm tours and various tourism experience and hospitality elements (café, theatre and private function room). The proposed development involves an agricultural enterprise (as per the truffery) and farm based agritourism enterprise, as per the Truffle Farm.

6.2 CLAUSE 21.3 USE STANDARDS

6.2.1 Clause 21.3.1 Discretionary use

Objective

That uses listed as discretionary:

- (a) support agricultural use, and
- (b) protect land for agricultural use by minimising the conversion of land to non-agricultural use.

Response

The proposed development is for a visitor centre and does not include a residential use.

The subject property title is covered by class 4 land, no prime agricultural land (as per class 1, 2 or 3) is present, and therefore section P3 is not applicable.

Hence the concentration of the response to performance criteria P1 and P2.

Performance criteria

P1

A use listed as Discretionary, excluding Residential or Resource Development, must be required to locate on the site, for operational or security reasons or the need to contain or minimise impacts arising from the operation such as noise, dust, hours of operation or traffic movements, having regard to:

- (a) access to a specific naturally occurring resource on the site or on land in the vicinity of the site;
- (b) access to infrastructure only available on the site or on land in the vicinity of the site;
- (c) access to a product or material related to an agricultural use;
- (d) service or support for an agricultural use on the site or on land in the vicinity of the site;
- (e) the diversification or value adding of an agricultural use on the site or in the vicinity of the site; and
- (f) provision of essential Emergency Services or Utilities.

P2

A use listed as Discretionary, excluding Residential, must minimise the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural use, having regard to:

- (a) the area of land being converted to non-agricultural use; whether the use precludes the land from being returned to an agricultural use;
- (b) whether the use confines or restrains existing or potential agricultural use on the site or adjoining sites.

Response P1

The proposed development is required to be located on the subject property title and is essentially an expansion of the existing Truffle Farm shop.

- (a) The proposed development includes the recently planted 1,500 oak trees which are being grown for black truffle production on the central and northern of the subject title. The greater Askrigg property has been growing oak trees for truffle production and harvesting black truffles since 1999, with the soils and climate proving ideal.
- (b) The Truffle Farm is located on the Askrigg property which grows oak trees for the production of black truffles. The subject property title, as part of the greater Askrigg property, and associated proposed development would be the location of the expanded oak tree truffery which is the setting to undertake the truffle hunt tours and is a highly attractive setting for tourists to come and visit and experience at the multi-award winning Truffle Farm. The subject property title is serviced by Transend for the supply of electricity.
- (c) The proposed visitor centre would include a farm shop which would sell truffle products grown on the Truffle Farm, host truffle hunting tours on the existing and in the future the recently planted oak tree truffery and provide visitors with the opportunity to undertake cook classes using truffles grown on the Truffle Farm. Visitors to the property would be hosted at the proposed visitor centre to undertake truffle hunt tours which involves wandering the oak tree truffery with specially training dogs to detect and harvest the black truffles.
- (d) The proposed visitor development would provide a retail outlet for the processed black truffle harvested off the property, and host visitors when they undertake truffle hunt tours which involves wandering through the oak tree truffery with specially training dogs to detect and subsequently hand harvesting the black truffles.
- (e) The Truffle Farm is a multi-award winning agritourism enterprise and has allowed the proponent to diversify the agricultural land use activity being undertaken on the Askrigg property from growing pasture to graze livestock on and expand into growing oak tree for black truffle production which are then sold off the property as well as being sold through the farm shop on the proposed farm shop. Visitors to the property would be hosted as the proposed visitor centre are undertaken truffle hunt tours. The diversification of the Askrigg property into the Truffle Farm agritourism adds very valuable income and attracts visitors to the Meander Valley.
- (f) This is not applicable to the proposed development.

