The Queen’s Domain and the People’s Temper: Contest for Public Natural Space in Urban Landscapes

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Abstract

The human relationship with nature is embedded in the physical, practical and psychological construction of societies. Public natural space has played an important role in urban development since Industrialisation drove people out of rural environments and into the cities. Nature and landscapes have moved humans to interact and react since early human history.

This analysis looks at discourses over shared and publicly-owned natural space, attachment to landscape and the desire of humans to engage in its use and maintenance. It asks how advocacy for public natural space beginning in the early 1800s has formed a foundation for both an environmental ethic and the modern environment movement.

The Queen’s Domain, Hobart, is natural parkland close to the city centre that, like other parks in urban settings across the world, offers ready access to nature free of human-induced pressures. This project examines the relationships between people and public natural space, motivations for engaging in debate over its use, and the role of newspapers in moderating that discourse over time by studying news texts about the Queen’s Domain spanning two hundred years, and applying an historical and discourse analysis. This study identifies
key voices that are absent in the discourse and considers the need for inclusivity in debate.
Acknowledgements

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The Queen’s Domain, Hobart, Tasmania,
1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

I would remind the Minister that this is the people’s park for all time, and that Hobart citizens are very jealous of it. Woe betide anyone who would dare to alienate any portion of it (Mercury 23 January, 1936: 6).

The human relationship with nature is embedded in the physical, practical and psychological construction of societies (Kellert 1996, Wilson 1993). Public natural space has played a role in urban development since Industrialisation encouraged the push of people out of rural environments and into the cities (Conway 1991). The concept of landscape — with its varied and individual interpretations — has prompted responses since early human history (Head 2000).

This is a study of the Queen’s Domain, Hobart, through news coverage over two centuries, raising questions and providing insight into a range of broader issues relating to human engagement with public natural space. Through an historical analysis of news coverage
supplemented by interviews and the readings of other relevant texts, this study poses several questions.

Firstly, just as the connection with nature is fundamental to humans and societies, and public natural space is an accepted feature of urban design and social well-being, is it that debate over public natural space is equally embedded in society? Secondly, when examining examples of debate over public natural space, is the essence of the conflict motivated by the public element of the land or the nature that occurs there? Finally, when discourse over public natural space occurs, who are the key actors and how can the conversation be broadened, become more inclusive and richer for the engagement of the greater community?

By examining relationships between people and public natural space, individual and political motivations for engaging in discourse over its use, and the role of newspapers in moderating that discourse over time, this study considers the development of advocacy for public natural spaces from the early 1800s, and looks for the foundations of the modern environment movement. Using the Queen’s Domain as a lens, this thesis studies how public debate over natural space has been framed and made visible through the media, and how discourse has played out over time.
1.2 Locating the Debate Over Public Natural Space

The Queen’s Domain is 568 acres of public land that lies between the Tasmanian capital city centre of Hobart and shores of the Derwent River (Inspiring Place 2013). The Domain rises gently from sea level, achieving sufficient elevation to observe the Derwent River as it sweeps past the northern and eastern suburbs of Hobart, then travels south to meet the Southern Ocean. Certain vantage points offer clear views west across the city, taking in the dolerite flanks and summit of Mt Wellington. The Domain’s immediate neighbours include Government House, the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens and the suburb of Glebe.

Comprised of a mix of bushland, native grasses, tended paths and avenues, the Domain is dotted with tributes to royalty and soldiers, and structures; old cottages and the occasional concrete reservoir. Most prominent are the sporting facilities, such as Hobart’s Aquatic Centre, the quaint Tasmanian Cricket Association grounds with neat stands and white picket fence, and the Soldier’s Memorial playing fields. On any given weekend there will be a line of cars delivering children to swimming lessons, soccer matches, cricket games, athletics carnivals and obedience training for dogs. Major events such as fun runs and charity events are commonplace and, while in winter the ice needs to be cracked on the oval before play can commence and footballs have been known to blow backwards in howling winds, there
is steady use of the Domain’s sporting facilities all year round. The Cenotaph and war memorials are the sites for frequent ceremonial events, and the Royal Hobart Regatta is launched annually from grounds dedicated to that use.

Gazetted as a place for the people in 1858, the Domain has gradually been separated from downtown Hobart and the neighboring suburb of North Hobart. Major roads and rail lines have divorced the parkland from most of the shoreline and access by car is the norm. Despite the fact that the Domain is a short walk away from Hobart’s central business district and the busy tourist precincts of Salamanca and Constitution Docks, the complicated route and need to cross busy major roads makes it harder for pedestrians step away from the city to experience the natural public space of the Domain.

Tasmania is renowned for its natural assets of reserves, National Parks and World Heritage Areas, and nearly as famous for the debate that rages over the use and management of public natural spaces. These debates have been a rich vein for newsmakers documenting fights for rivers, forests, the marine environment and the integrity of natural areas.

The Queen’s Domain is a natural space that has also attracted debate and strongly voiced opinions since the establishment of Van Diemen’s Land, later to become Tasmania. Not as vast or wild as the Tasmanian
Wilderness World Heritage Area, the nature found on the Domain is as precious, such as the thirteen species of rare or threatened plant that occur there (Forward 2008). The attachment to the Domain as a natural space is deeply felt and, consequently, this narrative of contest has occupied many column inches in newspapers since the early days of the colony.

The park was embraced as a place for the people, as a natural respite from life in a socially chaotic new colony, and as a public place to be enjoyed in a variety of ways, even before it was gifted to the public by the Crown at the cessation of convict transportation in 1853. From the initial marking of boundaries and throughout the subsequent decades, there has existed a dynamic tension around the many interpretations of how this public land should be maintained and utilised.

The debate relating to the use of Tasmania’s publicly-owned natural land, and its role as a resource, extended beyond the borders of the Queen’s Domain. Conflict over land and its use began in the early days with land grants and allocations to settlers by the invading English colonists, which displaced the Tasmanian Aboriginal residents through some of the most brutal evictions in global colonial history (Boyce 2008). Tension over parks and public land uses and boundaries continues, dominating or defining the political discourse (Hutton and Connors 1999, Bonyhady 2000, Buckman 2008).
1.3 Defining Public Natural Space

This thesis uses the term public natural space to describe parks and gardens, green and blue spaces (land and water), bushland, natural areas and reserves set aside and managed for use by the general public. In this study, the term touches on cultivated recreation grounds such as sporting fields or golf courses, but focuses on spaces where the non-human, non-manufactured elements dominate. It includes public natural spaces featuring designed or managed gardens, recreational facilities or structures such as lookouts, shelters and picnic areas. Public natural spaces are free to access and managed by an over-arching body such as a government agency or municipal council, existing for the people or community as a whole, shared, open to all and maintained at the public expense (Quynh, et al. 2013; Fraser 2008).

1.4 Research Aim and Scope

Central to this study is an examination of the values that humans ascribe to nature and natural spaces. This research sets out to examine the relationship between people and public natural space, analysing debates relating to the Queen’s Domain expressed in news texts and surrounding discourses across time.

The Queen’s Domain, also known simply as the Domain, presents an excellent opportunity to investigate the way in which the public
commentary regarding the use, management and definition of the land has evolved. The combination of a clearly defined area, and a consistent record of ongoing commentary on the subject of the Domain in news texts since the establishment of the colony, allows for relatively comprehensive data collection and analysis.

This study is focused on the public discourse as captured and conveyed by the media through editorials, Letters to the Editor, articles and court reports. These texts act as accounts of contemporary views and attitudes, community engagement, public opinion and concern. The study will include a history and chronology of activities on the Domain, informed by historical literature, management plans, news items and media releases. The research is supplemented by interviews to gain insight into the views of members of the Tasmanian community that are not represented in official documents or news mentions (Hansen and Machin 2013).

Historical studies and management plans of the Domain chart the uses of the area, proposed alienation and activities, and management practices. Detail of the Tasmanian Aboriginal experience in the region of the Domain is limited outside of cultural assessments for the Hobart City Council’s Management Plans, (de Gryse 1996; Evans 1996; Inspiring Place 2013) and there is a paucity of references to Aboriginal occupation in news texts.
1.5 Literature Review

This historical analysis of the Queen’s Domain enables the identification of themes in the relationships between people and nature, and examines the role of the media in articulating the elements that arise from both.

When considering actors in a discourse, it is important to consider the use of frames, symbols, language and identification of voices and power relationships in shaping the discourse (Fairclough 1998; 2001, Foucault 2002; van Dijk 2001). Such analysis of these elements helps identify the ways in which the media has shaped the public discourse, including conflict, relating to the Domain.

Another relevant strand of literature relates to human relationships with nature, and the values that colour the lens through which that relationship is viewed. For example, the person that emphasises the intrinsic value of nature will experience a different relationship to that person who values nature in economic terms (Harvey 1996; Kahn 1999; Kaplan 1995; Kellert 1993; 1996).

Thirdly, the historical context of human engagement with the natural environment globally and within Tasmania is a useful way to trace the forms and shifts in the critical discourse around public natural space.
This considers the role that environmental communication in society and the media (Cox 2010; Hannigan 1995; Lester 2007; 2010). Insight into experiences around the world in relation to conflict over public space identifies actors and highlights how simple attachment to nature and public space became the province of a distinct category of citizens called environmentalists, activists and ‘greenies’ (Cox 2010; Eder 1996; Hay 2002).

Finally, research relating to relationships between natural public space and nature, management techniques and consultative processes to mitigate conflict provides insight into public space debate participation and resolution.

1.6 Methods and Approach

This research benefits from ‘methodological pluralism’ (Carvalho 2008: 3) to explore and understand Tasmanians’ long-held relationship with nature and the voice it takes in society. The study employs an historical analysis, draws on some of elements of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1995), and examines the impact of discourse on social processes.

Data collection has involved gathering and examining news articles between 1816 and 2015, with analysis conducted to identify themes in recurring points of debate. Using a combination of online news
archives, digitised news sources and hard copy newspapers, the items studied include articles, court reports, editorials, Letters to the Editor and advertisements.

While newspapers act as a valuable source of evidence of discourse and the subjects to which they relate, they are a moderated medium with obstacles to inclusion in the forum, such as limited literacy, or social exclusion (Lester and Hutchins 2013). As well as determining the themes relating to engagement with land from colonial to modern times, the study aims to detect key silences in discourse. Where possible, interviews have been conducted to give volume to voices that have been excluded from the discourse due to the nature of news publishing.

The study also considers a similar example of gifted land adjacent to the city of Oxford, in the United Kingdom. This involved direct observation of Port Meadow and Wolvercote Common, Oxford, and accessing primary documents at the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.
1.7 Identifying Themes through Analysis

Three elements of public engagement with space are examined in detail: attachment to nature; boundaries and proposals to alter existing boundaries of reserves; and utilisations of public natural space and proposals to alter purpose. In investigating these themes the project examines public discourse over natural space, its use or preservation, questioning if it belongs exclusively to modern environmental movements and politics.

1.8 Value of the Study

The value of the study lies in its application to the modern public debate over the allocation of natural public land. In Tasmania, discourse relating to public land has been heated since the 1970s. Participants in the conversation attract labels and become compartmentalised into a specific political or social demographic. This longitudinal study of the relationship between the European population of Tasmania and the Queen’s Domain provides a valuable historical lens through which to view the contemporary discourse over public space, and considers the existence of a class structure within the debate. The study, by exploring the ways that conflict over natural areas has been viewed, deepens the understanding of the ongoing conflict over nature, and the potential for resolution of contest over landscape.
1.9 Thesis Structure

Following this introductory chapter, this thesis will be laid out as follows.

Chapter Two is a review of literature relevant to several aspects of this thesis. Firstly, it examines Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as an approach to reviewing the news texts. Secondly, the sociological and psychological discussion relating to the human connection with nature provides background as to the why and how contest over public natural space arises.

Chapter Two observes the rise of the Victorian parks movement and the popular conversation around the human relationship with nature as it unfolded through the 1800s and into the mid-1900s. Literature viewed includes the artistic expression of connection to nature in Australia, the evolution of the environment movement, and the role of the media in its development.

Chapter Three is an historical review of the Queen’s Domain showing the development of the attachment to the space, revealing the dynamic tension between the public and agencies that have sought to manage it for different purposes.
This chapter includes a brief comparison with Port Meadow and adjoining Wolvercote Common in Oxfordshire, England, which provides insight into how a similar parcel of land situated in close proximity to a population centre provokes discourse over connection to nature and land use.

Chapter Four explains the methodological approach to this research including the use of Critical Discourse Analysis, the purpose of studying the Queen’s Domain as a case study for its relevance to the notion of human connection to nature, and the contest for public natural space. Chapter Four describes the sourcing and presentation of the data.

Chapter Five is an analysis of news texts divided into three historical time blocks. This chapter presents a summary of prevalent themes throughout the centuries of debate relating to the public values attributed to the natural space.

Chapter Six relates the findings of interviews conducted to help inform elements of the discussion that have not been revealed through literature reviewed or through the data analysis.

Chapter Seven’s discussion draws together the examples revealed through the examination of news texts about the Queen’s Domain, in
the broader context of the human relationship with nature featuring contest over landscape.

In Chapter Eight, a conclusion is reached about how the human relationship with nature, the need for and allocation of public natural space, and historical influences such as the Victorian parks movement, have contributed to the shape and participants in contest for landscape.
2 Nature, Society and the Media

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on the subject of human relationships with public natural spaces, and the motivations contributing to debates over nature. Here, the values that apply to the context of the Domain research are identified, and literary threads from both a global and Tasmanian perspective are pursued, including nature writing and communications methods used in environmental public discourse. This literature reflects nature as seen through the British lens, and that of its new colonies such as America, Australia and Canada.

2.2 Access to Nature in the 1800s

In the mid-1800s in Great Britain, the onset of Industrialisation witnessed the movement of people into densely populated areas, with the urban environment increasingly consumed by factories, residential accommodation, manufacturing infrastructure and pollution. Working and living conditions for the labouring class were unrelentingly pressured and squalid. At that time working class leisure took the form of street music, bear fights and public house sing-a-long, as described and decried by Charles Dickens.
and other social reformers (Winter 1993; Conway 1991; Ackroyd 1990).

Within this context, Britain saw the emergence of an active group of advocates for access to natural space as a means of improving the quality of life and social environment. The Victorian Parks Movement espoused the benefits of the development of public parks beyond the private sphere where only friends or paying guests could gain access to natural spaces (Conway 1991). Although rural landscapes bounded city centres and industrial precincts, these fringes were difficult to access by workers who spent long hours labouring in factories and towns. Few had the time, energy or will to walk the distances required to reach a non-built environment, while pubs and street theatre were available on their doorsteps (Winter 1991).

Commons, described in Chapter Three, were areas encompassing pastures, woods and waterways, usually connected to estates or Crown allotments and used for profit by a designated group of ‘commoners’. Hence, commons did not always live up to their name and were not always accessible to the general population. Sometimes ‘ownership’ was not enforced and commons became the location for recreational activities, as illustrated by the examples of Wolvercote Common and Port Meadows in Chapter Three. Yet, commons were principally places for profit by a select group, and as Industrialisation bloomed, those commons closer to larger population bases were
eventually fenced to restrict access in case of damage, and occurred across England and Ireland (Conway 1991; Terry 1999; Brück and Tierney 2009).

Other than commons, most natural spaces were private gardens, or parks and zoos charging admission fees. Consequently, with the onset of urban expansion, access to nature was enjoyed only by those who could afford it (Elborough 2016).

The filth of the industrial urban landscape shaped the lifestyle of the inhabitants, creating poor health, productivity pressure and high crime rates. Members of the middle class, such as parliamentarians and social reformers saw nature as the saviour of the working class and the fabric of society, and they espoused the provision of free access to nature as sound social governance. It was hoped that access to parks, and an environment in which workers could recreate away from liquor and lewd behaviour, the working class would become more ‘thrifty, industrious, docile and moral’, like the middle classes (Conway 1991: 34).

While some advocates for access to natural space were undertaking social engineering, others were genuinely concerned about human wellbeing, (Conway 1991; Winter 1993) hoping the development of municipal parks owned and maintained by local council authorities would improve the lot of the working class. One such man was James
Silk Buckingham, Member for Sheffield, who introduced bills for open walks, public playgrounds and public baths every year between 1832 and 1835, none of which were passed by parliament (Conway 1991: 39).

From the early 1800s onwards there was increasing political activity, with supporters of the People’s Charter rallies demanding equality for the working class, and campaigns to end transportation gaining volume (Rowe 1967). While parks provided venues for the Chartists to rally, natural spaces were also used to distract the masses from the movement when authorities encouraged free access to the zoos and botanical gardens on days that rallies were organised, hoping to lure people away from the subversive gatherings (Conway 1991: 36).

2.3 Exporting the Parks Principal

Hobart’s Domain, more than 9000 nautical miles from London and royal rulers, adhered to the theory of the day, which prescribed healthy outdoor activity as an antidote to the malaise of living in newly industrialised cities with polluted environments. While an outpost such as Hobart might not suffer the same oppressive pollution as London, the principal was applied so that access to the outdoors and physical activity could potentially improve the so-called civility of the population. As well as exposing men and
women to the gentility of nature, recreation such as cricket, sailing and swimming were hoped to distract working class citizens from the seedy lure of the pub (Terry 1999).

