
Hawks Nest Road and Environs, Stony Rises

Location

Princes Highway, PIRRON YALLOCK VIC 3249 - Property No L10287

Municipality

COLAC OTWAY SHIRE

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

Hawks Nest Road is an old road alignment across the Stony Rises, linking the early farming hamlet of Pomborneit East with the Princes Highway at Pomborneit in the west, and Pirron Yallock in the south.

The road runs through a farming landscape that has changed little since it was originally subdivided and sold for small dairy farms in the 1860s. Alongside the road there are several simple buildings designed to serve a rural community, including a former creamery and the now-abandoned rural primary school that was attended by Richard McGarvie, who later became Governor of Victoria. In places there are extensive views across farmland with cattle sheds and stockyards. Several well-preserved dry stone walls are visible from the road.

The road alignment is strongly influenced by the underlying topography, following an undulating, sinuous route through lava flows between Mount Porndon and the southern shore of Lake Corangamite. Most of the road is surfaced with local stone, so that it blends into the rocky landscape around. Important geological features are seen alongside the road. Roadside vegetation includes significant remnants of the open woodland that once covered much of the Western District.

Views from the road are of a constantly changing panorama across an almost intact nineteenth century farming landscape scattered with trees and patches of woodland. When the sun shines the blue water and white beaches of Lake Corangamite, a Ramsar reserve and the largest permanent saline lake in Australia, can be seen in the distance.

How is it significant?

Hawks Nest Road is significant for historic, scientific and aesthetic reasons at a State level

Why is it significant?

When the land along Hawks Nest Road was surveyed for subdivision and sale the plan set out a grid of straight roads, but the actual tracks that developed twisted and turned between the lava ridges and hollows as settlers tried to find a way for their carts to get through the hummocky terrain. Major roads nearby were later straightened with the aid of modern rock moving equipment, and others tracks disappeared altogether, but Hawks Nest Road survived, still with the irregular plan and profile of the early farm track.

Farmers in the Hawks Nest Road area used the materials available to them to create field boundaries. Most of the log fences have disappeared, but stone walls, built from the basalt boulders strewn across the ground surface, have survived and are visible from Hawks Nest Road. One, the Rabbit Wall, is reported to be the oldest in the area. Marginal farming conditions in the Stony Rises have made it difficult to adopt modern large scale farming practices, and there has been less pressure for development than in most parts of the state. As a result farms and community buildings have survived, largely unchanged, from the time of closer settlement in the 1880s-1920s.

Although much of the land alongside Hawks Nest Road was cleared for farming, the difficulty of access through the irregular rocky topography allowed the survival of several important remnants of Basalt Plains Woodland, a priority Endangered Vegetation Class. Elsewhere, residual trees and secondary re-growth on patches of abandoned farmland create an open woodland appearance. The result is an intricate and varied landscape with a scale of detail that is unusual in Victoria.

Classified: 1/05/07

Hermes Number 192136

Property Number

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>