

5. Ocean Beach



Key facts about this geosite:

- **Dramatic coastal scenery and views along a 32 km long beach**
- **Interesting dune stratigraphy and palaeosols are preserved**

How to get there: The Ocean Beach Geosite is located about 6 kilometres west of Strahan (Figure 1). From Strahan follow the Ocean Beach Road (also called Harvey Street, C250) west for 3 kilometres to the junction with the Macquarie Heads Road (C251). Continue straight ahead on the unsealed road for 3 kilometres to a car park with beach access and a viewing platform. If time permits return to the intersection and follow the Macquarie Head Road to the Macquarie Head Camping Ground (approximately 12 kilometres). From here one can walk out to the southern end of Ocean Beach and view the lighthouse at Hells Gates.

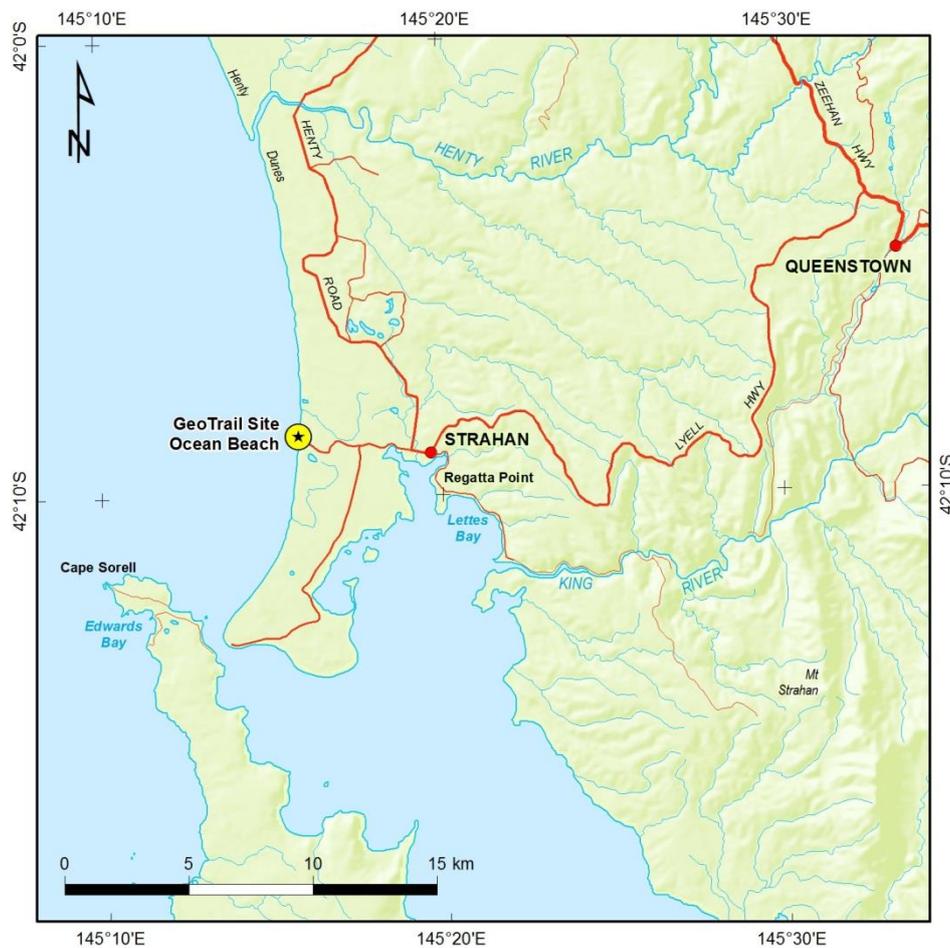


Figure 1: Location of the Ocean Beach Geosite

Geosite Description: Ocean Beach forms the coastline west of Strahan, running 32 kilometres along the coast from Trial Harbour to Hells Gates (Figure 2). The beach is adjacent to the Henty Dunes (Geosite 4) and is widely considered to have high conservation, aesthetic and recreational value. It is most easily accessed via a good, well signposted road 5 kilometres due west of Strahan, of a longer but more scenic route is via Macquarie Heads campground, about 12 kilometres from Strahan.



Figure 2: Photograph of Ocean Beach (photograph by *Danielle Fairfield*).

The southern end of the beach is backed by a [spit](#) (the sand bar at the mouth of Macquarie Harbour) (Figure 3). The beach sands are moving southwards along the beach by longshore drift, evidence for which is provided by the southward diversion of the mouth of the Henty River (Baillie and Corbett 1985)

Eroded dune exposures (Figure 4) and [palaeosols](#) (buried fossil soils) are found exposed along the expansive beach. These palaeosols have high scientific significance as they record changes in the environmental and geomorphic conditions in the Macquarie Harbour area over a long time. The beach is backed by cliffs of horizontally-bedded sand, cross-bedded dune sand, and peat which formed in the swales of dunes. These sands show little, if any, soil development and are regarded as [Holocene](#) in age.



Figure 3: Photograph looking across to Macquarie Heads from the southern end of Ocean Beach.



Figure 4: Large eroded dune forms along Ocean Beach.

References:

BAILLIE, P.W. and CORBETT, K.D. 1985, STRAHAN. Geological Survey Explanatory Report, Geological Atlas 1:50,000 Series, [Sheet 57\(7913N\)](#), Tasmania Department of Mines