The same model was applied in another British colony at Beacon Hill Park, on Vancouver Island in Canada, as reported in the local Canadian newspaper:

We don't like the idea of our citizens surrounding themselves eternally with the smell of the shop, or seeing them choking in the dusty and smoky atmosphere of the town, or sneezing away the noxious effluvia caused by the want of a municipal sanitary Board. We are in favour of everybody semi-occasionally taking a ride or a walk through Beacon Hill Park, either to inhale the sea breeze, admire the scenery, pluck the flowers and enjoy their aroma, listen to the warbling of the songsters of the forest, strengthen their muscle, fill their lungs with purer oxygen, walk or trot, gallop or run, or spread themselves out on the turf gipsy-like, and have a realizing sense of the extension of human liberty and the blessings of semi-occasional don't-care-a-rap-aticness. (The British Colonist 1861:2)
Conway (1991) describes the design and development of parks in the Victorian era, explaining how this philosophy was transplanted into colonial contexts, as shown in the works of George Burnap and Frederick Law Olmstead who made park design a central tenet of sound urban design.

In the 1800s in the United States, landscape advocate Frederick Law Olmstead, co-designer of New York City’s Central Park and architect of urban planning principals incorporating green spaces, was espousing the link between natural space and human wellbeing. Olmstead listed the aesthetic, spiritual, physical and family benefits of exposure to nature (Sperber 2007; Mitchell 2005). Olmstead was determined that his designs would democratise access to nature, allowing workers who did not have the capacity to leave the city for the summer to experience the restorative benefits of mountains or the countryside at no cost. (Mitchell 2005) Through his influence, access to nature was considered critical to urban planning, a body of thought emerging in the 1800s particularly in the United States where cities were growing (Burnap 1916).

2.4 Environment Writing

Early expressions of the values underpinning the relationship with nature were also reflected in the writings of Henry David Thoreau, who published his treatise on living with nature in 1854 after
eschewing society to live in a hand-hewn shack by Walden Pond (Thoreau 1944).

The explosion of scientific discovery and the rise in nature-based publications, coupled with an expanding audience of middle-class readers, prompted the expansion of environment-based writing from the 1800s onwards (Neuzil 2008). From the pure science publications of Alexander von Humboldt, Darwin’s sensational disruption of *Origin of the Species*, to the ‘hook and cook’ romanticism of outdoors writers such as Theodore Roosevelt, the natural world has provided rich subject matter for readers of news texts, journals and books.

In this environment the writings of Thoreau, John Burroughs, Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Muir and President Theodore Roosevelt describe the human compulsion to be part of nature (Neuzil 2008). Journals, books and magazines carried reflections on nature ranging from fishing, shooting wolves, birds and otters, and the articulation of the human desire to be in nature with increased popularity into the early 1900s (Leopold 1946). In the Australian context, journalists constructed a narrative around the Australian environment fostering a relationship with the landscape that led to protection of what are now iconic protected areas (Meadows and Thomson 2013).

The late 1800s and early part of the 1900s witnessed the formation of environmental societies such as the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society (America) and the Isaac Walton League devoted to preservation
of nature. Through the development of such organisations, the concept of nature as an item of value became legitimised in social institutions.

2.5 Valuing Nature

Leopold’s philosophy of the existential need for nature took a new turn following the 1962 release of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, prompting widespread consideration of the human impact on the environment. While Carson's treatise on the ecological dangers of chemical saturation in the landscape prompted scientific investigations into the human dependency on nature, philosophical and sociological investigations into human/non-human exchange flourished with the works of popular literature by novelists such as Edward Abbey in *Desert Solitaire* (1968). This decade is attributed as the witnessing the birth of the environment movement, with campaigning, lobbying and social mobilization on issues affecting the environment (Eder 1996; Hay 2002; Neuzil 2008).

During the 1960s in the United States, the role of wildlife agencies were under examination. Agencies previously tasked with managing natural areas for resource extraction or use by recreational hunters and fishers were being recalibrated as conservation agents. Public discourse coalesced into a social movement from the 1960s onwards in the United States and Britain, and the 1970s in Australia (Buckman 2008; Connors and Hutton 1999).
This saw the articulation of a new set of values, described as a ‘taxonomy of basic values as a way of organizing people’s beliefs about animals and nature’. Nine essential values define the human connection with nature, influenced by the social and ideological background of the individual:

- Utilitarian interest in exploiting nature for human gain,
- Naturalistic interest in experiencing nature and non-human life forms, with benefits for human mental and physical wellbeing,
- Ecological and scientific curiosity and desire to understand nature,
- An aesthetic attraction for animals and nature,
- Symbolic use of nature to communicate thoughts and actions,
- Dominionistic desire to master or control wildlife,
- Humanistic emotional bonding with animals,
- Moralistic concern for the wellbeing for non-human life,
- Negativistic attitudes to non-human life i.e. repulsion or fear of some natural elements (Kellert 1996: 6).

This typology has its roots in the theory of biophilia, described as multiple strands of emotional response woven into cultural symbols, suggesting that humans will continue to seek to connect with the environment even when they are removed from it. Biophilia is the result of a bio-cultural evolution, produced under the influence of
hereditary learnings, then fine-tuned by the senses. Certain genotypes experience a response that is more likely to ensure survival and reproductive fitness, therefore making it more likely that those genes will be passed on. This is the source of innate connectivity that leads humans to seek nature as part of their human condition (Wilson and Kellert 1993).

These theories affirm the value of nature in the social context and explain the human connection and impulse to engage with nature. They do not detail the motivation to act to retain or restore nature, or voice opinions about management and exploitation, which this study seeks to examine. These nine labels fail to address that particular relationship between nature and identity, discussed later in this chapter, which is important for gaining a full understanding of the origins of contest for nature.

2.6 Human Nature

The nature/human relationship from a psychiatric perspective would surely have been seized upon by Conway’s parks advocates were it available in the 1800s. Clinical research presented by psychologists indicates that contact with nature offers physical and mental benefits to humans, improving life and its outcomes. Simply looking through a window increases productivity in the workplace, improves mental and physical health, and reduces sickness in prisons. Direct contact with
animals offers clinical benefits for Alzheimer’s patients and autistic children (Kaplan, R 1995; Kaplan, S 1995; Kahn 1999).

Winding paths, meandering streams, areas with dappled light and foliage are an important part of the experience and link a sense of affinity for nature to evolutionary theory. Water is critical for survival; trees provide shelter; the mystery of what lies beyond the trees satisfies, in safety, the human need for inquiry, all of which are linked to the ancient origins on the savannah plains of Africa (Heerwagen and Orians 1993:139). Natural spaces that attract the visitor, with strategic placement of entrances, clever alignment of trees luring people into the landscape rather than pushing them to the edges, provide satisfying experiences for people and contribute to healthier city environments (Burnap 1916).

Nature and the environment are also considered to be a source of information that, along with the need for exploration, is considered as central to our functioning as humans. Nature, ranging from community gardens to vast wilderness, plays a critical role as generator of information that humans store, retrieve and employ to advance the species. Nature is also recognised for its healing effects (Kaplan, R 1995; Kaplan, S 1995).
2.7 Landscape

In an extension of the taxonomy of nature, Lesley Head (2000) discusses the complexities of the varying interpretations of ‘nature’ and ‘landscape’. Head explains the recognition of nature as being ‘present and active in human affairs’ and ‘the reciprocity of nature and society’ (Head 2000: 54). Drawing on the work of L.B. Rowntree, Head (2000: 55) offers a list of landscape themes:

- Landscape as geological artifact; as transformed by human action,
- Landscape as evidence for origins and diffusions; as a backdrop of developments,
- Landscape as material culture; the look of the land, including human structures, field patterns etc,
- Urban landscapes; landscapes of myth, modern citiscapes,
- Art, literature and landscape meaning; the way in which people see and depict landscape, privileging certain scenes,
- Landscape as a visual resource; part of the larger environment and subject to blight or enhancement,
- Landscape as ideology; as a source of ideas that act as guidelines for national culture,
- The role in production and maintenance in social categories; control of the environment to produce and reinforce power relations such as race, class, status,
Landscape as texts, symbols and signs; treated as texts authored or read by observers.

These landscape themes further develop the taxonomy of values that humans ascribe to nature.

2.8 Connecting Nature, Place and Public Space

The philosophical question of the relationship between people and nature is addressed by Kate Soper, who asks big questions in her book entitled What is Nature (1995). Soper considers the complexity of ‘nature’ and its many different applications, noting that ‘natural’ is distinguished by its difference from ‘human’ and ‘cultural’. In attempting to define nature, Soper describes it as everything that is not human and distinguished from the work of humanity, exploring the impulse to separate humanity from the ‘other’. Nature is opposed to culture, history convention and artificial production (1995: 15).

This is not to imply that nature is not influenced by humanity and culture, especially when it is located within an urban context, and so the relationship to nature can apply to anything ranging from a wilderness area to a municipal park.

Topophila, a concept articulated by Yi-Fu Tuan (1974), describes the relationship between people and place. Tuan explores the connection to the physical environment and examines the responses it inspires:
delight at a pleasing aesthetic, a tactile response to the feel of air, water, vegetation and the reaction that is more difficult to qualify as it is wrapped up in the response to feelings inspired by a place and memories with which it is associated. Topophilic sentiment varies according to the individual and the context, with each relationship as unique as the human that experiences it. Tuan asserts that the environment informs each person’s worldview, and attachment to place can profoundly influence a person’s mindset. Like Schama twenty years later in Landscape and Memory (1995), Tuan posits the importance of history and memory in the formation of attachment to place, which might include a personal or collective history. The establishment of monuments and facilities act as signposts for the collective engagement with a place, and public spaces such as the Domain, replete with memorials and historical monuments, reflect the presence of topophilia (Tuan 1974: 99).

Some environmental commentators and scholars measure the value of nature according the level of human influence (Soper 1995, Hay 2002). For some such observers, nature may sit on a sliding scale of value according to how pristine or otherwise it might be. The topophilic effect of the natural environment is well conveyed by Tuan when he states, ‘Environment may not be the direct cause of topophilia but environment provides the sensory stimuli, which as perceived images lend shape to our joys and ideals’ (Tuan 1974: 113).
When a place is both natural and public, the attachment that applies to the space takes on additional significance. The ‘publicness’ of natural space may contribute another unit of value to people enjoying that space due to its freedom from commercial value, commanding no immediate price for access or maintenance. With no dollar figure attached to its worth, plus the topophilic affect of a landscape that carries memory, myth and cultural significance, the value of public natural space can become priceless.

2.9 Place, Identity and Art

A sense of personal identification, derived from a close association with nature, can arise from a sense of place, a feeling of subconsciously knowing and a sense of belonging in a landscape. This is explored by environmental lawyer and writer Tim Bonyhady (2000), poet and environmental philosopher Peter Hay (2002) and social commentator Don Watson (2014). This is commonly associated with Indigenous cultures, but it is helpful to look at this in the context of European Australia as it developed through colonisation in the 1800s, and evolved to shape a national identity and cultural relationship with nature in this country.

Using art as a reflection of the evolution of human attachment to the new colonial landscape, the relationship with nature by European Australians ranges from bemused, to brutal, to adoring. Nature was
manipulated to ‘improve’ the aesthetic, and even the most celebrated artists doctored the scene to make it fit their visual ideal. (Bonyhady 2000) Art, as an expression of a human representation of nature, is a reminder that critical discourse over nature is exclusive neither to Tasmania, nor to recent centuries (Schama 1995; Hay 2002). The interaction between artists, environmental preservation and conflict arising from differing values relates to this exploration of the relationship between public natural spaces, cultural aesthetic and trends in the colonial era.

2.10 Getting Active for Nature

Impulses, thoughts or triggers that inspire people to defend public space include anthropocentric motives, ecological concern, and horror at separation from other life forms. Coinciding with the actions of the Victorian parks movement and Jeremy Bentham’s social reform theories, these expressions of the environmental impulse began with Romanticism, as a reaction against the Age of Enlightenment and disconnection with nature brought about by the sweeping onset of Industrialisation in the 1700s and 1800s (Hay 2002; Ackroyd1990).

The content for this research falls into this post-Romantic time frame coinciding with the colonial era, the European occupation of Tasmania and the gazettal of the Queen’s Domain. This correlates with the clearly articulated attachment to this public natural space, prompting the question of whether the pre-European residents held what we now
refer to as an environmental ethic, or simply the culturally evolved humanistic instinct to retain contact with nature (Heerwagen and Orions 1993; Kahn 1999).

Connection with nature and movements for nature apply to anthropocentric ideals (such as parks and nature reserves) as much as an eco-centric motivation for defending the environment (Hay 2002; Kahn 1999). This Western interpretation of environmentalism highlights the deafening silence of the attitudes of Aboriginal Tasmanians and other less powerful social agents. More research into the Tasmanian Aboriginal connection with the landscape continues to emerge, but as yet there is little that applies to the Domain, an ancient landscape so close to Tasmania’s largest population centre. Also missing is insight into the experiences of other less vocal members of the community, such as the homeless who use natural areas for sleep or refuge.

The human relationship with nature is a cultural construct informed by a set of utility-centric values, that is, the human/nature relationship is defined by how much nature can provide to society and its productive forces (Eder 1996).

In his chapter on framing and communicating nature, Eder concentrates on post-Carson environmentalism and the way in which the movement influenced the development of a different cultural
relationship with nature. Eder describes the institutionalisation of nature in society as ‘post-environmentalism’, and claims that it substitutes ecology over industry, changing ‘the nature of politics by inventing the politics of nature’ (Eder 1996:163). Geographer David Harvey states that, ‘Discursive struggles over representation are... as fiercely fought and just as fundamental to the activities of place construction as bricks and mortar’ (Harvey 1996: 322). Similarly, representation and identification with nature reinforces the concept of connection to nature, and while Harvey warns of the risks of symbolic attachment, such symbols are a critical component of environmental communication.

2.11 Claiming Space and Drawing Boundaries

Understanding the need for meaningful natural public space is an important contribution to the analysis of the dispute over proposed changes to boundaries and utilisation. The role that public space plays in a city environment, the way in which the public and commercial interests can influence how that space is defined, used and managed, explains why people engage vocally and visibly when changes are proposed to the purpose or boundaries of the space (Fraser 2008).

Prevailing attitudes and conventions of different eras wield subtle, yet profound, influence over the use of space. Again, the temporal context plays an important role in understanding changing attitudes to public
space. Enrique Penalosa, a former mayor of Bogota and advocate for public natural space, has articulated its importance in a contemporary urban context, suggesting that:

The least a democratic society should do is to offer people wonderful public spaces. Public spaces are not a frivolity. They are just as important as hospitals and schools. They create a sense of belonging. This creates a different type of society – a society where people of all income levels meet in public space is a more integrated, socially healthier one.

(Penalosa in Walljasper 2010)

Fraser (2008) and Penalosa (Walljasper 2010) are describing in a modern, urban context what early advocates for access to public natural space in the Victorian urban era were also aspiring to. Yet, differing priorities, shaped by the era, can influence its use and management, such as prioritising commercial return. Competing interests can have consequences for public land management or for achieving protection for public land in the first instance. Land protection is usually brought about by individuals referred to as ‘policy entrepreneurs’ (Frisch and Wakelee 2011: 231-232) who enjoy the following characteristics:

• They have a claim to be heard based on expertise, position or the ability to speak for someone else,
• They have political connections or negotiation skills,
They have persistence.

These three points are consistent with the identities of the early parks advocates in the environment era, being individuals with political connections who, in some cases, were elected to speak on the behalf of constituents.

Looking then to Tasmania, a significant amount of environmental conflict and protest relates to areas that had been gazetted as national parks, or extensions to national parks. While the spatial context of this thesis is not a national park by definition the Domain, as a public natural space, enjoys some of the protections, management issues and public expectations associated with national parks (Buckman 2008).

2.12 Nature in the News

Deliberate construction of the environmental narrative with desired outcomes, such as the theory and practice of communications methods over environmental issues, has also influenced nature discourse. Environmental advocates employ journalism theory on the newsworthiness of environmental issues, risk management, collaborative processes and communication theory attempting to resolve environmental conflict (Cox 2010).
News media is the critical tool for moving an environmental problem from a condition to an issue (Hannigan 1995). News is manufactured around frames and media discourse is essentially a ‘symbolic contest’ (Hannigan 1995: 61) between competing sponsors of frames, including claims makers. Metaphors, exemplars, catch phrases, depictions and visual images are used to communicate environmental problems. Issues that make for social drama, complete with heroes, victims and villains, are more likely to get attention. This reminds us that political strategy might be underlying all texts written about contest over nature, subtly influencing how readers react to the messages.

