Woakwine Cutting is situated just 12 kilometres north of Beachport on the Southern Ports Highway. ‘Woakwine’ is an Aboriginal name meaning ‘elbow or bent arm’ and refers to the shape of the large watercourse near the Woakwine Homestead.

The Beginning
The McCourt family moved into the Woakwine area in the 1880s and soon realized that without richer land to compliment the rocky high country, living on the land would be difficult. As a result, in 1957, Mr Murray McCourt decided to ‘have a go’ at constructing a channel from the swamp through the range to Lake George.

The South Eastern Drainage Board assisted in designing and planning the proposed channel, however, these plans were not adopted as Mr McCourt believed the process was too costly. Instead, he decided to take a risk by having almost perpendicular walls. This type of development had never been seen in Australia before and there were obvious risks associated with the plans such as slipping of the steep walls. However, Mr McCourt along with the assistance of one of his workman, Mr Dick McIntyre, set out to prove that it could be done.

The Results
Length of Cutting: 50 chains (1 kilometre)
Width at bottom: 10 feet (3 metres)
Depth at deepest point: 93 feet (28.34 metres)
Material moved: 361,109 cubic yards (276,000 cubic metres)
Time taken on construction: Work started May 1957 - completed May 1960

Today
A short distance from the cutting is a lookout providing a view of the area drained. Above this approximately 40 hectares of scrubland has been left in its natural state and is home to many native species of flora and fauna.

The cutting, a huge engineering feat for its time, is a remarkable example of how the land has been drained, ploughed, cultivated and sown to pasture, making the area efficient and agriculturally sustainable. The machinery used can be seen in a shed on site. Great views of Lake George and coastal dunes are also a bonus for the visitor. The car park is large enough to turn a passenger bus or 4WD and caravan.