Response P2

- (a) The proposed visitor development is planned to cover approximately 3,500m² on the southern area of the subject property title, with the balance of the block recently planted out with 1,500 oak trees for the production of black truffles. The proposed visitor centre building, car park and recently planted oak trees could be removed and the land rehabilitated to allow its return back to agricultural use, such as pastureland to graze cattle.
- (b) The proposed development has been sensitively designed and located in order to minimise the potential for conflict and interference with agricultural land use activity on the greater Askrigg property and that which occurs on adjacent and nearby properties. The proposed location of the visitor centre (southern end of the subject property title) in conjunction with the new oak tree plantings (north of the proposed visitor centre) as well as the new shelter belt (west of the proposed visitor centre car park) and existing well established shelter belts (to the south and east), nature of the use of the visitor centre on the subject property title is considered to have a negligible impact on the current and future agricultural land use activities which could be undertaken on the balance of the Askrigg property. Section 5.4 provides extensive details on the low potential for negatively impacting adjacent and nearby agricultural land use activities. There is sufficient setback aided by distance, topography and vegetative buffers to prevent conflict and interference from any agricultural land use on surrounding properties.

6.3 CLAUSE 21.4 DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FOR BUILDINGS AND WORKS

6.3.1 Clause 21.4.1 Building height

Objective

To provide for a building height that:

- (a) is necessary for the operation of the use, and
- (b) minimises adverse impacts on adjoining properties.

Response

The proposal will be consistent with Acceptable Solutions A1.

Acceptable solutions

A1

Building height must not be more than 12m.

Response

A1

The proposed visitor centre building height will be planned to be approximately 6.5m in height and hence is compliant with A1.

6.3.2 Clause 21.4.2 Setbacks

Objective

That the siting of buildings minimises potential conflict with use on adjoining properties.

Response

The proposal will be required to meet with Acceptable Solutions A1 for sensitive use, although will not meet with Acceptable Solutions A2 and therefore Performance Criteria P2 is addressed.

Acceptable solution

A1

Buildings must have a setback from all boundaries of:

- (a) not less than 5m; or
- (b) if the setback of an existing building is within 5m, not less than the existing building.

Response

The proposed visitor centre will be greater than 5m from the nearest title boundary and hence is compliant with Acceptable Solutions A1.

Performance criteria

P1

Buildings for a sensitive use must be sited so as not to conflict or interfere with an agricultural use, having regard to:

- (a) the size, shape and topography of the site
- (b) the prevailing setbacks of any existing buildings for sensitive uses on adjoining properties
- (c) the location of existing buildings on the site
- (d) the existing and potential use of adjoining properties
- (e) any proposed attenuation measures, and
- (f) any buffers created by natural or other features.

Response



P2

- (a) The subject title is rectangular block, approximately 350m long and 150m wide, and located on the far south eastern area of the Askrigg property. The proposed development will be positioned at the southern end of the subject property title which allows for the balance of the central and northern area of the block to be planted out with a large contiguous parcel of oak trees for black truffle production.
- (b) The Needles locale is lightly populated and there are only two residential dwellings within 400m of the proposed visitor centre on the subject property title. The nearest residential dwelling, as per on property title 60995/1 would be located approximately 180m to the east of the proposed visitor accommodation, and within this setback there are substantial areas of native vegetation present and approximately a 10m altitude difference. The existing Truffle Farm shop would be located approximately 370m to the north. A combination of the setback distances, presence of existing and propose vegetation plantings and recent planting of 1,500 oak trees and topographic variations would ensure a negligible impact on the residential amenity of these nearby residences.
- (c) There are no existing buildings on the subject property title.
- (d) Current land use activity to the north and west of the subject property title, as per on the balance of the Askrigg property is based on grazing livestock and an oak tree truffery for the production of black truffles, and this current use is expected to continue unchanged in the future. The grazing of cattle on pastureland is considered a low impact agricultural land use activity, and the oak tree truffery actually forms part of the Truffle Farm agritourism experience and hence is supported by the proposed development. The agricultural land to the east, as per property title 147401/1 is used to graze livestock and this would be expected to continue in the future. The utilities zoned adjacent to the south land is associated with Mole Creek Road and this use will continue in the future. The land further to the south, as per property title 118379/1 is used to graze livestock and hosts a gravel quarry with substantial areas covered by native vegetation, and it is reasonable to expect these uses will continue into the future although the gravel quarry lease expires in Jan 2030. Two properties are used for residential purposes nearby to the east (as per on property title 60995/1) and the west (as per on property title 95395/6), and it is reasonable to expect this use will continue in the future. Section 5.4 and 5.5 provides details on the potential interactions between sensitive and non-sensitive use on adjacent and nearby properties to the subject property title. A combination of the nature of the proposed visitor centre in conjunction with the existing and proposed vegetation buffers and relative land use activities which are and could be conducted on the adjacent and nearby land would a minimal potential for negative impacts and/or disruption of the agricultural and residential land use activities.
- (e) The visitor centre would be constructed of modern building materials and sensitively designed to minimise its visual impact. On the western side of the car park a new shelter belt would be established. As of the proposed development 1,500 oak trees have been planted on the central and northern area of the subject property title.
- (f) Well established shelter belts are located to the south and east of the visitor centre and these create a significant buffer in these directions.