Central to all communications relating to the environment is conflict, generated from within the issue or reported through the media. Whether the conflict be ‘latent or manifest, structurally determined or purposefully enacted, objectively real or subjectively perceived,’ (Cottle 2006: 4) its presence determines the level of mediatisation that nature-based issues will attract. Consequently, environmental issues peak and trough as news content depending on the effectiveness of the claims-makers.

Studies of mediatised conflict over the environment range from contests crossing global and ecological boundaries (Cottle 1993; Hansen 1993; Cottle 2006; Lester and Hutchins 2013) to Tasmanian conflicts (Hutton and Connors 1999; Lester 2007; 2010). These texts examine the actions of individuals, but also consider the roles,
methods and effects of conservation advocacy groups that organise individuals to act as movements.

Cottle emphasises the importance of the relationship between the media and movements by stating, ‘What is clear... is that the mass media are likely to be of major importance in the selection, transformation and circulation of environmental meanings in modern society’ (Cottle 1993: 108). In short, the media plays a critical role in determining whether an environmental condition is escalated into a social concern or issue, which in turn may influence the outcome of the conflict.

2.13 Conclusion

This review of literature provides a background for the investigation of critical discourse over public natural space. These authors identify and explain the human condition requiring contact with nature, be that for evolutionary or cultural reasons, and moves through the development of the articulation of the human/nature connection since members of the Victorian parks movement advocated for ready and easy access for all workers to public space. Modern psychology provides theory about how nature, wild or cultivated, offers beneficial effects for humans. Finally, the critical role of media is confirmed in introducing nature into the public discourse. However, there is little presence of a connection between the post-Industrialisation movement for social change of the 1800s, and the environmental ethic and
movement that developed in the mid-1900s.
3 Public Natural Space, Crown Lands, the Queen’s Domain and the People’s Park

3.1 Introduction

The Queen’s Domain landscape illustrates the relationship between people and natural space in an urban environment. This chapter outlines the history of the area, the definition and boundaries of the park and the historical context in which the space has evolved since the arrival of Europeans in Tasmania. This chapter provides other examples of public natural space, management and use as a point of reference for the Domain.

3.2 The New Colony

Before the British arrived in 1803, the island state of Tasmania was home to multiple Aboriginal nations, each with distinct natural borders (Boyce 2010). After claiming the land for the Crown, the colonists systematically massacred or imprisoned the residents in what is described as a ‘collision of cultures’ (Lehman 2013: 194).

Contact between the Mouheneena and the British was reported from the European perspective as relatively friendly in the area now known as the Domain, but the locals were undeniably expelled from their
cultural landscape (Inspiring Place 2013). The new occupiers established themselves on the western shores of the Derwent River, displaced the local Mouheneena people, and proceeded to create a new network of lines and maps to define the space as their own. Ian Terry (1999), in his comprehensive history of the Domain, cites accounts in the diaries of the colonist Reverend Knopwood of fires lit by the Tasmanian Aboriginals, or Palawa, above Hobart in 1805, 1806, and 1807.

There are at least 21 Aboriginal sites dotted along the Domain foreshore protected under the *Aboriginal Relics Act 1975*. The area now described as the Upper Domain consists predominantly of native grasslands, described as important to the contemporary Aboriginal community for providing, ‘an association between the modified landscape today and the Aboriginal landscape which was sustained in the area for many thousands of years’ (Austral Archaeology 2002: 4).

### 3.3 The Crown’s Land

The Queen’s Domain initially covered roughly 640 acres of native vegetation and cleared land allocated to the Governor of the colony. Some small land parcels within the area were granted to private landholders, however, by 1830 these allocations were resumed following the visit by New South Wales Governor Macquarie who insisted that a vice-regal residence should be more impressive than the existing one. The small promontory of land known as Pavilion Point was considered
an appropriate location for a Governor’s home (Government House pamphlet n.d.).

Although essentially considered private, the land was also part-public reserve, and with the establishment of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens in 1818, the area became more accessible to the public. While work on the new Government House did not begin in earnest until 1853 and was not completed until 1858, the land officially belonged to the Crown, and the Governor of the day could grant or restrict access to the land as he saw fit.

The name ‘Government Domain’ was used to describe land attached to the residence of the Governor and, hence, national purposes. However, in the Australian context, the colonists chose to interpret this area as ‘commons’, and so the public assumed a proprietary attitude towards the Domain (Terry 1999). The land was frequently used as a public reserve and it was greatly valued by early Hobart residents as much of the land at that time was alienated to the water’s edge, offering few opportunities for public recreation (de Gryse 1996).

3.4 The People’s Paddock

The perception of the Domain as public space took hold early in the colonial timeline, despite the granting of leases for quarrying, timber getting and grazing, the profits from which went directly to the Governor or the colony’s coffers.
The concept of inalienable land renders its ownership non-transferrable. The declaration of the Queen’s Domain as inalienable land in 1858 secured its status as belonging to everyone and no-one. The gift of the Domain to the people of Hobart was described as ‘required compensation for the despondency associated with living in a penal colony,’ *(Mercury* 1992: 11). Tasmanians quickly exerted a sense of ownership over and interest in the public space, fondly calling it ‘the Paddock’ *(Mercury* 1918: 3).

In 1917, the 476 acres of the Domain were vested to the Hobart City Council, *(Terry* 1999) while the 2013 Domain Master Plan applies to just over 568 acres *(Inspiring Place* 2013). In the early 1900s, reports indicate that the Hobart City Council was prepared to countenance all proposals for the use of the Domain in so far as it appeared to serve a public purpose.
3.5 Domain Name

The public space has variously been known as the Government Domain, Government Paddock, Queen’s Park, (Terry 1999) Queen’s Domain or Queens Domain (as mapping conventions exclude the use of apostrophes) (Lennard 2015), People’s Paddock, the Paddock and the People’s Park (Mercury 1936:6). The homosexual community refers to it as the Queen’s Domain, but in this case ‘Queen’ is slang for a homosexual man (Punch 2011). What is now known as the Domain was formerly the land of the Mouheneener. As the Tasmanian Aboriginal convention does not use capital letters for place names, in the contemporary context the area is referred to as the domain (Sculthorpe 2015).
3.6 The Regatta Matter

The promontory now named Pavilion Point was originally called Regatta Point after the public holiday and aquatic carnival day patronised by Governor Sir John and Lady Jane Franklin to commemorate the discovery of Tasmania by Abel Tasman (Bowes 1998). Now the site of Government House, the land adjoining the water has been dissected and subsumed by the approach roads and infrastructure of the Tasman Bridge connecting the eastern and western shores of the Derwent River.

Since 1838, Regatta Day has been celebrated annually on 1 December, except for two occasions. Organisers hoped the recreation day would help diffuse social tension with healthy outdoor activities in keeping with the Victorian parks principle. Despite the gripes of the editorials, Hobart Regatta Day proved to be roaring success. Initially, the event was criticised by the newspaper True Colonist as frivolous and inappropriate, ‘The paper disapproved of “respectable” people mixing with social inferiors and of amusements that were not “conducive to the morals and interests in a young colony”,’ (Bowes 1998:22).

However, the prevailing class conflict or scorn of authority by the lower orders of the new Hobart society was not greatly alleviated. In 1841, when Governor Franklin tried to restrict the consumption of alcohol due to drunkenness at previous events, the organising committee simply
moved the event to another site in defiance of the perceived attack on freedom (Terry 1999; Bowes 1998). In 1853, Governor Young was not happy with the prospect of the carnival being held in what was shaping up to be his front yard, with the new Government House under construction. However, the Hobart population considered the land very much public property and the resulting compromise saw the Hobart Regatta being moved slightly downstream to Macquarie Point and received the royal seal in 1934 (Bowes1998; Terry 1999).

3.7 Inalienable Domain

In 1858, the new Tasmanian Parliament declared Hobart’s Domain inalienable land to be managed by the Minister for Lands. However, in addition to the land excised for Government House and the Botanical Gardens, the building now known as Domain House was set aside for a high school, which then in 1890 became the first site of the University of Tasmania. Despite its inalienable status, significant incursions by individuals and entities have occurred, treating it as a source of resources for the colony and a public space within which they could recreate and dwell, both with and without authorisation (Terry 1999).

3.8 Vanished Visitors

Government House, the Botanical Gardens and war monuments that have been in situ since the late 1800s remain. However, some notable Domain residents have left no trace. From 1894-95 the Tasmanian Exhibition occupied a fabulously ornate temporary building that was
completely disassembled on the close of the exhibition (*Mercury* 1895: 2).

During the 1920s and 1930s in the days of the Depression, desperate families camped on the Domain with the blessing of the land managers and fellow citizens, until the tide of opinion turned against them and sympathy for their plight was replaced by a desire to have the space restored as unoccupied. There is no trace of Thomas Edgecock and his large family (reports vary from nine to eleven family members) who lived in three tents for more than a year commencing in 1920, when they could no longer afford their rent in Battery Point during an acute housing shortage in the city (*Mercury* 1920: 5). Edgecock was difficult to move on and made several court appearances as the authorities tried to evict him from the Domain, taking a stand on behalf of waterside workers who were committed to living on the Domain in tents during the ‘house famine’ of the early 1920s (*Advertiser* 1921: 6).

### 3.9 Dirty Deeds

The Domain has been a setting for crimes and misdemeanors, such as the flight of Parsons and Johnson who absconded from their prison gang working on the Domain in 1912 (*Daily Telegraph* 1912: 6). The Domain was a go-to source of firewood for illicit wood hookers, such as tent-dweller Thomas Rooke who was charged by police with taking wood that had been cut for the train engines that skirted the boundaries of the park. Rooke explained to the court that the theft occurred as a
result of a lapse in judgment from a knock on the head in his youth that caused him to take fits. Police Magistrate E.W. Turner declared in response, ‘You may take fits, but you must not take firewood,’ (*Mercury* 1921:6).

The illegal cattle grazers are long gone, but crime and upheaval is a consistent theme throughout the history of the Domain. Newspapers report stories of murders, thieves escaped and apprehended, absconded prisoners, vagrancy, cars stolen and burnt, and deaths on the level railway crossing adjacent to the Domain. There are reports of children being approached by strange adults in play areas, and sexual assault is a recurring theme across many decades.

### 3.10 Loyal to the Royals

While the Domain became very much the People’s Paddock, the initial association with the Crown endured. Visiting members of the Royal family were received and cheered by their adoring Tasmanian subjects during carriage drives around through the park. Monarchs spanning the reigns of Victoria, Edward VII, George VI and Elizabeth II have all had their birthdays and benevolence celebrated on the Domain. The death of Queen Victoria and celebrations of Federation of Australia both took place in grand style on the Domain in 1901 (*Daily Telegraph* 1901: 2).
The Soldiers Memorial, an avenue of cedars and Italian Cyprus trees cultivated from the original trees planted to honour Tasmanian soldiers, has been tended by families and volunteers since 1918. Each Anzac Day, fallen soldiers from all wars are remembered at the Cenotaph at dawn (Friends of Soldiers Walk Inc 2004).

3.11 The Last Tiger

Undoubtedly the Domain’s most famous occupant was the last captive Thylacine (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*). The striped-backed marsupial was held at the Beaumaris Zoo, a parcel of land that was granted by the then managers of the land, Hobart City Council, to relocate the private collection of animals after the death of the private zookeeper Mary Roberts. At the Domain site the menagerie grew from predominately native birds and animals to include lions, bears, zebras and polar bears (Evans and Jones 1996). Visitors flocked to watch the very last of a species’ frustrated pacing in its prison on the Domain before its death in 1936. The Beaumaris Zoo site remains undeveloped, but the associated quarters such as the zookeeper’s cottage remain intact and in use (Austral Archaeology 2002).

3.12 Loyalty to the Domain

It becomes clear when reading newspapers dating back to 1816 that Tasmanian residents, even beyond the south, have held a fierce commitment to the land remaining as public space. Suggestions of carving out land for quarries, sporting grounds, even an extension to
the University, have been met with vocal criticism articulated through the press, as detailed in Chapter Five. Many such proposals have progressed none-the-less. For example, the Domain has for many years been the site of the Tasmanian cricket ground and athletics fields, which have attracted controversy within their own context (Terry 1999).

3.13 Many and Varies Uses

As the Domain represents a healthy parcel of seemingly ‘free’ land close to the city, it has occasionally been suggested as a solution to Hobart’s urban challenges. Parking shortages, traffic congestion and repeated calls for a new hospital have prompted proposals that the Domain land be used to accommodate such pressing needs. As recently as 2014, the proposal for a new hospital site on the Domain filled the pages of the newspapers (Mercury 2014a: 1,4; 2014b: 1, 8-9).

Many and varied uses of the land filled advertising space and letters pages; public ceremonies, royal visits, tree planting exercises, musical events and visiting circuses. Less popular was the proposal in 1900 to house a quarantine station there during a Bubonic plague outbreak (Mercury 1900: 4). The presence of soapboxes for allegedly seditious statements by Communists in 1932 was also written about disparagingly (Examiner 1932: 8).

The Domain was the home to the coastal wireless station built to provide radio communication for Douglas Mawson’s Australasian
Antarctic Expedition from 1911 to 1914. The coastal wireless station, listed as nationally significant due to its association with the Mawson expedition, continues to transmit as voluntary Tas Maritime Radio, monitoring distress signals and broadcasting weather forecasts (Austral Archaeology 2002).

3.14 The Domain in the Twentieth Century

Following the World War II, Hobartians enjoyed a relatively happy co-existence with the area and its land managers, the Hobart City Council. In 1972, a pattern of consultation around land use and stewardship began with requests for input into the management plans occurring approximately every ten years (Sunday Tasmanian 1972; Lennard 2015).

3.15 Silent Visitors

In addition to the original Tasmanian Aboriginal residents, there are other communities that have made use of the Domain as a public space that go virtually unmentioned in the mainstream press. Homosexuality was a criminal act in Tasmania until 1997 when sex between consenting men was decriminalised (Croome 2006). Prior to this, along with criminality, the stigma attached to being gay drove men into dark places to practice their sexuality. The Domain was a recognisably important place in Hobart for men to go to meet in relative privacy and in a pleasant environment, and hence this
community’s gift of new meaning to the title ‘Queen’s Domain’ (Punch 2011, Croome 2016).

3.16 The Monarch’s Gift: Port Meadow and Wolvercote Common

To put the concept of land as a gift by a monarch into some context, it is appropriate to look at a similar example. Port Meadow is 342 acres of common land on the north-western edge of the city of Oxford. Bordered by the River Thames, Wolvercote Common, Wolvercote Green and Binsey Green are connected, with boundaries defined by ditches and the occasional marker.

Originally known as Portmaneit, the area is famously mentioned in the Domesday Book, 1086 (Oxford City Council 2014) in which it is recorded that King Alfred granted the land to Freeman to graze cattle and horses for a nominal fee. To this day, the Freeman, a privileged class of local residents, have had the sole right to make a profit from the use of the pastures and waterways. Port Meadow is now a registered Site of Special Scientific Interest due to the fact that it has never been ploughed. Walking trails and towpaths line the river, boating is a regular pastime, as is skating in the winter when the meadow floods and the river freezes over (Hibbert 1988).
According to the Freemen of Oxford, this title was allocated in feudal times to, ‘a man possessing the full privileges and immunities of a city, borough or trade gild to which admission was usually by birth, apprenticeship, gift or purchase,’ (Freemen of Oxford n.d). Yet, since the land was allocated to the community of privileged grazers, there have been numerous points at which contest has arisen over Port Meadow and the surrounding commons.

In 1970, 210 Freemen were registered as having rights to Port Meadow, sharing pasture for not more than 700 animals. They had no
right to the turf or soil below the herbage (Hibbert 1988). In 2015, this ancient body still observes strict criteria regarding entitlement to the Freeman credentials, and continues to exercise the right to graze on Port Meadow, which is a right that cannot be assigned to another party other than by the action of the General Committee (Freemen of Oxford n.d).

3.15.2 Shifting Boundaries

Port Meadow was larger by approximately 150 acres than the current boundaries encompass. The ‘Map of Port Meadow’ drawn in 1695 by Benjamin Cole, which includes the adjoining Wolvercote Common and Wolvercote Green, indicated ‘439 Acres 1 Rood and 30 Perches of Land’.

Over many hundreds of years, the tug of war over authority and management has played out between the Freeman and Oxford City Council. In the 1500s, disputes arose over the leasing of rights to non-Freeman, while in the 1700s the Freemen defeated an attempt by the city to sell a portion of the land to clear its debts.

The Council had previously represented the Freemen on the matter of management, however in 1835 the Municipal Corporations Act determined that while the Freemen had rights to the pastures, the Council had ownership over the soil. Thus, no longer able to act purely as their representative, the council established Port Meadow
Committees with attendant Freemen. The tension between council and Freemen continued, relating to the occasional leasing of land and the contentious appointment of a non-Freeman sheriff in 1836 (University of London Institute of Historical Research 1979). Papers reflect frustration with the fact that the land is managed by the Council, yet the benefit and profit of the pastures return solely to the Freemen. Even the selling of beverages on the green during the many horse and skating races could only by undertaken by ticketed Freemen (Port Meadow Committee 1855). Booths and grandstands erected by the city corporation for the races were ardently opposed by the Freemen. Across the centuries, sheriffs ensured that those who did not enjoy the rights of access to the pasture would have their animals removed and incur a fine.

