
FYANS FORD AND BULLOCK TRACK

Location

4 HAMILTON HIGHWAY AND 65 HYLAND STREET AND THOONA LANE FYANSFORD, GREATER GEELONG CITY

Municipality

GREATER GEELONG CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7721-0462

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO1723

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Interpretation of Site

It is possible that the ford represents an opportunistic use of an existing Aboriginal eel trap. The stone ford is shown in plans from 1837 and was critical in providing access to the south west coast region in the first 15-20 years of European settlement in Victoria. Bullock wagons regularly used the ford as a watering hole for stock as they continued on their travels across the western district. The ford crossing and associated bullock track was also important for local commercial trade for linking agricultural centres to markets.

Evidence of in situ archaeological remains of the ford in the Moorabool River are visible when the water is low. Placed stones are also visible in a subsurface context on the river bank and extend away from the river.

Historical Significance	The site is historically significant for its associations to Captain Foster Fyans and the early settlement of Fyansford and Geelong. The ford and bullock track have significant links to early transportation in Victoria, establishing pathways to the Western District. Early maps and plans of this ford by well known surveyors and artists add to its historical values.
Archaeological Significance	The archaeological significance of the ford is currently unknown. The place has been identified as having high archaeological sensitivity (Hewitt et.al 2014: 176). Further archaeological investigation, including a detailed archaeological survey and recording of features would be required to determine the integrity and nature of associated features and deposits and thus an assessment of the archaeological significance.
Hermes Number	197471
Property Number	

History

Fyans ford is shown on plans as early as 1837, when Foster Fyans, Police Magistrate, first camped in the area (Sydney G7 Gheringhap-Fyansford section). An 1846 water colour by Charles Norton shows the ford constructed of uncut rocks and earth. A wooden post and rail fence abuts the ford on either side of its approach (State Library of Victoria Image no. H91.315/12).

The ford was critical in providing access to the south west coast region in the first 15-20 years of European settlement in Victoria. Bullock wagons regularly used the ford as a watering hole for stock as they continued on their travels across the western district (Geelong Advertiser 26/09/1844). The importance of the ford crossing for the western district wool market is evident in the following article in the Geelong Advertiser in 1842: "Unless something be speedily done towards the repair of this, the principal crossing place on the Great Western Road, a serious difficulty will be found to exist in bringing down the present clip of wool to market". John Atkins, who built the Swan Inn several hundred metres west of the ford in 1842, took it upon himself to upgrade the ford. This upgrade is evident in the 1846 impression of the ford by Charles Norton which shows an earth roadway with boulders at the margins. As the stream is shown flowing beneath the surface of the roadway, it could be safely assumed that the earth was laid over a bed of boulders allowing the water to flow through the interstices.

The ford continued to sustain heavy use during the gold rush in the early 1850s until the wooden bridge was built several hundred metres downstream in 1854 (Rowe & Huddle 2000: 192; Fyansford Rural Training School Pupils 1934).

The bullock track leading to the ford was the route from Geelong. After crossing the ford it continued past the Swan Inn in a southerly direction and then onto the Inverleigh Road. This route is mapped from 1847 (D'Arcy's Murray 421 1854; and continued to be the only route until 1854 when the new timber bridge was built crossing the Moorabool River.

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/>