7 Conclusion

1. The subject property title is located at 844 Mole Creek Road, and forms one of eight titles which forms the greater Askrigg property.
2. The subject property title, 130203/4, covers 5.5 hectares and consists of land capability class 4 land.
3. In the past the subject property title has been used for pasture production to graze cattle.
4. The proposed development is for a visitor centre and planting of 1,500 oak trees for the production of black truffles.
5. The proposed development will allow for an expansion of the existing multi-award winning Truffle Farm agritourism enterprise operations and support the aim of attracting a greater number of tourists and providing them with an enhanced visitor experience.
6. The proposed development is sensitive to the adjacent land use activity and is not anticipated to create any negative impacts and/or constrain on the capability/capacity of the neighbouring properties which are to be actively managed and used for agricultural land use activity.
7. The proposal is compliant with the applicable clauses of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, including 21.1, 21.3.1, 21.4.1 and 21.4.2.

8 Declaration

I declare that I have made all the enquiries which I consider desirable or appropriate, and no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have, to my knowledge, been withheld.

Jason Lynch

Jason Lynch BAppSc (hort.)
Senior Agricultural Consultant
Pinion Advisory
July 2025



Image 9 Soil profile of the red brown clay loam ferrosol soil which is present throughout the majority of the subject property title. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.



Image 10 Northerly view along Askrigg Lane with the recent oak tree planting on the subject property title and existing shelter belt present along the eastern side of the lane. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.



Image 11 Southerly view over the recently plant oak trees towards the proposed location of the visitor centre which would be located in front the establish shelter belt. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.



Image 12 Easterly view towards the subject property title with the recently planted oak trees visible. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.



Image 13 Westerly view towards the property (title 95395/6) nearby to the west of the subject property title. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.



Image 14 Aerial image southerly view over the subject property title. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.



Image 15 Aerial image westerly view over the subject property title. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.



Image 16 Aerial image northerly view over the subject property title. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.



Image 17 Aerial image easterly view over the subject property title. Taken at site assessment 23/7/2025.