On two occasions in the 1850s a portion of the meadow was sold to Great Western Railway. During World War II, a corner of Port Meadow was used as a landing strip, and garden allotments were begrudgingly granted by the Freemen for use by non-commoners, which continued up to the 1960s. In 1970, management of the land was assumed by the City Council of Oxford. The council operated a rubbish disposal site on the meadow, resulting in a regular flow of garbage trucks across the land for several decades (Hibbert 1988; Oxford City Council 2014).
3.15.3 Wolverine Common

Wolvercote Common is visibly separated from Port Meadow by a post marker engraved with the words “WOLVERCOTE COMMON AND PARISH BOUNDARY 1899 D COLLETT CHAIRMAN OF PARISH COUNCIL”. In contrast to the Freemen’s tenure over Port Meadow, Wolvercote Commoners enjoy access to the space purely by virtue of living in the community that fringes the meadows and also enjoy some rights over Port Meadow.

The Wolvercote Commoners Association members are active on issues such as local transport, childcare and development. However, the greater focus of their purpose relates to the natural area, its heritage and the manner in which it is used, shared and managed (Wolvercote Commoners Association n.d.). In a letter of welcome to new Commoners, the Association proudly declares:

One of the unusual features of Wolvercote is the tenacity of Wolvercote people in fighting to preserve their heritage. Almost throughout recorded history there have been attempts to enclose, purchase, or build upon our commons. The Commoners’ Committee’s predecessors fought major legal battles to maintain their rights in 1553, 1649, 1762, and 1843. In 1892, an attempt to reduce Wolvercote Common by a few feet along its southern
boundary led to an outbreak of physical violence now known as ‘The Battle of Wolvercote’ (Wolvercote Commoners Association n.d.)

Like the Domain, the residents surrounding Wolvercote Common are an active and engaged community group.

3.15.4 **The Dreaming Spires of Oxford**

![Figure 2: The Prospect of Oxford from the North](image)

Figure 2: ‘The Prospect of Oxford from the North’, detail from ‘A Map of Port Meadow’ Cole, 1695 Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

The protectiveness over the natural space adjoining the City of Oxford is not limited to utilitarian values, such as grazing, harvesting and access. Since 2012, the Oxford University and the Oxford City Council
have been embroiled in conflict over the construction of the Caste Mill student accommodation. Built on an old railway marshalling area on the edge of the city, public outrage ensued when the structures created a visual barrier between the commons and the city of Oxford, in particular, the famed ‘dreaming spires’ and rooflines of Oxford University.

A campaign by the Save Port Meadow group, supported by high profile Oxford academics and alumni, has resulted in the council considering removing the tops floors of the buildings, incurring millions of dollars in costs and forcing students out of the accommodation (Osborne 2015). The buildings were described by then British Planning Minister Nick Boles as ‘…one of the worst examples of a planning proposal I’ve seen and one of the worst examples of modern design that I’ve seen,’ (BBC News 2014). The dispute has thrown residents, students, the student union, university staff and planning officers into a pitched battle that remained unresolved at the end of 2015.

3.17 Conclusion

The history of the Queen’s Domain and the parallel cases of Port Meadow and Wolvercote Common illustrate how, when land is allocated as public space, the public will claim that space as their own. This will result in discourse, and sometimes action, in opposition to the authorities’ choices in management. In instances of conflict or commentary on the impact of management decisions over public
natural space, news media has played an important role in disseminating the content of the discourse to the broader community to take the conversation into the public sphere.
4 Methods and Approach

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methods employed in this study, the approach to data collection and the parameters of the study. This will also explore the rational behind the Queen’s Domain as the case study, and methods of analysis.

4.2 The Queen’s Domain and Debate over Public Natural Space

The Queen’s Domain provides an excellent opportunity for studying relationships between people and nature. Soon after the establishment of the British colony in Tasmania, the Domain was recognised as a natural space accessible by the public. The history of the parks movement and the historical context of natural space within close proximity of the urban populations, explained in Chapter Two, provides the setting for a localised example of public natural space and the discourse relating to the Domain.

In a contemporary context, the Domain remains largely intact both in terms of its boundaries and in its use. Hobart City Council management plans chronicle the changing theory behind the treatment and maintenance of this public natural space since the commencement of the formal management planning process in 1972.
(Lennard 2015). This provides valuable background material about the management and use of space over time.

### 4.3 News Texts as Data

This study explores the shift in attitudes relating to public natural space over time, so by accessing news texts that began publication soon after European arrival in Tasmania (then named Van Diemen’s Land), it is possible to conduct a longitudinal study of engagement with the Domain. Unlike news broadcast through radio and television, newspapers have been published daily, sometimes twice daily, from soon after the formation of the colony in 1803. Consequently, news texts form the main source of material for this study.

When the Tasmanian colony was first established, and continuing into the late 1800s, numerous newspapers were in publication. Those that have provided data on the Domain in this study include the *Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter*, *Southern Australia*, *Colonial Times*, the *Courier*, *Cornwall Chronicle*, *Hobart Town Daily Mercury*, *Launceston Examiner*, the *Advocate* and the *Sunday Tasmanian*. From outside of Tasmania articles on the Domain were sourced from the *Argus of Melbourne*, and *Daily Herald, Advertiser* and *Chronicle*, all published in South Australia. By the late 1800s, the number of publications had reduced and the main news publications that ran stories about the Domain were the *Mercury*, the *Sunday Tasmanian*
and the *Examiner*. By the mid-1900s, the *Mercury* and associated *Sunday Tasmanian* were the only locally produced source of print news in the south of the state, where most of the Tasmanian population is concentrated and where the Queen’s Domain is located. Consequently, articles about the Domain sourced from the *Mercury* dominate the data in number and content. The diminishing list of publications in the 1900s limits the scope for an inter-source analysis of the role and influence of particular newspapers in this thesis.

Images, either hand drawn and photographs, were rarely used in the early publications of newspapers. Collection and analysis of imagery has not been undertaken in this study as the inconsistent use could undermine the longitudinal consistency of the data. However, some images have been included to assist the reader in visualising the Domain as a public natural space.

**4.3.1 Sourcing Newspaper Texts as Data**

Bell (1991: 10) observes the need to make clear and consistent delineation of exactly what is to be collected, as well as limiting the amount of data to be collected to manageable proportions while also ensuring that it remains representative. The databases that were accessed to obtain the news texts are listed below according to the source and the years for which texts were available:

- 1848-1952 — Trove
- 1955-1965 — Data gap
1966-1997 — The Mercury on microfilm

1998-1915 — Newsbank

2013-2015 — Mercury online

4.3.2 1848-1952 — Trove

Trove, the digital database maintained by the National Library of Australia, is an extensive archive of Australian newspaper resources. Using the key words ‘Queen’s Domain Hobart’ in a Trove search yielded 37,430 articles between the 1816 and 1994. Many of the texts were not relevant to the Queen’s Domain in Hobart, but drew in anything containing those key words.

By refining the search to the phrase ‘Queen’s Domain’ and the word ‘Hobart’, the yield reduced to 7,103 articles from 1848 to 1993. All of the articles delivered in the search summary were relevant to the Queen’s Domain in Hobart. The Hobart-based publication, the Mercury, is not digitised beyond 1954, so the articles retrieved consisted only of a small number of items from non-Tasmanian publications. This research is not exclusive to Tasmanian publications, however the local nature of the newsworthiness of the Domain (Galtung and Holmboe Ruge 1965) explains the decrease in articles in non-local publications after 1954.
4.3.3 1955-1965 — Data Gap

These news texts are available only on microfilm, which precludes key word searches. This project conducted an examination of data between 1955 and 1967, manually reading 3872 newspapers to detect the word ‘Domain’ in the title or body of the article. As few results were yielded, casting doubts on the effectiveness of this type of search method, this time frame has been excluded from the study. Future studies of the Domain could explore the missing eleven-year period currently not examined in this project.

4.3.4 1966-1997 — The Mercury on microfilm

This set of data consisted of electronically saved and printed copies of articles stored on microfilm that appeared in the Mercury between 1966 and 1997.

4.3.5 1998-2015 — Newsbank

News texts between 1998 and 2011 were acquired through a search of the Newsbank service. By this time in the collection period, news texts of the Domain are exclusively published by The Mercury.

4.3.6 2013-2015 — The Mercury Online and Print

For this period, texts were collected from online and print sources. Articles that appear in print may or may not appear in electronic versions of the publications, and articles that appear on in both formats may differ slightly. For example, Letters to the Editor are not
published online, but will appear in print. Instead, online articles invite comments from readers moderated by the online editorial staff.

4.4 Managing Newspaper Texts as Data

News texts accessed comprise of the following types of text:

- News reports,
- Letters to the editor,
- Editorials and opinion pieces,
- Advertisements,
- Public notices,
- Transcripts and accounts of parliamentary proceedings.

The majority of articles raised in the searches were advertisements or public notices. As this study focuses on news items reflecting contention or public discourse relating to the Domain items that did not reflect such content were set aside, thus significantly reducing the number of news texts gathered.

A spreadsheet was developed for all texts accessed; recording the year, day, name of the publication, title of the article, author (where recorded), date of access, URL at which the article may be found, and summary of the content. The spreadsheet records 545 pieces that relate to the Queen’s Domain and reflect contention or contest over the use and/or management of the area ranging between the years of
1816 and 2015. The news texts and details of their sources appear in the appendix.

The two-century span of the texts collected meant that a simple coding and counting method (Hansen and Machin 2013) would not accommodate the changing methods of communication and shifts in cultural context. Applying codes across two centuries risked becoming restrictive in its scope for meaningful analysis, so themes were identified and articles given a category to help reveal patterns in discourse.

4.5 Historical Points of Significance as Guides

Data was grouped into categories based on a textual analysis of significant cultural and political events, identified in news texts and management plans.

The data has been divided into three time blocks:
• 1816 to 1901 (European colonisation of Tasmania to Federation),
• 1902 to 1949 (Federation to just after World War II),
• 1950 to 2015 (post-World War II to the present).

These time frames were chosen because they suggest critical shifts in the historical identity of Australia and Tasmania, and the changing relationship with England. The two earlier punctuation points —
Federation and two major wars — represent maturation of the nation and an emerging national identity. Significant state-based environment conflicts are included to indicate Tasmanian engagement in the modern environmental debate.

4.6 Temporal Discourse Analysis

Discourse is considered to live within the social domain, (Kress 1985, Wodak and Myer 2001) and in this study of newspapers and print media spanning two hundred years, discourse plays out in texts moderated to influence messages.

This thesis draws – yet does not rely – on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) for analysis of news texts. CDA is a method employed for the analysis the expression of ideas, values and opinions (van Dijk 1985). By analysing the content of the text it is possible to chart patterns and consistencies in media reporting of the subject across three centuries. It also allows for identification and classification of social actors, the power they wield within the social context, and the way in which they may shape the critical discourse of the day (Hanson and Machin 2013, Wodak and Myer 2001). CDA is used as a point of reference in this study when examining the construction of news and relationships between language and power, agenda-setting, social relations and political discourse (Fairclough 1995; 2001).
Given that social dialogue found media such as newspapers is potentially exclusive to persons sufficiently educated and confident to engage in public discourse, there will be important voices absent. This weakness has been overcome by seeking interviews with participants known to be engaged in the discourse, yet missing from the news pages (Lester 2010).

Critical Discourse Analysis offers a useful tool in this study, however in light of its shortcomings, specifically, a lack of cohesion (Hansen and Machin 2013), this research follows the method described by Anabela Carvalho as a time-sensitive discourse analysis ‘considering the particular context of a given period, from specific events and developments related to the issue under examination to wider aspects of the social environment’ (Carvalho 2008: 5).

This need for observation of changes in social norms and the role of the media is critical to noting the development in the social discourse over the centuries under consideration. Tasmania’s beginnings as a penal colony under the rule of Queen Victoria in the grip of the Industrial Revolution, through to the contemporary scene of the global cultural economy and digital communication, must be taken into consideration when discussing the relationship between people and public natural space in this study. Carvalho (2000: 4) observes that critical discourse moments will, with time and repetition, fragment to transform into a discursive construction of issues and themes.
Drawing on this concept, this study uses the term ‘discourse moments’ over the more prescriptive ‘critical discourse moments’, adopting a critical reading of texts to analysis the engagement with the natural space through news texts (Carvalho 2000).

The account of the interface between media and environment (Cottle 1993; 2006; Lester 2010) and the observations of the commencement of the environment movement in a contemporary context (Eder 1996; Hay 2002) map the historical line between active campaigning for a landscape, and what may have previously been simply considered civic engagement. This pertains to the fact that news data charting the debate over the Queens’ Domain as public space predated the recognised start of the environment movement by at least one century.

Media framing (Lester 2010: 76), and the components of newsworthiness also have application in this study; frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity and composition (Galtung and Holmboe Ruge 1965).

Newspapers are valuable records of changing attitudes towards public natural space, as reinforced in a study of the influence of writers’ and journalists’ public attitude towards the Australian environment in the late 1800s to the mid 1900s (Meadows and Thomson 2013). This also
captures a sociocognitive approach in which social representations play a vital role in conducting CDA (van Dijk 2001).

The 545 news items studied to track the emergence of a trend, in a semi-quantitative fashion, allow for the classification and representation of social actors, and analysis of language, including the absence or presence of ideology within the texts.

4.7 Interviews

The nature of news texts is such that there will be actors not represented, despite a close association with the public natural space being examined. Through historical research, the study identifies key players and voices that are not represented through the media, so interviews have been conducted to seek insight into their engagement with the Domain. To obtain more information relating to these less visible communities, three interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach (Hansen and Machin 2013) with Greg Milne, Visitor Services Manager of the Bushland Reserves Unit at the Hobart City Council, and Rodney Croome, a leader of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered community. An interview was also sought and agreed to by Andry Sculthorpe, Cultural Project Officer of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, which was conducted via email exchange.

4.8 Port Meadow and Wolvercote Common
As it is helpful to examine the Queen’s Domain as a case study in a
global and historical context, a study of Port Meadow and Wolvercote
Common was undertaken. Research relating to Port Meadow and
Wolvercote Common consisted of:

- Online news text searches,
- Review of original documents and maps at the Bodleian Library,
  University of Oxford,
- Review of literature at the Oxford Municipal Library,
- Direct observation of Port Meadow and Wolvercote Common,
- Review of council submissions and reports at the Oxfordshire
  Council Chambers, Oxford.

These documents provided valuable insight into the historical use and
conflicts over these natural areas.

4.9 Conclusion

Using the approach and methods outlined above, this thesis aims to
explore the discourse narrative as revealed through news texts
referencing the Queen’s Domain. The Domain as a case study offers a
temporal view of the relationship between people and nature, and the
use of CDA as an analytical tool allows for inquiry into the social
context in which the discourse takes place. In doing so, the thesis will
investigate the human relationship with public natural space and the
motivations for engaging in critical discourse over landscape.
5 Queen’s Domain in the News

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the news texts collected and identifies the major discourse features reflected in the newspaper items. This analysis draws out the points of contention relating to use and management issues. To assist in locating the discourse in the context of these time frames, each section includes a brief summary of key events derived from the reading of news texts, management plans and other articles described in Chapter Four. Articles are referenced in full.

5.2 Discourse Moments: 1841 to 1900

5.2.1 Summary of Events

Pre-1803  Traditional land of the Mouheneena people
1803  European arrival in Hobart
1818  Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens established
1821  Governor Macquarie selects the site for the Governor’s residence
1830s  Sandstone quarrying using convict labour to build Government House
1841  Queen’s Battery built to defend Hobart from sea attack
1848-49  Domain House constructed for the High School of Hobart Town
1850-51  Domain Powder Magazine (H.M. Victoria Gunpowder magazine) built
1853    England ends of transportation of convicts to Van Diemen’s Land
1855    Van Diemen’s Land renamed Tasmania
1853-58  Government House constructed in Victorian Gothic style
1856    Proposal for the Queen’s Domain to become a ‘people’s park’ by Mayor of Hobart
1858    New Parliament of Tasmania’s declares the Queen’s Domain (640 acres) ‘inalienable land’
1882    Tasmanian Cricket Association home ground established including Tasmanian Pavilion and Ladies’ Stand
1889    Queen’s Domain Committee formed to manage the area under an Act of the Tasmanian Parliament
1890    University of Tasmania established in Domain House
1891    Quarry sites restored using prison gangs
1894-95  Tasmanian Exhibition
1901    Federation of Australia
5.2.2 News of the Day

The newspapers in this era performed the role of the parliamentary record, Hansard (Parliament of Australia 2015). All parliamentary procedures were reported in the daily newspapers, including the listing of bills in the House of Assembly and Legislative Council, first, second and third reading speeches and questions to ministers.

