

4. MINING HISTORY

4.1 General

Traces of tin and gold were found at Mt. Heemskirk in 1876. Several leases were pegged before the first discovery of small vein tin stringers at South Heemskirk in 1879. This field collapsed in 1884 after it was found that the ore bodies were small and widely scattered.

Meanwhile exploratory work from the Heemskirk area had located traces of gold and argentiferous galena and a silver/lead orebody at Zeehan in 1882. Development around Zeehan was slow until 1887 when galena was discovered at the Silver Queen Mine. Intense prospecting and development followed leading to the discovery of the Dundas field in 1889 (galena) and the Cuni/Melba field in 1893 (copper/nickel). Tin (1890) and gold (1891) were found in the Ring River. Tin-bearing sulphide ore was discovered at Renison Bell about 1899 during the construction of the Emu Bay Railway.

Most mining in the Dundas and Zeehan fields ceased at the start of World War I. The only major development this century was the exploitation of the Renison Bell tin sulphide deposit.

4.2 Dundas Field

4.2.1 Dundas

Within a year of the 1889 Dundas galena discovery the area was covered by leases. Dundas township had been built by 1900 following the formation of several exploration and mining syndicates. Most mining activity ceased by 1913. Minor mining occurred at the South Comet Mine between 1927 and 1949 and in recent years. Local prospectors still produce crocoite, cerussite and dundasite specimens from the Adelaide Mine area. The main mines in the area were :-