Appendix 2 Property development plan

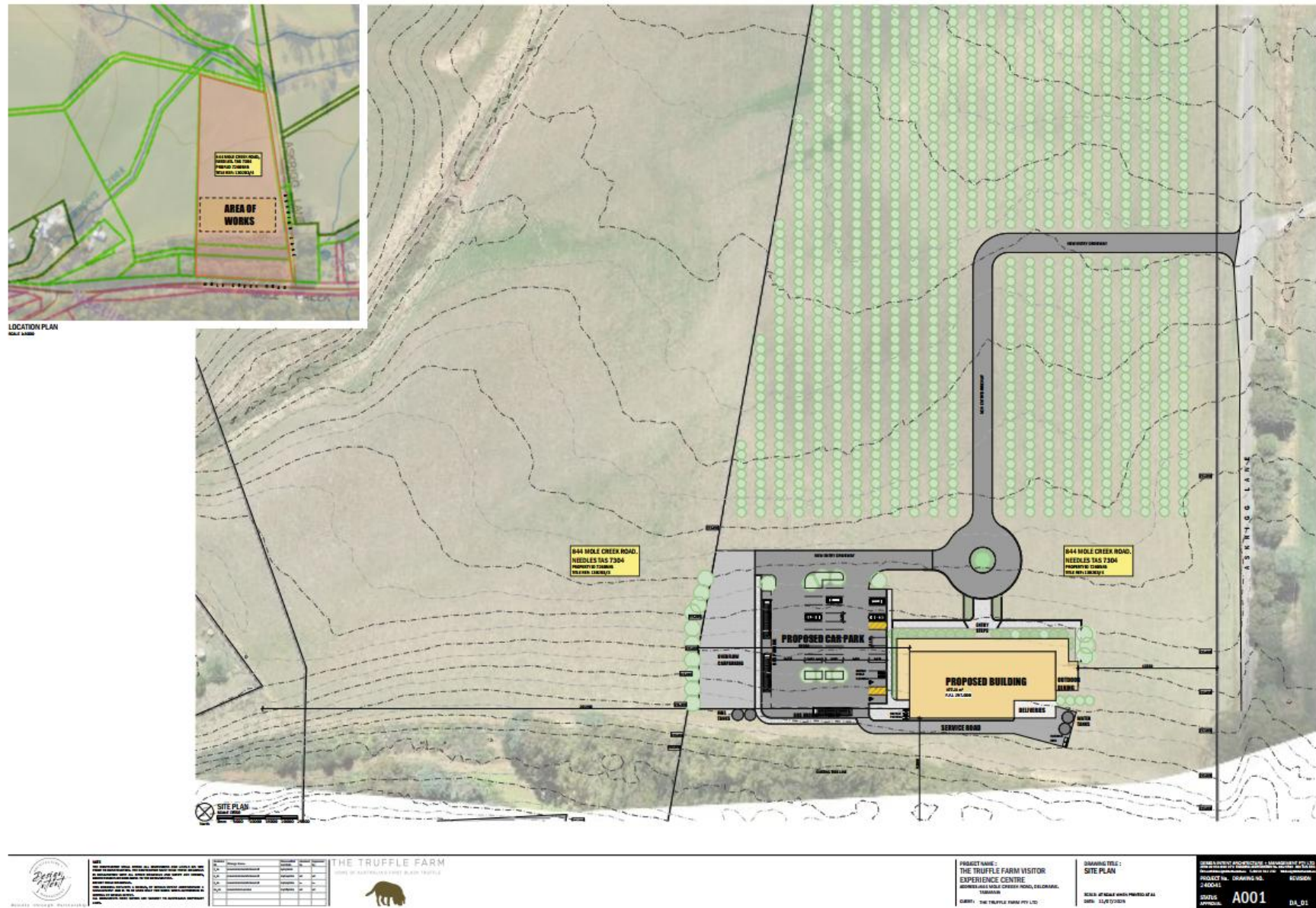


Image 18 Proposed development of the subject property. (source: Design Intent Architecture + Management Pty Ltd)



PROPOSED VISITOR EXPERIENCE CENTRE – THE TRUFFLE FARM

844 Mole Creek Road, Deloraine (access via Askrigg Lane)

Meander Valley Council

Project No: 240041 | 11/07/2025

Design Intent Architecture + Management

ABN 20 634 099 979

Postal Address: P.O Box 216, Kings Meadows. TAS. 7249

Australian Institute of Architects Registration No: 881

Building Accreditation, No: CC2370X



Project Overview

This report has been prepared to accompany a development application submitted to Meander Valley Council for a Visitor Experience Centre at the operational truffle farm of The Truffle Farm Pty Ltd, located at 844 Mole Creek Road, Deloraine.

The proposal supports the existing agricultural operation – Tasmanian Truffles, Australia's premier producer of black truffles – by providing an immersive visitor experience that includes:

- Interpretation and education around truffle farming
- A farm-based café featuring truffle produce.
- Retail space for farming and locally made products
- A function area for cooking classes and culinary events
- A landscaped area with an outdoor pizza oven and gathering space.

The development is designed to maintain the rural character of the site, protect its long-term agricultural productivity, and enhance the regional agritourism offering.