Consequently, throughout 1858 there is significant column space given to the listing, acceptance and subsequent amendment to the Queen’s Domain and Launceston Swamp Bill, which were moved to render the land at the Queen’s Domain and East Launceston as inalienable otherwise by the special authority of the Parliament of Tasmania. The debate and comment accompanying these texts asserted the value of parks for the benefit and recreation of citizens (Hobart Town Daily Mercury 8 March, 1858: 3).

The news texts studied reflected the fledgling nature of the new colony and the population’s aspirations to achieve the civilised standards of England, reporting praise for road building (The Courier 8 November 1853: 2), and ‘improvement’ by prison laborers who removed stones and leveled the ground (Mercury 16 June 1881: 3).
5.2.3 Resource Source

The Domain as a source of raw materials appears in a variety of contexts. The cutting of trees, outlawed by the Governor in 1816 (The Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter 17 August, 1816: 1), was renewed in 1872 under the auspices of the Director of Public Works, (The Cornwall Chronicle 19 November, 1872: 4) who allowed the cutting of wood from the Domain for the construction of seats for children at an upcoming Prince’s reception at the Regatta Grounds.

In 1861, Martin McDonald was found asleep in the hollow of a tree he had burnt out of desperation due to his inability to gain work (Mercury 11 July, 1861:2). The wood found lying around him may have been a potential source of income or the result of a violent act, but either way, cutting wood was a punishable offence.

The government not only controlled and limited the removal of timber, it also regulated quarrying and grazing of stock. Even though the Domain was declared inalienable land in 1858, quarrying on the Domain was an established and controlled activity, with stone being used to build government buildings and offices. However, the Domain Improvement Committee, charged with guiding the maintenance of the Domain, perceived the activity as a form of alienation and greeted the reopening of quarries in 1891 to obtain metal for road works with fierce criticism. The Minister for Lands, who held greater authority,
argued strongly and convincingly that the quarry would be an improvement to the Domain, and the Committee had no right to stand in the way of the beautification of both Hobart and the Domain (Mercury 9 October, 1891: 3).

Another resource-based activity that enjoyed significant column space over this time frame was the grazing of stock. Newspaper texts feature classified advertisements for grazing licenses from the mid-1860s and cautions that anyone caught grazing cattle without a license would be fined and have their stock impounded (Mercury 30 August, 16 June, 1864: 1), up to the declaration of the cessation of grazing in 1881 (Mercury 16 June, 1881: 3). General news items included editorialisation regarding the clash between recreation and commercial grazing arrangements, including one in which two young ladies ‘received a severe fright through being chased by a couple of bullocks’ being driven through the Domain (Mercury 17 July, 1869: 2).

5.2.4 Inalienable Land

By the late 1880s — three decades after the declaration of the Domain as inalienable land — discreet excisions had been made. The news texts examined did not account for the reasoning behind such modifications to the unallocated nature of the public natural space, but one consistent theme is that each is associated with a public use, such as the high school and the sports fields.
Texts examined reflected a strong sense of ownership of the public space, demonstrated by correspondents’ passionately expressed views. A critic of the proposal to erect fences around the sporting grounds and the exclusive use of the Domain wrote, ‘...the day will come when those who are now desirous of alienating the Domain piecemeal will regret their efforts in that direction,’ (Mercury 1 August, 1885: 3). In his Letter to the Editor directly addressing Dr Agnew, a member of the Domain Improvement Committee, correspondent William Finlay queried, ‘Can he say that he has never heard of the complaints, both loud and deep, against this most scandalous monopoly by a private association ...’ (Mercury 20 July, 1885: 4). In this way, the newspapers became vehicles for unofficial public submissions regarding the management of the public space.

General news reporting covered the scope of antisocial acts that took place on the Domain, including assault, suicide, unlawful cutting of trees by young boys and the capture of absconding prisoners. One Constable Linsky features as the law enforcement officer frequently on hand to intercept offenders over what must have been a busy decade of police service (Mercury 11 July, 1861: 2, 10 November, 1868: 2, 4 November 1871: 2).

The Domain also acted as a gathering place for those wishing to petition the Governor in an early version of workers agitating for
better employment opportunities and conditions (Mercury 23 November, 1865: 3).

Recreation activities, picnics for children, circuses and general events were advertised then reported later in glowing terms. Sunday school outings, outings for the ‘ragged school’ orphans and public holiday events were recorded favorably, reflecting the purpose of the Domain as a place for public recreation and leisure. In an 1871 edition of the Mercury (also advertising the sale of the newly released autobiography Martin Cash, Adventures of a Bushranger), is a call for tenders for construction of public baths (Mercury 4 November, 1871: 1). The baths, when completed, became the site for public baptisms (Mercury 16 March, 1889: 3).

As previously mentioned, the circumstance in which news moderation was less evident was in the publishing of proceedings of the Tasmanian Parliament. Here, in the absence of an official Hansard service, debates were at times recorded verbatim and speakers attributed. In December 1872, the discussion over the leasing by the Ministry of portions of the Domain for the Main Line Railway Act Amendment Bill (20) was both extensive and heated.

The reports indicate that in the very final days of government, the previous ministry had granted a lease for a station and holding area for the new rail line on portions of the Domain without putting this
before the Parliament (*Mercury* 21 December, 1872: 2; 18 December, 1872: 2). Some members of the Parliament objected that the giving away of land was unconstitutional, and others condemned the alienation of the recreational space.

Dr Crowther condemned the letting of the Domain for the railway line as it was considered ‘for all time to be a recreation ground for the citizens’, and in the same debate Mr Swan was so astonished at changes to the Act of Parliament required to allow the railway line in the Domain; ‘He could only ascribe it to the insanity that precedes destruction.’ Similarly Mr Grubb feared that the ‘people would awake when it was too late to find that they had been deprived of their pleasure ground,’ (*Mercury* 18 December, 1872: 2).

**5.2.5 Land Management Under Fire**

The 1870s witnessed further agitation to take the management out of the hands of the State Parliament, questioning the credentials of the Director of Public Works in parks management. One editorial piece states the desire to see the Domain ‘opened up more freely by new drives, some fine commanding spots and pretty views being at present only accessible to pedestrians’ (*Mercury* 14 May, 1873: 2). The Hobart City Council is suggested as a better-equipped land manager, willing to shoulder the expense of beautifying the Domain by, for example, removing the rugged boulders disfiguring the space, and sculpting the landscape to fit the aesthetic of the day.
By the 1880s, the Royal Society were invested in the management of the Domain, and the *Mercury* acts as a vehicle for public lobbying of the Minister of Lands on matters of maintenance, management practices and improvement. A paper written and read to the Royal Society by E J Crouch was published (*Mercury* 16 June, 1881: 3), offering opinion and inviting debate on the subject beyond the confines of the Society and into the public realm.

From 1894 to 1895 an impressive and, in keeping with the inalienable nature of the Domain, impermanent structure was built to house the Tasmanian International Exhibition. The site covered 13 hectares and the Exhibition Centre, housing a concert hall with grand organ and two art galleries, included exhibits sponsored by Russia, France and India. (*Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser* 10 March, 1894: 493) The magnificent building was removed in 1895 at the close of the Exhibition, without commentary considering the merits of retaining it for future use (*Mercury* 1 July, 1895: 2). Despite high public attendance, the Hobart Exhibition lost money due to unexpectedly low participation by other countries, so the pressure to return money to creditors possibly contributed to the dismantling and resale of the Exhibition Centre materials (*Age* 7 May, 1895: 5).
By the 1890s, news coverage largely reflected an orderly running of affairs in the Domain, although one report mentions the Defence Department’s uneasiness at the length of the grass there, (*Tasmanian News* 12 May, 1892: 2) and the issue of quarrying continued to excite passion among readers and letter writers.

### 5.2.6 Birth of a Nation

This time frame ends in anticipation of the dissolution of the Federated League and the inauguration of the Australian Commonwealth. It was from the Queen’s Domain that the shots were fired at midnight on December 31, 1900/January 1 1901 to herald the birth of a new nation (*Mercury* 31 December, 1900: 2). However, this young nation was still enmeshed with Britain and the monarch,
bearing the legacy its unwanted felon population and the decimation of its traditional owners.

5.3 Discourse Moments: 1901 to 1949

5.3.1 Summary of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-1912</td>
<td>Coastal wireless station built to provide radio communication for Mawson’s Antarctic expedition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>World War I begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td><em>Scenery Preservation Act 1915</em> created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Freycinet and Mt Field made into Tasmania’s first reserves, later National Parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Queen’s Domain vested to the Hobart City Council via the <em>Queen’s Domain Vesting Act 1917</em>: 476 acres (after the excising of the Botanical Gardens, Government House, and the University, now Domain House)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>World War II ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Hobart City Council develops Beaumaris Zoo site to house the private collection of Mary Roberts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Beaumaris Zoo officially opened, Curator’s Cottage built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929-39</td>
<td>The Great Depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Beaumaris Zoo in financial difficulties due to the Great Depression,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Death of the last Thylacine in captivity at Beaumaris Zoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Beaumaris Zoo closed and animals disposed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1939 World War II begins
1942 Bandstand moved from zoo location to the Botanical Gardens
1942 Oil tanks constructed on the Domain by the Navy
1943 First Tasman Bridge built
1945 World War II ends

5.3.2 The Domain in the New Tasmania

The jubilant reception of the new nation was followed by somber accounts of the ailing health and subsequent death of Queen Victoria (Mercury 16 May, 1901: 2), with support for the Domain as a site of a monument to the late monarch. Tree planting and similar types of ‘beautification’ were advocated and advertised extensively throughout the columns of the Mercury in the four decades following Federation (Examiner 2 March, 1904: 6; 15 May, 1909: 8; 28 July, 1939: 6; Mercury 22 August, 1934: 3; 23 July, 1937: 7).

Maintaining order, improvements to the quarry and ongoing management of the area were regularly reported up to 1910 and beyond. The proximity of the Hobart Gaol to the Domain made it the first port of call for absconders, including a prisoner by the name of Thomson who was apprehended while ‘perched up a tree’ following his escape from the nearby prison (Mercury 9 April, 1912: 5; Examiner 10 April, 1912: 5).
5.3.3 Vesting Control of the Domain

The dominant discourse of the new century in the context of the Domain relates to the vesting of control and management of the Queen’s Domain from the Tasmanian Government’s Minister of Lands to the Hobart City Council. While this did not take place until 1917, notices of Bills to be introduced appear as early as 1908. In his Letter to the Editor (Mercury 13 July, 1908: 2) the Chairman of the Queen’s Domain Committee, Mr Walch, outlined the need for a dedicated caretaker and sufficient funds for maintenance of the Domain, articulating the perception of neglect under the management of the government.

By 1913, an editorial in the Mercury described the decline of the Domain, from being a ‘picture to behold’ to a state whereby the landscape was denuded through illegal woodcutting and neglect, with remaining vegetation dead or dying (Mercury 7 March, 1913: 7). Support for the transfer of management to the Hobart City Council included members of the Newtown City Council who suggested they would be happy to no longer have to deal with the drunks on the Domain.

The Lord Mayor of Hobart also supported the proposal, noting that while he did not want to convey a vote of no-confidence in the land management efforts of the Queens’ Domain Improvement Committee,
he could see the benefits of having one management authority. The Mayor went so far as to muse about his preference of the Domain as bush country rather than a fancy garden, which he felt interstate visitors would appreciate so close to the city (Mercury 7 March, 1913: 7).

On 22 January 1918, the Mercury reports on a gathering at the Town Hall to mark the handing of control of the Domain from the government to Hobart’s City Council. Of the speeches that were reported on, one noted the satisfaction of the vesting of the Domain to the care of the one public body:

... for the simple reason that it had been the subject of tremendous controversy for many years, to the detriment of the Domain, which had promoted bad feeling undesirable in a small community. (Mercury 23 January, 1918: 3)

The Minister of Land and Works, in conducting the handover, noted that if the citizens did their part in finding the money for the Council to do their job of managing the area, ‘the Domain would prove to be what it had always intended it should be – a people’s park and a credit to the community,’ (Mercury 23 January, 1918: 3). The Minister encouraged citizens of Hobart to, ‘take their hats off to the grand old
men who had reserved the Domain for future generations,’ *(Mercury* 23 January, 1918: 3).

This sentiment would feature as an important part of the discussion in the late 1940s, as pressure for space in the growing population pressed into the boundaries of the People’s Park’.

### 5.3.4 Life Under Canvas

However, there would first be a significant temporary and unplanned incursion on the public space bordering the city. Even before the Great Depression rocked the world, shortages in affordable housing made the Domain a haven for the homeless where they came to build temporary accommodation, such as the large Edgcock family, just one of many families who found themselves living under canvas on the Domain. In 1920, when reports surfaced with regularity in the *Mercury*, the general attitude was one of concern and an urge to assist the needy *(Mercury* 8 October, 1920: 5).

By 1922, by which time the Edgcocks and others had lived on the Domain for two years, the land managers took a different view, requiring temporary residents to obtain permission to camp, pay rent, erect tents in allotted spaces and keep their tents in a sanitary condition *(Examiner* 19 October, 1920: 5). The language of reports and editorials became less charitable and after several years of the Domain as an established campsite, the sentiment was less welcoming:
While Thomas Henry Edgecock, Hobart’s original tent-dweller, was serenely wiling away the morning at his home on the Domain, long discussions were taking place in the city to-day as to the method of bringing about his ejection. The City Council, the body responsible for the government of the Queen’s Domain held a special meeting to discuss the matter, and an interesting and at times heated discussion resulted. *(Examiner* 6 February, 1922: 7)

The Edgecock family became champions for the need for public housing and the furore went all the way to the mainland newspapers and the House of Assembly where the Premier was prevailed upon to offer the necessary police assistance to the Council to carry out the forcible removal of the family. The Premier declined to support the Council, invoking their newfound and full responsibility for the management of the Domain *(Maitland Weekly Mercury* 11 February, 1922: 16).

Two decades later, fee-paying camping was reported again *(Mercury* 15 April, 1943: 4). The Queen’s Domain being partly alienated for accommodation, while albeit using temporary structures, eventually met with dissatisfaction among the general public. The newsworthiness of the outrage made its way to the press where the public could express their anger that their public natural space was
being used for private benefit. The voices heard on this matter were those of journalists and the general public writing Letters to the Editor, but never the Domain’s homeless tent dwellers themselves.

5.3.5 The Beaumaris Zoo

At the same time the Hobart City Council was wrangling with squatters, residents of a different kind were making the Domain their home. An extensive private zoo owned and run by Hobart resident Mary Roberts was passed to her daughter Ida in 1921. Unlike her mother, Miss Ida Roberts had no wish to be a zookeeper and offered the whole collection of animals to the Hobart City Council, which they accepted in 1922. The Domain was decided upon as the most appropriate location and the Beaumaris Zoo moved into purpose-built structures under the care of the zookeeper Mr Albert Reid. Lions, deer, monkeys, a plethora of birds, and many native species were housed here until 1937 when the Council could no longer afford to run it.

Newspapers record the official alienation of land for the Beaumaris Zoo in 1922, and include accounts and advertisements about many festive events and activities that took place at the zoo between 1922 and 1937. Later, the reporting of financial liabilities took precedence over stories of happy days visiting the animals, as general cost-cutting measures were imposed, including lending an elephant to Launceston Zoo and offering a leopard for sale.
The focus on the Thylacine as a significant part of the collection is not conveyed through news articles, and the iconic footage of what is widely considered the last Thylacine in captivity pacing the cell-like corners of the zoo enclosure has gained more fame and significance in recent decades. Historians have since written scathing accounts of the treatment of the animal and how the systematic extinguishing of the species was completed through ignorance and arrogant neglect by the government managers of the zoo (Paddle 2000; Owen 2003). This sentiment is in no way reflected in newspapers of the day, but surfaces in those same publications seventy years later (Mercury 24 January, 1988: 6; Mercury 23 May, 2003: 10; Mercury 2 August, 2003: 9).

5.3.6 The First of Many Hospitals

The first glimpse of the Domain as a site for housing the sick may have been the proposal for the quarantine site for the patients suffering from the bubonic plague in 1900 (Mercury 13 March, 1900: 4). While this was rejected, there would be more tilts at alienating a portion of the Domain for hospitals. In 1936, the idea arose again when the Minister for Health suggested the Domain would make ‘one of the finest positions in the world for such a purpose’, presumably for its natural setting so close to the city centre. However, this prompted a fierce rebuke in the Letters pages by WRC Jarvis of Hobart who proclaimed:
But I would remind the Minister that this is the people’s park for all time, and that Hobart citizens are very jealous of it. Woe betide anyone who would dare to alienate any portion of it. Fifty-five years ago the temper of the people was shown in a practical way, when the Regatta Committee erected a fence around the grandstand in the Domain. A public meeting was held beside the Town Hall, and a motion of protest was carried unanimously. The crowd, instead of dispersing, proceeded to the Domain, and promptly pulled down the fence. Recently the University Council pleaded for a few feet of ground in order to extend its buildings, but it met direct opposition by those who will not allow the people’s rights to be interfered with. (Mercury 23 January 1936: 6)

Jarvis’s reference to the ‘people’s temper’ that had thwarted plans for alienation in the past indicated a fierce loyalty to the natural space and the collective sense of ownership of the public land. Yet the demand for a hospital outweighed the authorities’ fear of the people’s rage; Premier Ogilvie again raised the prospect of the Domain as a hospital site, until insurmountable objection rendered it impossible (Examiner 6 June, 1938: 7). This would not be the last time such a proposal would be mooted, with yet another hospital plan launched —

5.3.7 University Controversy

During the 1940s, newspaper texts hosted discourse over several proposals for alienation of the Domain, including the plan by one entrepreneur to open an ice skating rink, a proposal that was ultimately rejected by the Council (Mercury 6 July, 1948: 2; 26 July, 1948: 3; 28 September, 1948: 1). In 1949, this flurry was eclipsed by the vigorous debate that would ensue over the proposed alienation of more than one hundred acres of the Domain for the construction of a new University of Tasmania campus, adding to the land already excised for the High School that had passed to the university in 1885. A request for the university to build a new campus within the boundaries of the Domain was reported as early as 1918, but had been met with outrage by residents of the neighboring suburb of the Glebe, who claimed that the university was trying to steal land away from the people for the privileged few who could afford higher education (Mercury 22 January, 1918: 6).

In 1949, articles, editorials and Letters to the Editor appeared, expressing the range of support and horror (mostly the latter) at the prospect of Hobart City Council giving the university license to expand further into the Domain:
Now apparently under the influence of its servants it offers 103 acres of the Domain as a site for the university. Such a proposal is an insult to those who reserved the Queen’s Domain for the citizens. (*Mercury* 7 May, 1949: 3)

As well as such doubts about the integrity of the Aldermen, the commentary articulates scorn for the Hobart City Council as land managers, sadness at the loss of green space and outrage at the potential impact on the Tasmanian Cricket Association Ground located on the Domain, which would be absorbed by the proposed increase to the university grounds.

Correspondents assert that the expansion of the university there offered less access to the broader population, indicating that higher education was enjoyed by ‘the pampered few’ (*Mercury* 18 April, 1949: 3), and reallocation of the Domain would exclude residents and undermine the inalienable intent of the tenure of the space (*Mercury* 5 April, 1949: 20). The university authorities were presented as voracious consumers of public space who, ‘would be content with nothing less than entire control of the area,’ (*Mercury* 30 April, 1949: 7).

In a town planning exercise six years earlier it had been stated that five acres of area should be set aside per one thousand residents for recreation, and the Domain was identified as providing the necessary
green space for Hobart’s population of 80,000 (Mercury 9 June, 1943: 6). By 1949, residents expressed the view that this was insufficient for the growing community and the excision of land from the Domain, including the removal of sporting facilities, would leave them wanting.

Arguments raged on the pages and in the council meetings, until one Councilor Osborne put a motion for a poll of Hobart citizens (Mercury 5 April 1949: 20), which was deferred until finally the oft-suggested site at Sandy Bay was agreed upon as the home of the new university buildings. It was decided that the legislative manoeuvres that would be required to change land tenure (and the disruption to the cricketing community) was not worth the trouble, and work commenced at what was previously a rifle range on the new University of Tasmania campus (Examiner 25 June, 1949: 2).
5.4 Discourse Moments: 1950 to 2015

5.4.1 Summary of Events

1950  University Of Tasmania campus under construction at Sandy Bay
1958  Olympic swimming pool on the Domain opened
1964  Current Tasman Bridge built
1970  Domain gunpowder storage retired from use
1970  National Parks and Wildlife Act passed
1972  Lake Pedder flooded
1975 Ore carrier Lake Illawarra hits the Tasman Bridge killing twelve people
1997 Refurbished Aquatic Centre opened
1982 Franklin River blockade begins
1993 Decommissioning of HMAS Huon
1997 Refurbishment of pool completed
2011 University resumes ownership of Domain House

5.4.2 The New Century

Tasmania entered the latter half of the Twentieth Century with a complex new identity. It was part of a new Federation, yet had repeatedly suffered the profound loss of life fighting in two major wars for England and its monarchs. Australia was exploring a post-war cultural identity, no longer harking to the colonial past and instead exploring a world altered by the consequent technological and social changes.

5.4.3 Loyal to the Royals

The ongoing series of festivals and events dedicated to the royal family that took place on the Domain illustrate that attachment to the old country was still strong. Many of Tasmania’s small island population had been lost or affected by the monarchs’ wars and the continued attachment was writ large. Between 1950 and 1954 alone, the Queen’s Domain was reported as the location for no less than 117 salutes, fireworks displays, parade ground shows, royal visits and
festivities. Kings, queens, birthdays, deaths and royal babies were celebrated on the Domain well into the later half of the 1900s.

The royal fever during the visit of the new young Queen Elizabeth and her husband Prince Phillip in 1954 was captured in newspaper headlines titles such as, ‘Singing Thousands Greeted Queen and Duke’ (Mercury 20 February, 1954: 8) and ‘Hobart “Lets Down Hair”: Wild Scenes As Queen Arrives’ (Mercury 21 February, 1954: 3). The news reports of the 1954 visit by Queen Elizabeth undoubtedly marked a high point in the devotion to the monarchy.

5.4.4 Respect for the Fallen

Activities that were reported frequently across the decades without controversy relate to the ceremonies honouring soldiers serving in wars. Within the precinct of the Domain, the Boer War memorial and the Cenotaph feature monuments and host Anzac Day and Remembrance Day ceremonies consistently across the decades. Apart from a brief discussion about moving the Cenotaph to St David’s Park in the centre of the city prompted by Premier Robert Cosgrove in 1952, the Domain as the precinct for post-war homage was cemented (Mercury 23 April, 1952: 7).

The Soldiers Walk is an avenue of trees that has been planted to remember individuals who fought or died in wars, tended by families of the fallen (Friends of Soldiers Walk Inc 2004). There is an extensive
array of articles relating to its maintenance, upgrade, occasional vandalism, and these events that could warrant an entire study on its own. This discourse reflects the gathering of Tasmanians at least annually to remember war and its legacy, both glorious and grotesque, and continues to modern times uncontested.

5.4.5 The People’s Centre in the People’s Park

The Tasmanian post-war environment carried with it a new boldness of attitudes, encompassing ideas about the use public space such as the Domain. As well as using the park as a place for homage to monarchs and soldiers, and relentless programmes of sporting events, there is an emerging evidence of Tasmanians wishing to ‘claim’ the space.

In 1950, SW Blythe, the head of Hobart Technical College, set his students an assignment in which they were required to design a ‘people’s centre’ on the Domain, incorporating a pool, cultural centre and playing fields. This student task opened the floodgates for discussion around the development of the Domain with an emphasis on culture as well as sport (Mercury 17 May, 1950: 3). This prompted fury from those who felt this equated with alienation and, even though such centres would be available for the use of all Hobartians, it was seen as alienation none-the-less.
One Letter to the Editor, signed by ‘Citizen’, accused Mr Blythe of suffering from ‘specialist’s disease’ whereby they see an empty space and wish to fill it. Citizen goes on to write:

… he complains that the Domain is almost unused. That is the beauty of it. It is a place where one can find space to relax. Once building is started on the Domain it will go on. Lost parkland is hard to recover… (Mercury 20 May, 1950: 3)

As an exercise in sparking discourse and motivating the student body to exercise its imagination, Mr Blythe’s design assignment was highly effective. It even motivated the Lord Mayor of Hobart to call a public meeting and form a committee to investigate the idea (Mercury 18 May, 1951: 15). However, the project never went to the model stage and the Citizen’s gloriously empty space prevailed.
5.4.6 Cars, Parking and Traffic

As Hobart’s population and affluence grew, so too did urban pressures such as parking. In 1953, the first of many conversations about parking on the Domain commenced, including a suggestion in 1999 (Mercury 15 June, 1999: 18) to build a car park under the Domain, similar to that under Sydney’s Domain. Media mentions of contention around availability, and introduction of a fee for parking occurred in...
Traffic issues, including proposals to reroute roads through the Domain, or close roads through the Domain to curtail traffic through the park, have been reoccurring points of discussion. Traffic and road access appears in 1952, 1954, 1973, 1983, 1995, with a gap until 2015 when it is referenced by Alderman Burnett as part of an opinion piece entitled ‘Talking Point: It takes more than roads to fix traffic woes,’ (*Mercury* 3 July, 2015).

### 5.4.7 The University Again!

In 1954, the spectre of a proposed claim for land by the University of Tasmania reared its head again. This was quickly quashed by the Town Clerk, but not before generating discussion via the press. The effect of the outcry over the consideration of the Domain being alienated for the university in 1949 was not so distant, and land managers were quick to reassure the public that any work undertaken by the university would not result in excision of any of the Domain (*Mercury* 4 March 1954: 12; *Mercury* 5 March, 1954:7; *Mercury* 9 March, 1954: 17).

At this time, plans for carving off a portion of natural space not far from the university campus were afoot, as proposals for a swimming pool gained volume (*Advocate* 20 December, 1954:8).
5.4.8 We Like the Domain As It Is

By the 1970s, the reporting of the Domain and public engagement had decreased in frequency and intensity, and media mentions consisted largely of criticism of management practices. In 1972, the Hobart City Council was publicly-berated in the news for over-use of fire as a management tool. Yet, also in 1972, the first news text advertising management plans for the Domain appeared. The Domain Master Plan proposed dividing and managing the park in four zones: sporting areas and monuments; a parking zone; an adventure playground; walking areas through steep terrain, foreshore and replanted areas. It is suggested in this glib editorial in The Mercury that the plan might manage to ‘Introduce a little more sophistication without spoiling the natural charms’, while ruing the fact that the People’s Centre never eventuated in the 1950s.

The job of managing the myriad of public expectations, and the history of the public asserting their thoughts on the use of the Domain was summarised:

It must be admitted right away that it is much easier to leave the Domain alone than to do anything with it. That way, there is no controversy. The public may sometimes claim that the Domain is being wasted, that there is so much could be done to turn it into a more useful and
popular civic asset. But when some proposition does come along the same public is likely to be highly vocal about interference with the Domain. (*Sunday Tasmanian* 7 November, 1972: 14)

In the 1980s, the Hobart City Council was endeavoring to engage the public formally in the use of the space through a management and development plan. The Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Committee, Mr RB Excell, wished to hear from individuals and groups interested in its development (*Mercury* 21 October, 1972: 2). While this may have been the first formal invitation to the public to make suggestions about the space, the addition of the word ‘development’ to the proposition is notable. The moderate presence of the development on the Domain indicates that development was not significantly forthcoming.

Management plans were developed approximately each decade following the first call for input in 1972 (Lennard 2015). Discourse relating to the development of management plans and master plans arises in news texts in 1972, 1996, 2006 and 2012.

In 1978, Domain land was leased to the Commonwealth to facilitate the use of oil tankers, which sparked one letter of criticism that described the handing over of this public space at the behest of the federal government, without consultation, as ‘prostitution’ (*Mercury* 20
December 1978: 2). This matter would arise again in the letters pages in 1994 when the time came to begin the assessment of the future lives of the tanks (*Mercury* 23 November, 1994:19).

**5.4.9 High Price**

The 1990s brought to the news pages the costs associated with managing public areas in and around the Domain. The need for an upgrade of the pool facilities and the struggling finances of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens were reported regularly. The success by then Lord Mayor Doone Kennedy in acquiring funding for the refurbishment of the pool was a cause for celebration (*Mercury* 1990: 26; 1 February 1994). However, the upgrade did not come without concern for the Domain’s native grasses that look set to be lost to the aquatic centre’s parking lot (*Mercury* 13 May, 1995: 3).

In 1991, archaeologists discovered the remains of a hot-shot oven, one of only two in the world, built in Britain in 1861 and shipped to Hobart for making shot for ammunition to resist potential attacks on the city. The oven was covered over in the 1920s, found again in the late-1980s, then re-covered by the council when they realised they could not afford to conserve it and make it into the tourist attraction they hoped it would become. The news response reflected more disappointment than ire (*Mercury* 16 October 1988: 21; 26 March 1990:16; 26 March, 1991: 1).
5.4.10 Full Circle: Back to Government House

Over the ensuing decades, public discourse over the Domain shifted in tone. The focus on Government House pertained to making the space more accessible to the public, with regular advertisements for annual ‘opens days’. At the same time, the conversation around the relevance of the monarchy to modern Australia gained volume, resulting in an unsuccessful referendum to alter the Constitution to establish the Commonwealth of Australia as a republic with the Queen and Governor-General being replaced by a president was held in 1999 (Australian Electoral Commission website 2008). In 2003, Government House became the venue for a controversy relating to the appointment of Richard Butler as Governor. Butler, a former United Nations weapons inspector, was a high profile supporter of Australia becoming a republic. His appointment was met by outrage by monarchists and bemusement at the prospect of the Queen’s representative wishing Australia to cut ties with the crown.

The Governor’s situation quickly moved from unconventional to untenable, resulting in several senior Government House staff resigning, and Mr Butler and his wife being pursued by media. Soon after, Butler was relieved of the role, exited with a sum of money from then-Premier Lennon, and Government House returned to its usual stately order (Mercury 22 November, 2003: 5; 9 August 2004: 1; 9 August, 2004: 5; 10 August 2004: 14; 11 August 2004: 1).
This controversy invited reflection over the Governor’s role, purpose and, inevitably, the Governor’s quarters. Remembering that the Domain began as land given to the early colony’s authority, it is not surprising that, in an era when the Queen’s relevance was under consideration, new uses for the house and gardens would be mooted. Following on from earlier suggestions in 1997 of converting the house to an arts centre, something that Hobart was lacking at the time, (Mercury 15 March, 1997: 36) Hobart City Council Alderman Jeff Briscoe also offered his views in the Letters pages:

Good things can happen to their palaces and gardens when kings and queens leave. For example, who wouldn’t visit Versailles if lucky enough to visit France, or the Forbidden City in China? As to the public sharing the grounds with any new vice-regal occupant (if they continue to live there), the British royal family happily shares the grounds and much of the popular Windsor Castle with tourists and locals. The 15ha of our Government House grounds are a very valuable resource on the foreshore of the River Derwent and should be made more accessible for all visitors and residents by being open 365 days a year. (Mercury 14 August, 2004: 22)
This sentiment indicates that gift of parkland to the people of Hobart may yet outlive the vice-regal presence for whom it was initially set aside in the early days of the Tasmanian colony.

**5.4.11 The Latest News on Hospitals**

The *Mercury*’s editorials were often willing to offer opinion on the management of the Domain, and of its value as a public natural space. This is expressed clearly in the ongoing conversation over the use of the Domain as a hospital.

In late 2014, the subject of the Domain as a site for a new hospital resurfaced. The beleaguered Royal Hobart Hospital had been a focus of political and media attention due to funding and defunding, spending and alleged misspending on a rebuild — a hot potato frequently tossed around by various state and federal governments.

Following criticism of the previous Labor government’s handling of the hospital redevelopment, the Liberal state government announced it would walk away from the refurbishment of the existing hospital and instead proposed a brand new hospital complex at what was described as a ‘greenfields site on the Queen’s Domain’ (*Mercury* 5 October, 2014). The proposal received rare unilateral political support and was embraced by the development proponents and medical community. An editorial in the *Mercury* asserted the dire need for a new hospital, stating, ‘The Queens Domain proposal is the unknown wild card in
the deck. On the surface it appears one of the most exciting
developments proposed for the city for some time,’ (Mercury 7
December 2014).

This was a departure from the previously articulated views by the
Mercury, such as in 2008 when an editorial stated:

CALLS for the new hospital to be built on the Queen’s
Domain threaten to change Hobart’s green heart forever.
On the surface, it seems like a reasonable idea — there is
plenty of land, it’s centrally located and many parts of the
Domain are rarely used. But the early settlers of Hobart
fought long and hard make the Queen’s Domain an area
for the people. (Mercury 4 August, 2008: 14)

However, the state government announced that the $2.4 billion
project intended for the land directly adjoining the Cenotaph on the
Domain was unaffordable. This discourse was couched in financial
terms, paying due respect to the war heritage of the Cenotaph which
consistently attracts strong responses. After several months of double
page spreads, artists impressions of the proposed new development
and positive words about the grand prospects of the complex
(hospital, hotel, war memorial, boat ramp) and in justifying the
rejection of the proposal, the status of the land was recognised as
public space, not just a ‘greenfield’ site implying the land was an
unused, unallocated space. The Minister for Health is reported as finally recognising the Domain’s status as inalienable land in one line: ‘He also said it would have required a free gifting of land set aside for the public 100 years ago,’ *(Mercury 17 Dec 2014)*.

While the *Mercury* editorial was an active participant in the conversation about the alienation of the Domain, the newspapers gave no sign of the Hobart City Council resisting the alienation of the Domain for a new hospital, despite its authority over the park and role managing the natural space so close to the city.