Description

Property Details

Proposed Visitor Experience Centre – Tasmanian Truffles

Site Address: 844 Mole Creek Road, Deloraine (access via Askrigg Lane)

Title Details: 130203/4

Property ID : 7260585

Planning Scheme: Tasmanian Planning Scheme – Meander Valley

Zoning: Agriculture Zone

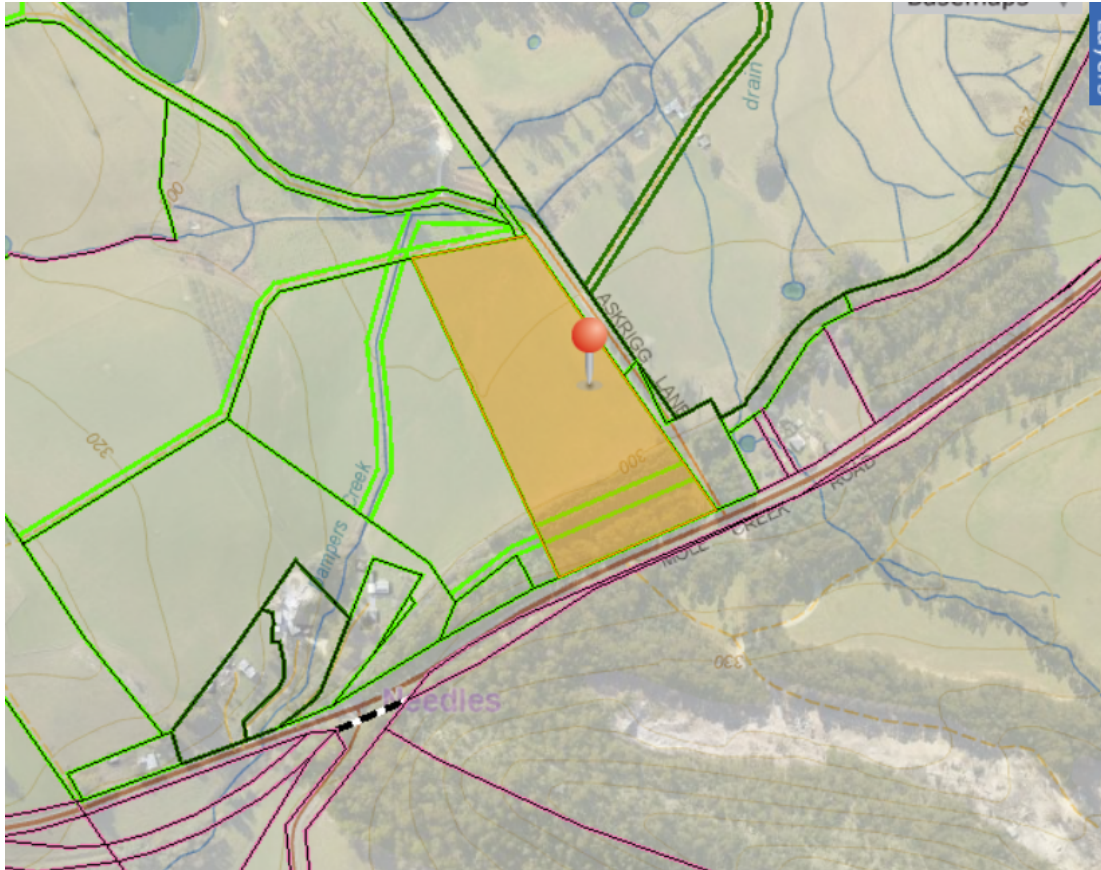
Proponent: The Truffle Farm Pty Ltd

Site and Locality

The site is located at 844 Mole Creek Road, Deloraine, with access provided via Askrigg Lane, a rural road intersecting Mole Creek Road. The property is situated in the foothills of the Great Western Tiers and is actively used for black truffle cultivation. The site includes:

- A truffle orchard of inoculated oak trees
- Harvesting infrastructure and minor farm buildings
- Internal farm tracks and service areas

The surrounding area comprises rural holdings used primarily for grazing and mixed agriculture. The nearest sensitive use (dwelling) is located more than 200 metres from the proposed development.