**5.5 Conclusion**

Over five hundred news texts were studied in an effort to register the key themes and debates pertaining to the Queen’s Domain. These texts have proved to be a valuable source of data, providing insight into the issues that caused voices to be raised on matters relating to the use and management of the Domain as public natural space. The data gathered from the news texts indicates that engagement with the Domain as a public natural space has occurred since at least 1816, soon after the establishment of the new colony in 1803.
6 Silent Visitors

6.1 Introduction

Not all who venture into nature are found as an active voice in newspapers. While opinions and representations in news texts largely adhere to van Dijk’s (1985) political, social or institutional categories, there are some who slip between the cracks.

6.2 Mouheneener Country

Evidence of the ancient Tasmanian Aboriginal connection to the Domain is shown by the middens located on the Derwent River foreshore and those dug up at the adjacent Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. These indicate Aboriginal occupation of the area in 5210 BP (Terry 1999). While the systematic expulsion of people from their country was thorough, the connection with landscape has by no means been completely severed. Andry Sculthorpe, Cultural Heritage Officer for the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, says:

I think for me the domain is valuable because it is a surviving patch of what is similar to the type of country that would have been around Hobart before invasion, sitting in the middle of the city and surrounded by highways and houses and nothing resembling a natural
or cultural landscape, the domain is an oasis where we can see begin to see the now transformed world of Hobart as it once was. Patches of kangaroo grass and native cranberry, grassland and woodland tell of times gone by, environments which are all but removed from many of our experiences. (Sculthorpe 2016)

The voice of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community has been absent from two hundred years of news items recovered for this research. Accounts of Aboriginal association with the Doman appear in management plans and historical research by the Hobart City Council. The Tasmanian Aboriginal community is represented by the media as neither a voice, nor a subject in debate over the Domain.

6.3 Place Without Others

The Queen’s Domain has been known as a recognised meeting place for same-sex attracted men to pursue sexual contact, either in situ on the Domain or through future meetings organised after making an acquaintance on the Domain. This occurred more frequently prior to 1997, after which homosexuality was decriminalised by the Tasmanian Parliament. Up until that point it was a criminal offence to engage in sexual activity with members of the same sex (Croome 2006). According to Rodney Croome, a leader of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered community, part of the lure of the
Domain was due to its proximity to the city centre, while also offering privacy in the vegetation. The Domain is:

... in the city but not of the city... It is a place where people could find some degree of anonymity and privacy, particularly if they were younger people who were still reliant on their parents or married men — married in heterosexual relationships — or were otherwise fearful of people finding out who they were. (Croome 2016)

Few texts retrieved identify issues relating to public sexual activity despite the knowledge that the Domain was a renowned meeting place, as confirmed in interviews with Croome, and Greg Milne (2015), Visitor Services Manager of the Bushland Reserves Unit at the Hobart City Council.

Before 1997, men who pursued such assignations opened themselves to risks, including bashings and abuse, although there are reports of ‘fag-running’ (in which homosexual men are deliberately physically or verbally abused at random) as late as 2011 (Punch 2011). Prior to the Tasmania Police’s proactive education campaigns, there was also a risk of police harassment (Croome 2016). As homosexuality was de-stigmatised, then descriminalised, police attitudes towards same-sex attracted men to the Domain changed to trying to prevent crimes of violence against those people.
The Domain is frequented less for these purposes since decriminalisation and with the advent of online dating, but prior to that the Domain was a social sanctuary. Croome offers insight into engagement with the natural space beyond its convenience, privacy and relative anonymity:

But there will be people for whom the attraction is that it is a natural place, a place for them to connect with the natural world and not feel judged. So they feel judged in the social world, but in the natural world that doesn’t happen and that lends itself to feeling a bit freer, having a stronger sense of connection with something. And I know that is important – I have spoken about that with some men, obviously they tend to be the more environmentally conscious ones, but there is a definite element of their being a social outsider, or unconventional — sexually unconventional — or feeling that society is hostile and finding a refuge in nature. (Croome 2016)

6.4 Home for the Homeless

If the community of same-sex attracted men is a quiet constituency, the homeless community’s absence from the news texts is deafening. The squatters’ camps and homeless communities on the Domain between 1920 and 1925 were well reported in the newspapers of the
day, and discussions over their tenure that took place in the council chambers were also well-documented through the news pages.

Homelessness gained a brief mention again during World War II. Hobart City Council’s Greg Milne confirms the continuing reality of homeless people occupying the Domain.

Milne was the coordinator of the Queen’s Domain Master Plan 2013-2033, seeing the process from inception through to endorsement by the Hobart City Council. According to Milne, in a process that actively sought input from the community around the future of the public natural space, there was no submission for or by representatives of the homeless community. This is unsurprising given that individuals who find themselves sleeping rough exist on the fringes of the community, with unreliable access to the necessary tools for participating in public consultation exercises.

Milne explained that the HCC engaged in a parallel exercise, developing a partnership with the Salvation Army, offering training for field staff around working with homeless people.

The Domain is obviously known as one of the places to sleep rough in the city... I think the level that we are operating on is out of care and concern for people who are in that situation and about linking them up with professional services. So that when our people are out
there whipper-snipping, mowing, doing the normal on-ground management, if they see homeless people then we know to go to ... the Salvation Army in Newtown and they go out and visit them to try to link them up with supportive services. (Milne 2015)

The visibility of the homeless who make the Domain their refuge was captured in a 2013 art exhibition held at Domain House upon its re-acquisition by the University of Tasmania in 2011. Tasmanian artist Geoff Parr produced the work ‘Homeless Nearby’ aiming to:

... acknowledge their almost unheard and unseen presence and the few pieces of bedding left behind and the campsites deeper in the bush, contrasting their situation with society’s consumer habits. (Parr 2013)

Parr’s artistic reflection is a rare contribution on the subject of homelessness on the Domain. The exhibition, and Parr’s piece, received no news coverage or reviews.

6.5 Conclusion

There is significant scope for exploring the relationship with public natural space with these seemingly silent members of the community. This conversation has potential to add to the taxonomy of values of nature, and provide critical perspectives on nature that have not been
considered, as well as providing representation for important stakeholders in the area who have been excluded up to now.
7  

Discussion

7.1 Introduction

Considering the questions raised at the outset of this thesis, this discussion will draw together the threads of the research conducted here within the context of previous relevant research, raised in the review of literature earlier in the thesis.

7.2 Natural Debate

This research began with the premise that the connection with nature is fundamental to humans and societies, assertions that were supported by social theory, psychology and historical texts and environmental literature. This question was further extrapolated to consider whether public natural space, as an accepted feature of social well-being and sound urban planning, will always incite debate.

7.2.1 The Need for Nature in the City

Evidence of the human need for nature and accessibility to nature in urban environments in the Western context is demonstrated by establishment of private gardens and campaigns for public natural space in the 1800s (Conway 1991), urban design, and the emergence of an environmental ethic in the in the 1900s (Burnap 1916; Sperber
The value of public natural space was espoused in Britain (Winter 1993; Conway 1991; Terry 1999) and Ireland, (Brück and Tierney 2005) by advocates for free access to natural space. In the United States it is shown through the development of parks in urban planning (Burnap 1916; Mitchell 2005). All of these examples provided the setting for the establishment of parks and commons in British colonies.

The declaration of the Queen’s Domain in 1858 as inalienable land could be seen as a triumph for the likes of James Silk Buckingham and the Victorian parks movement, who repeatedly endeavoured to make the establishment of public parks and playgrounds a municipal responsibility (Conway 1991). Natural spaces were also considered as hallmarks of a civilised society so, while the debate over Britain’s transportation policy raged, residents of colonies were seeking to cultivate cities that were more than just dumping grounds for Britain’s unwanted felons and political agitators (Boyce 2008). Residents developed a love for the landscape and a sense of ownership over public natural spaces; for aesthetic reasons, for the principal of universal access and for its status as a ‘gift’ of the distant monarch (Bonyhady 2000).

**7.2.2 Is Natural Debate Inevitable?**

The Queen’s Domain in Hobart is an example of public natural space that has evoked responses and debate over its use and management
since the colony was established. The constant use, despite its separation from the city over time, and the variety of affectionate names given to the land, affirms the people’s connection to the space. Newspapers have consistently reported public discourse over the space and, while the demographic of those expressing an opinion may be relatively narrow and is discussed further in this chapter, the engagement has undoubtedly existed (Kahn 1999; Kaplan 1995; Fraser 2008).

Papers and publications relating to Port Meadow and Wolvercote Common, examples of other gifted lands, indicate that this situation is not exclusive to Hobart’s Domain. The gradual growth of an environmental ethic and movement during the 1800s and 1900s for public lands, ranging from city parks to tracts of wilderness tracts, point clearly to the profound link between people, nature, and the associated debate.

By examining the example of Port Meadow in the context of the Queen’s Domain there are clear comparisons. Port Meadow and surrounds were gifted by the Crown to the people of the county of Oxfordshire many hundreds of years before Tasmania was colonised, and over that time the tenure of the land has slowly become more democratic; evolving from a place that turned a profit for neighbouring commoners to one that is universally regarded as public space so that
even intrusions on the visual amenity by adjoining Oxford University is contested.

The Domain differs to Port Meadow in that, while sporting facilities and associations were given access to the space over its inalienable status and the Beaumaris Zoo was allocated land within its boundaries, profit-making entities have rarely been given permanent concessions. Since the days of Governor Franklin, Tasmanians have exercised a proprietary influence over the Domain that has prevented overtly profit-making endeavours from taking root in the area. The facilities for swimming, tennis, athletics and cricket, while essentially commercial entities, are ones that offer a public service, that is, the provision of centres for sport and recreation.

Like Port Meadow, the Domain’s public nature has been defended from incursions ranging from the extension of the university in the time when education was not universally accessible, to the establishment of people’s centres and ice rinks. Across time, and on opposite sides of the planet, communities have largely kept the absorption of these public natural spaces by commercial ventures at bay. These two examples reflect the theories of Kellert (1993, 1996), Rachel Kaplan (1995) and Stephen Kaplan (1995) around human attachment to nature and illustrate, particularly in the case of Port Meadow, that these inclinations existed long before Industrialisation and the Victorian parks movement. It also indicates that, as long as
humans seek out nature in public spaces, debate over nature is inevitable.

**7.2.3 Finding Nature in the Now**

In the 1800s, when workers left the factory to visit the municipal park, there was a clear divide between recreation and the workplace. For some, technological advancements have seen the demands of employment extend from the office or warehouse into other corners of daily life: the home, the commute to work, children’s playgrounds and even the bedroom. For those who are city-bound, there is still a deep connection to nature that early parks designers may have understood intrinsically, but did not identify as a psychological state until studies articulated the reasoning behind them (Kahn 1999; Kaplan, R 1995: Kaplan, S 1995).

In the spirit of the Victorian parks movement, the continuing call for access to nature has not abated. Contemporary attempts to reclaim urban space for nature can be seen in projects such as the transformation of an overhead rail bridge in New York into a public natural space named the High Line, (Friends of the High Line n.d.) and the Garden Bridge in London (The Garden Bridge n.d; Morrison 2016). Actor Joanna Lumley is a high-profile advocate for a Garden Bridge spanning the River Thames, which has invited controversy for its financial merit, usefulness in the transport context and
contentious tendering processes. However, its value as a source of
nature in a busy city is not disputed, (Frearson 2016) indicating that
access to nature in urban environments is uncontested, even if the
establishment and management sometimes is.

7.2.4 Nature Generates Debate

In 1918, when responsibility for the management of the Domain
passed from the state government to the Hobart City Council, the
Minister for Works encouraged citizens to applaud the people who had
reserved the land in perpetuity as the People’s Park. This recognition,
so long ago, of public natural space as a thing to be prized and its
sequestration a significant act, offers a clue to the values that
accompany such spaces.

The Domain is just one small example in the island state of Tasmania
that features many areas of public natural space, of different sizes
and varying natural values as criteria for protected area status.
Conflict over natural space in Tasmania has at times been
characterised by authorities as a caprice of problematic individuals or
groups. However, this research indicates that vocal opinion on the
subject is a genuine element of the human relationship with nature.
While the motivations for honouring that space differs amongst all
those who use it, public natural space invites a sense of ownership
that leads to debate over its use and management, which land
managers and governing agencies must be ready to receive and mediate as an essential part of their roles as custodians.

**7.3 Public, Natural, Real or Imagined**

The second question raised as part of this research queries whether the essence of the conflict relates to the public element of the land or the nature that occurs there? This reading of literature, news clippings about the Domain and papers on Port Meadow and Wolvercote Common, suggest it is both and more again.

The Queen’s Domain in the far-flung colonial capital of Hobart and bordered by the traditional style of Botanical Gardens and Governor’s private residence, evolved at the pivot-point in the discourse over the need for public natural space. However, the early adoption of the space as a public place by the people and the deliberate gesture towards provision of natural space by local authorities is indicated by the popularity of activities such as the Regatta, the tending of the Soldier’s Walk and the ongoing commentary over how it should be treated (Terry 1999; de Gryse 1996). By the 1970s, social geographers could label these actions as topophilia and later biophilia, with the impulse to relate to nature and public natural space explained as an integral element of the human condition.

**7.3.1 Valuing the Domain: Is it the ‘Natural’?**
The emergence of an environmental ethic in the 1800s reflects motivations including nostalgia for experiences in disappearing natural places, scientific alarm at ecological collapse and an environmental impulse to preserve natural processes. Leopold (1946) lamented the poetic loss of empathy for ecological thought and processes, while Carson (1962) simply names up the scientific reality of species loss.

The inclination to defend what is public does not necessarily take precedence over the valuing of natural space. Frequent critiques of the management of the Domain’s vegetation and concerns over potential loss of threatened temperate grasslands in the course of swimming pool redevelopment are just two examples of public discourse over nature. Regular columns in the Mercury enthuse over the bird-life and rich biodiversity of the Domain (Knowler 2006: pB12; 2010: pB02; 2012: p19). Proposals for a threatened species recovery centre in 1990s at the site of the former Beaumaris Zoo show an ecological impulse and recognition of the appropriateness for the Domain as a natural public setting for such a facility (Grube 1999; Vine-Hall 2003; Paine 2003; Briggs 2003). The news items examined reinforce that the human engagement with the Domain fit every category of Kellert’s taxonomy of values, and the responses to landscape explore by Simon Schama (1995), Tim Bonyhady (2000), Lesley Head (2000) and Peter Hay (2002).
The novelty of observing the Thylacine at the Beaumaris Zoo, the very last of its species on earth, supports the way in which contemporary social context shapes discourse (Kress 1985; Fairclough 2001; van Dijk 2001). In this case, the fascination with this animal hunted to the brink of extinction through the prevailing attitudes was vastly different to those Tasmanians proposing the establishment of a threatened species centre at that very same location half a century later, when the limitlessness of nature was no longer taken for granted (Grube 1999, Vine-Hall 2003, Paine 2003).

7.3.2 Valuing the Domain: Is it the ‘Public’?

These news reports relating to the Queen’s Domain reveal that the themes within the discourse over public natural land are not always clear; at times the discourse relates more to the word ‘public’ than ‘natural space’, and vice versa.

The Queen’s Domain and Launceston Swamp Bill in 1858 declared the Domain ‘inalienable’, other than by special authority of the Parliament (Hobart Town Daily Mercury 8 March, 1858: 3). Incursions, such as sporting grounds and the rail line, have occurred due to their capacity to fulfill an ill-defined and rarely tested public service. The few reports of disputes over the development of sporting grounds suggest the media endorsed those facilities as being in the interests of the public. Public discourse over quarrying and timber-getting in the 1800s, multiple proposals for the excision of land on the Domain for the
University of Tasmania and hospitals, the upset invoked by the Hobart City Council’s imposition of fees for commuter parking on the Domain in 2014, all illustrate the a public sense of rightful ownership, access and influence over activities in the public space. Public land invites conflicted individual expectations of how that space should be treated.

The debate over freedom of access, the value of nature and public natural space has re-emerged in the Tasmanian public discourse in 2015 and 2016 with proposed changes to management plans for parks and wilderness areas that may allow for the expansion of commercial accommodation inside National Parks. This would alter the notion of universal and equal access to the public natural space by creating different tiers of nature experiences for those who can pay for greater access to the area, and introduce developments into the natural space to service visitors. It also raises arguments relating to exclusivity arising from those who can pay to access nature versus those who are physically able and willing to get out there amongst it, and is reminiscent of the state of affairs in the 1800s when only the wealthy enjoyed ready access to parks and gardens (Conway 1991; Winter 1993, Elborough 2016). And so, the contest for landscape continues and the important question of inclusivity in this debate is discussed further in this chapter.
7.3.3 Testing Boundaries

The discourse over the encroachment of development into natural space was well underway in the mid-1800s, and raised on both sides of the Atlantic; in the Port Meadow Papers, and in the popular writing of American writers such as Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson and John Muir (Neuzil 2008). The train became the symbol of an unwelcome incursion of progress into nature:

But rail-roads now have got a share
Of this broad land, in summer fair,
Which yields no profit by sweet air
To thousands who frequent it.
[A Freeman 1853]

While A Freeman’s scorn for the allocation of Port Meadow to the railroad and the profit reaped by the Freeman of the Meadow and Wolvercote Common is quite light in delivery, Thoreau is more caustic in his criticism of rail’s interference with his time in nature:

But I cross it like a cart-path in the woods. I will not have my eyes put out and my ears spoiled by its smoke and steam and hissing.  (Thoreau 1854: 120)
Twenty years later, intrusion on the Domain by rail is echoed in Hobart when government excision of land from the Domain for the New Line Railway was met with scathing criticism by some Members of Parliament. Mr Grubb worried that the people would wake up to the loss of their pleasure ground too late, and Dr Crowther noted that the Domain, ‘...was intended for all time as a recreation ground for its citizens,’ (Mercury 1872: 2).