Proposal

The proposal involves the construction and operation of a Visitor Experience Centre to:

- Showcase the farm's production and harvesting methods
- Host guided truffle hunts and educational tours
- Deliver seasonal, truffle-focused food and beverage offerings
- Facilitate direct-to-consumer retailing of truffle products
- Provide a bookable space for small functions and culinary experiences

The building will be low in scale, under 12m in height, and constructed using natural materials that reflect the rural setting. New infrastructure includes visitor parking and landscape improvements. The building is sited to avoid conflict with productive agricultural areas.

An Agricultural Report prepared in support of the application confirms that the proposal will significantly enhance the site's agricultural productivity and provide long-term benefits to both the truffle farming enterprise and the broader region. The proponent intends to plant up to 3.5 hectares of new French oak trees across multiple titles, supported by irrigation infrastructure and soil conditioning works to increase black truffle production. The proposed Visitor Experience Centre, located in the far south-eastern area of the site, will occupy approximately 1.4 hectares



and serve as the operational hub for agritourism and on-site truffle value-adding. The report concludes that the development will:

- Improve agricultural productivity through expanded truffle cultivation
- Diversify and enhance agritourism, attracting increased visitation
- Enable on-farm processing, rather than outsourcing truffle product handling
- Support regional economic development by boosting tourism within Meander Valley

A Traffic Impact Assessment has also been prepared. It concludes that the development will not create any adverse traffic impacts and that traffic will continue to operate safely and efficiently along Mole Creek Road, at the junction with Askrigg Lane, and on the site itself. Minor works are recommended to enhance safety and compliance, including sealing the first 10m of the driveway from Askrigg Lane in accordance with LGAT Drawing TSD-R03, providing a culvert for drainage, delineating car parking with treated pine timbers, and requesting vegetation clearing from the Department of State Growth (DSG) to improve sight lines along Mole Creek Road. Subject to these recommendations, the proposal is supported on traffic grounds.

Planning Assessment

This section assesses the proposed development against the applicable provisions of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme – Meander Valley for land zoned Agriculture.

The following clauses are relevant to the proposed development:

Clause 21.1 – Zone Purpose

The purpose of the Agriculture Zone is to:

1. Provide for the use or development of land for agricultural use.
2. Protect land for agricultural use by minimizing:
 - a. conflict with or interference from non-agricultural uses.
 - b. non-agricultural use or development that precludes return of the land to agriculture.
 - c. non-agricultural use in irrigation districts.
3. Provide for use or development that supports agricultural use.

The proposed visitor Centre complements the truffle farm's operations and supports agricultural use by:

- Providing on-site value-adding and education about agricultural production.
- Facilitating agritourism that directly relates to the ongoing and expanded agricultural operations.
- Not sterilizing or undermining the productive capacity of the land, which is being enhanced through additional oak plantings.



Clause 21.2 – Use Table

The proposed use is a combination of:

- Resource Development (truffle cultivation – No Permit Required).
- Tourist Operation and Food Services (Visitor Experience Centre – Discretionary).

The discretionary components are permissible under the scheme where they support the agricultural use of the land.

Clause 21.3.1 – Discretionary Use Standards

P1 – Operational Requirement:

Complies – The Visitor Experience Centre is located on-site to deliver hands-on tours, truffle hunts, and on-farm processing. The use directly supports agricultural operations by showcasing the propagation, cultivation, and harvesting of truffles – a high-value agricultural product – through immersive agritourism experiences.

It represents a **diversification and value-adding activity** by enabling the use of the land for processing and packaging truffle produce, which aligns with the planning scheme's definition of agricultural use. The Agricultural Report confirms that this integration enhances productivity and economic viability by expanding operations, engaging visitors, and creating direct-to-market opportunities. The development strengthens the long-term sustainability of truffle farming on the site and in the surrounding region.

P2 – Minimized Conversion of Agricultural Land:

Complies – Only 1.4 hectares is affected, and the development does not preclude return to agriculture or constrain adjoining land.