**7.3.4 Take the Person out of Nature**

The Queen’s Domain Master Plan 2013-2033 describes how, over centuries of allocating the Domain for its natural or cultural values, it has become ‘many places’ (Inspiring Place 2013: 5), and so the new plan aims to take a spatial approach to planning for the first time. The historically disparate approach to managing the Domain has resulted in it being described by the public in the Master Plan’s consultation process as under-used, difficult to get around, hard to get to and under-loved.

The gradual separation of the Domain from Hobart’s population began with the New Line Railway in the 1870s, and continued with post-war road developments. Construction of the bridge across the Derwent River to accommodate future traffic in the 1950s further divorced the Domain from the city, which was finalised by road completion in the 1980s. The historian Terry credits the development of bridges as having the most profound impact on the Domain and, while the
enclosure of the Domain by busy roads has left its natural centre intact, the Domain is now isolated from the city and neighbouring suburbs. According to Terry:

... over time the children of North Hobart became separated from their 'big backyard', while the residents of the Glebe could no longer access the water’s edge and their bathing areas. (Terry 1999: 57)

Foreshore access is an issue raised by Greg Milne. When asked what he would do differently, if he could take the Domain back to how it was when first gifted to the new colony of Hobart, he was quick to suggest that he would not separate the Domain from the water and the city, keeping the coastline uninterrupted:

Keep the entity of the Domain from being all cut up into pieces. And then the scattergun approach of quarrying and wood cutting and using it for this or that, to build your tennis centre here and your athletics centre here or your hospital here, which came and went. I think that it has just evolved by development pressure over time.

(Milne 2015)

As part of the implementation of the Queen’s Domain Master Plan 2013-2033, the construction of new bridges for better access and
amenities for the public is underway in 2016. The effort to restore the Domain to the city of Hobart is taking place more than a century after development secured its isolation, indicating how critical it is that land managers make decisions that will stand the test of time.

Invoking the words of a correspondent to the *Mercury* in 1950, ‘Lost parkland is hard to recover,’ (*Mercury* 1950: 3) and an even more prescient writer in 1885 said, ‘... the day will come when those who are now desirous of alienating the Domain piecemeal will regret their efforts in that direction,’ (*Mercury* 1885: 3).

The examples, from several countries and centuries, of the intrusion of ‘progress’ into nature are important. They all reflect the willingness of authorities to excise natural areas for what is perceived to be necessary progress. In the contemporary context, the necessary progress is economic development and employment; hence altering prescribed uses for public natural space is justified as beneficial. Mr Grubb mused in 1872 that people would realise too late they had been robbed of their pleasure ground, and in 2015 Greg Milne agrees that separating the Domain from the foreshore and the city are actions that would have been better not taken. The Domain should act as a salutary warning that decisions made in altering boundaries and uses of public natural space ostensibly for economic benefit or progress can have profound, unforeseen future consequences that can never be undone. According to Mline:
We have still got something that can be a tremendous asset to this city but if you were able to plan it from scratch I’d say consolidate those activities possibly more in one area and leave more of the rest for the natural. (Milne 2015)

The reallocation of natural space, the altering of boundaries and the redefining of purpose of protected areas has been historically provocative, providing a source of debate on the Domain and in other Tasmania protected natural across many decades (Buckman 2008; Hutton and Connors 1999). The public, once endowed with public space, do not give it up without a fight.

7.4 Debaters on the Domain

The final question posed at the outset of this thesis relates to the presence and volume of voices engaged in discourse over public natural space. Who are the key actors and how can the conversation be broadened to make it more inclusive to provide richer engagement with the greater community?

7.4.1 Seeds of the Modern Environmental Ethic

The impact of dense urbanisation and the growing industrial complex was taking place during a time of intense scientific inquiry and discovery, a growth in the production and availability of nature-based publications, and the emergence of a middle class with more
recreation time in which to consume them (Neuzil 2008). The middle classes embraced nature, and a dearth of healthy environmental conditions impacted most heavily on the poor.

Yet, those engaged in those public conversations — from the UK in the 1800s, to the US and Australia in 1900s — were overwhelmingly well-educated, middle or upper class and predominately male. Even in the case of the Domain, the homeless and the stateless, such as escaping convicts, were only ever spoken about. News reports never featured first-hand accounts, and these stories were invariably told about these people, never by them.

The pages of the *Mercury* and other Tasmanian publications indicate that a debate over nature may have not involved street marches and petitions, but lobbying, political connections and persistent pressure by influential actors, as described by Kingdon (1995) as key to land protection outcomes, and was well underway in the 1800s (Frisch and Wakelee 2011). The environmental movement and wilderness campaigners were taking these philosophies out to bigger expanses of nature; with increased access to wild nature came an increased risk to wild nature. As Hay (2002) has pointed out, the reasons behind connection with nature might be eco-centric, anthropocentric, or might align any of the nine values of nature (Kellert 1993).
The analysis of news texts in Chapter Five indicates the discourses across three centuries over the Domain range from criticism of management, to discontent with the way fellow Tasmanians were choosing to behave or engage with the space. Whatever the motivation behind the urge, the desire to engage prevails.

7.5 Public Natural Space, Public Discourse and the Media

The contemporary popularisation of environmental issues in social groups or movements date from the 1960s, yet discourse over public natural space has a long history that may have begun in the comfortable drawing rooms of middle and upper class England. From the early days of newspaper publications in Tasmania, the discourse relating to the Domain that appeared in the pages of newspapers was predominantly carried by the ruling elite, elected representatives and the middle class, including journalists and editors.

These conversations became slightly more inclusive from the mid-1900s onwards, yet there are still significantly absent actors, such as the homeless, the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, women and same-sex attracted men. Those engaged exhibit a sense of the right to be heard and 'belonging' on the stage of public discourse. However, those with marginal status in society, for example, the homeless, the culturally or socially disenfranchised, are less likely to either offer an opinion or be consulted on their thoughts. Again, these are people who might be talked about, but they are rarely talked to.
The moderators of news media have played a significant role in maintaining the status of this discourse, including actively editorialising in support of adhering to the initial intended purpose of the Domain — the People’s Park of all time. Journalists have played a part in articulating support for the inalienable nature of the space and, like the writers described by Neuzil (2008), and Meadows and Thomson (2013), they have played an important role in maintaining the Domain as a place for the people in the public consciousness, even though its primacy as a go-to natural space has been eroded through poor development decisions over time (Neuzil 2008; Meadow and Thomson 2013).

The *Mercury*, as the dominant publisher of news in the state since the 1900s, has influenced discourse over the Domain. However, due to the lack of competing newspapers, its editorial position of support for the public space goes unchallenged and does not inflate the contest within the discourse, just reflects the broader discourse within its own publications. While not within the scope of this thesis, further study could examine the effect of the reduction in media sources over public discourse relating to nature.

While the style of reporting has changed since the 1841, moderated news such as the newspapers and online newspapers studied act as an immediate source of information (Fairclough 1995, 1998; van Dijk
1985, 2001) and provide a clear insight into the issues engaging the public. Several examples confirm the role of media in shaping and influencing the status and effectiveness of conflict over landscape. Were it not for the reporting of proposals — and the associated furore — requesting alienation of portions of the Domain, such as the proposed People’s Centre in the 1950s, numerous attempts by the University of Tasmania to acquire land, or repeated efforts to establish a hospital, the Domain may be even more fragmented than it is in 2016.

Over the centuries the Mercury has maintained support for the inalienable space, yet in recent years this has altered according the perceived needs of the community, such as a new hospital. Where it not for a lack of funds to build it, it is possible that a major construction would be underway and news texts would reveal the editorial line of endorsement.

In articles written between the mid-1800s and the early 1900s, scorn is directed at both the authorities of the day and individuals of lower class or lesser means. This points to a readership comprised of the educated and possibly the ruling class. Those not of that status might be the subject of reports, but never the authors, and nor are they represented in the first person in a Letter to the Editors.
In this time period, letters are addressed to ‘Sirs’, implying that the sentiments are being expressed not just to the moderator of the discourse, but also to the community of gentlemen at large.

The discourse recorded in the news texts featured predominantly European men, members of the elected ruling class, land managers and military, or the news moderators themselves as the key social actors. The absence of female correspondents and the manner in which letters refer to ‘...the wives and children of our citizens...’ (Mercury 20 July, 1885:4) indicate that women were not regarded as citizens of the colony, and nor are they the intended audience. By the mid 1900s the voices had expanded to increasingly include women either as journalists reporting on issues, or as correspondents.

It must be noted that while MP Buckingham and his peers were hustling for more green space, the monarch was bequeathing land, and Hobart residents were claiming their People’s Park, the British Government and its agents were systematically driving the Tasmanian Aborigines from the shores of the Domain and the new state. Not until the late-1900s were the Tasmanian Aboriginal community recognised as part of that public who could share a sense of ownership over that space through their inclusion in cultural heritage assessment processes by the Hobart City Council (Milne 2015). The news texts examined indicate the news moderators in this context have barely begun to do so. More extensive examination of the connection of the
Tasmanian Aboriginal community and the nature of this area would add a critical voice to the Domain discourse.

The case study of the Domain corresponds with the description of mediatised conflict (Cottle 2006; Hansen 1993), however it is does not present the same scale of drama offered by other examples of contested landscape in Tasmania in the last hundred years. Conflict over public natural space in Tasmania has provided theatre on a grand scale, including thousands rallying in the streets, flotillas of inflatable boats on remote rivers, mass arrests of environmental activists, angels suspended from tripods, activists locked on the landing skids of a helicopter and industrial woodchip loading facilities (Lester 2007; Buckman 2008; Cahalan 2015).

The passionate contest for the Tasmanian landscape that has been the subject of tug-of-wars between defenders of pure nature and developers of canal estates, cables cars and tourism lodges, makes the tirade against hospitals and ice rinks in a modest patch of public space near the city seem rather low-key. Yet the principles of contest over public natural space are consistent, as is the role of the media in facilitating the debate. Claims-makers, heroes and villains are all there in the discourse about the Domain, be they University officials, absconders or homeless families outstaying their welcome.
7.7 Conclusion

As long as humans are motivated by a range of values at the heart of the human connection with nature, people will engage in discourse, both because it is public and because it is natural.

A common source for such debate has been the perception of the need for industrial and technological development, which continues to intrude on public natural space. Managers or custodians of that space need to invoke the future users and guardians, and run the spaces to ensure the durability of nature, rather than as facilitators of a contemporary progress that will shepherd in negative impacts.

When the purpose of the use of the land is altered, people will react and critical discourse will ensue. Proponents of alteration to the intent of the public natural space should ready them selves for robust and open discussion. And in courting this discussion, land managers, rather than shying away from the debate, should broaden it by seeking out the views of those they know to have a relationship with nature yet may not be empowered to offer it.
8 Conclusion

This thesis set out to examine the relationships between people and public natural space, the motivations for engaging in discourse over its use and the likelihood of ongoing debate in that context by looking at attachment to nature, the significance of boundaries and the utilisation of public natural space.

Using the Queen’s Domain in Hobart as a case study this research follows the thread of ‘discourse moments’ for this example of public natural space. Employing multiple methods for examining news texts, including historical, discourse and frame analysis, this research has considered the role of news manufacturers in influencing and facilitating public discourse about natural space across two centuries. These methods have allowed for the identification of key actors, claim makers, social context and the power exercised in nature discourse (Wodak and Myer 2001, Hansen and Machin 2013).

The multi-method approach to this study, as outlined in Chapter four, allows for an analysis of discourse, in particular media discourse. This method is informed by the works of Bell (1991), Hansen (1993),
Fairclough (1995, 1998), Cottle (2006), Carvalho (2008) and Cox (2010), and enables an examination of themes, patterns and construction of environmental discourse since the mid-1800s. The extensiveness of this report was limited by the lack of a semiotic analysis of imagery, as pictures and photographs rarely featured in news texts until the mid-1900s, and so fell outside the scope of this study. Future studies into both the Domain and other natural spaces could benefit from scrutiny of the visual representation of the place, the artists, the audience and the messages conveyed.

A thorough analysis of language in news texts assembled, via strict Critical Discourse Analysis methods described by van Dijk (1995, 1998, 2001) and the above-mentioned authors in Chapter four, would allow for a fine examination of the social context, the individuals that influence the availability of public natural space and the associated discourse. Questions such as the status, level of education and investment in the space can influence language and discussion and, while the scope of this research did not allow for such examination, these elements could reveal much about public natural space and its role in society.

The materials obtained via digital archives were very importance to this study. Therefore, the ten-year period in which newspapers were not digitised imposed a limitation on the collection of data and left a small gap in the chronology of discourse moments. The eventual
expiration of copyright restrictions will allow for future research to thoroughly search and capture potentially useful information.

In this thesis I have contributed to the discourse pertaining to natural space and environment theory in a temporal context, showing a history of environmental advocacy and support of public natural space since at least the mid-1800s. In Chapter two I have examined the intentions and advocacy of environmental writers and proponents for public natural space of the 1800s, drawing a connecting line to the early environment discourse that grew from Rachel Carson’s launch of modern ecological concern in the 1962. This thesis shows that the contemporary environmental ethic is closely preceded by environmental advocacy of a different, but related, kind. These took the form of social campaigns described by Conway (1995) and Winter (1993), and advocated by Burnap (1916) and Olmstead (Sperber 2007, Mitchell 2005), supporting the formal connection between nature humans through the establishment of municipal parks, maintained by public authorities for the free use and the enjoyment of the broader society. In the colonial Tasmanian context, painters such as Louisa Anne Meredith articulated animal rights and photographers cultivated the aesthetic idyll with their compositions of nature (Bonyhady 2000). While in America, commentary on the intrusion of human constructs into wilderness and rural nature was provided by writers such as Thoreau (1944), Leopold (1946) and Abbey (1968). The contemporary iteration of these philosophies can be seen in conservation campaigns
described by Hutton and Connors (1999), and Buckman (2008), and analysed in the media context by Lester (2007, 2010) and Lester and Hutchins (2012, 2013).

Emerging from the case study of the Queen’s Domain is a clear indication that when parameters and purposes of natural public space are mooted or changed from the original stated intent, no matter how well justified or articulated by authorities, contest over that landscape will ensue. The literature, reviewed in Chapter two, by Soper (1995) and Eder (1996) shows that the boundary and spatial definition of public natural space can be as important as the space itself, as humans observe the line between urban and non-urban, constructed and artificial. Attachment to nature may reflect the mental and physical benefits articulated through theories by Wilson (1993) and Kellert (1993), referred to as biophilia, or may reflect the attachment to place that is born from memory and association, explained by Tuan(1979) as topophilia.

In Chapter four, the parallel example of Port Meadow, gifted to the people of Oxfordshire in 1066, reveals a long history of dispute over nature that has continued up to complaints in 2015 over intrusions into the public space, thus emphasizing his theory of conflict over public natural space. In Tasmania, the study of the Queen’s Domain shows an ongoing inclination to fight for public natural space, and the contemporary dispute over the management and use of nature on
public land, from parkland to wilderness, emphasises that contest for public natural space is a recurring, possibly essential, ingredient of the relationship between people and nature.

With these theories in mind, it is difficult to determine if the motivations for conflict emanate more from the love of nature, or a sense of ownership over a public entity. Over than five hundred news items about the Queen’s Domain were closely examined for this thesis, and have been summarised into three blocks of discourse moments in Chapter five. These indicate that there is a powerful uniting principal amongst those who engage within public natural space; that is, exclusivity is rarely tolerated by a society that regards such places as their own, be that in the context of use, profit-generation or decision-making. These articles tell us that a person’s connection to nature, a strong sense of place and the collective proprietary attitude towards public space is a potent mix.

Future research into the human relationship with public natural space should incorporate identification of other ‘silent’ stakeholders, allocating resources to interviewing such communities. While this might require facilitation by third parties, such as support services in the case of the homeless community, the deeper understanding of the use of public natural space by otherwise disenfranchised individuals would offer richer understanding of relationships, and aid in managing such areas to the benefit all involved.
I will conclude this thesis by giving notice to custodians of public natural landscapes. Debate over public natural space is as fundamental as human engagement with nature. Agencies and individuals with oversight for such places must prepare for vigorous debate by many voices and, rather than try to reduce the volume of that debate, make provisions to invite even more. For where there is public natural space, so too will there be the people’s temper.


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179
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