P3 – Use on Prime Agricultural Land:

Complies – The Agricultural Report confirms the proposal delivers a significant economic benefit to the region through:

- Increased black truffle output.
- On-farm value-adding.
- Agritourism experiences and regional visitation.

Clause 21.4 – Development Standards for Buildings and Works

21.4.1 Building Height:

Complies – The proposed building is below the 12m maximum.



21.4.2 Setbacks:

Complies – Setbacks exceed 5m and are more than 200m from the nearest sensitive use.

21.4.3 Access:

Complies – Access is via Askrigg Lane, a Council-maintained Road. The Traffic Impact Assessment confirms safety and efficiency, with recommended upgrades including:

- Sealing first 10m of access.
- Installing driveway culvert.
- Parking delineation.
- Sightline vegetation removal (via DSG).

Conclusion

The proposed development is consistent with the purpose and provisions of the Agriculture Zone and meets the relevant planning scheme performance criteria. The proposal will:

- Support and enhance the agricultural use of the site.
- Provide value-adding and diversification through agritourism.
- Deliver social and economic benefits to the Meander Valley municipality.
- Preserve the rural character and functionality of the land.

Approval is therefore sought for the proposed Visitor Experience Centre at 844 Mole Creek Road, Deloraine.

Yours Sincerely

A large, bold, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heath Clayton". The signature is stylized with a large, circular initial 'H' and a long, sweeping tail.

Heath Clayton RAIA
Director + Architect
11-07-2025



RESULTS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

4/1 Pipework's Road,
South Launceston. Tas 7249
E: enquiries@designintent.com.au
M: 0419 312 232
W: designintent.com.au

Nooshin Varikodan
TOWN PLANNER
Meader Valley Council
26 Lyall Street,
Westbury, TAS. 7303

Dear Nooshin,

Response to Information Request – 844 Mole Creek Road, Red Hills Food Services (café) & Tourist Operation (visitor centre) PA/26/0038

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the application for the above development. We have reviewed Council's feedback and now provide the following clarifications and updates for your consideration.

1. Agricultural Assessment

- An updated Agricultural Assessment and Compliance Report has been prepared, addressing Council's concerns and correcting Section 2.1 location details.

2. Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA)

- An updated Traffic Impact Assessment has been prepared, which includes:
 - Existing traffic levels on Askrigg Lane, including current property uses.
 - Assessment of road geometry, width, gradient, and shoulder treatments along the full 164m section.
 - Confirmation that a passing bay has been added to Askrigg Lane to support safe two-way functionality.
 - Safety recommendations, including treatments consistent with current standards.
 - Crash risk and safe system scoring for the lane.
- The report also addresses vehicle types expected (including delivery vehicles and buses) and revises car parking calculations to include kitchen areas. Bicycle parking numbers have been updated to reflect the **revised site area values**.

3. Car Parking and Pedestrian Access

- The submitted plans have been updated to show:
 - Proposed surface materials for all driveways and parking areas.
 - Disability parking relocated to meet Acceptable Solution requirements (closest to the main entry).
 - Pedestrian crossing points through the carpark, ensuring safe access to footpaths and entries in accordance with Clause C2.6.5.

4. Visitor Centre Clarification

- The area identified as a "theatre" is clarified as an interactive display space demonstrating truffle growing, harvesting, and production. This forms part of the Tourist Operation (visitor centre) use class and complements the existing on-farm experiences already provided.



RESULTS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

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5. Vegetation and Bushfire Management

- The proposal does not require the removal of any existing vegetation.
- Dedicated bushfire water tanks have been included, and an updated bushfire management plan will be prepared as part of the building approval process.

We trust the above updates, together with the revised Agricultural and Traffic Reports, address Council's initial concerns. The proposal has been carefully amended to ensure compliance with the planning scheme while improving functionality and safety for visitors and the local road network.

We respectfully request that Council now co-sign the application form under Section 52 of the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993, enabling the application to be validated under Section 51(1AB).

Please let us know if any further clarification or information is required.

Yours Sincerely

A large, bold, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heath Clayton". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail.

Heath Clayton RAIA
Director + Architect
10-09-2025