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# NEW WORKS SITE

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## Location

NINETY MILE BEACH AND PRINCES HIGHWAY LAKES ENTRANCE, EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE

## Municipality

EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8422-0001

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO225

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 2, 2005

What is significant?

The New Works historic complex at Lakes Entrance marks the site of a major nineteenth century engineering achievement in Victoria. The unreliable natural entrance from the sea to the Gippsland lakes had caused numerous shipping accidents from the time of its first use by large vessels in the 1850s. In 1869 the burgeoning local population petitioned the government to cut a safe and permanent opening in the four hundred metre wide sand bar. The first attempt in 1870 failed, but the 'new works' undertaken between 1884 and 1889 completed the task. The choice of site and design have significant connections with the eminent colonial engineer and architect William Wardell, then Inspector General of Public Works, and with Sir John Coode, distinguished harbour engineer. The construction site, on sand-hills on either side of the entrance, became known as New Works, and its remains are links with the building of the entrance. Fishermen began settling here in the mid 1880s, and reputedly often took over or rebuilt the Entrance workmen's houses when their contracts ended. The groups of extant cottages are important links with those who undertook this great work, and with a way of living on the job which is now virtually extinct. After World War I Lakes Entrance became a popular tourist resort, and the New

Works cottages became desirable as holiday houses for well-off local graziers. Continuity of ownership has resulted in a largely unchanged landscape, and the oral history of the place has also been passed on within the families. The cottages have connections with some notable Gippsland identities, who stayed there at various times, such as Flora (Minter) Gregson, a noted water colourist, and Mary Grant Bruce, a well known author of books for children. The New Works greatly improved access by sea to this part of Gippsland, causing marked changes in the population and their occupations, and encouraging further development in this relatively isolated part of the colony. The site marks the location and time of a surge in the growth of East Gippsland and the Gippsland Lakes as an important rural industry area, as the centre of a large fishing industry, and for Lakes Entrance as an important seaside resort.

The New Works complex at Lakes Entrance comprises on the west side of the entrance three cottages, a jetty, remains of a pier, rail tracks, remains of a crane, and various related artefacts. On the east side are a rocket shed, workshop and boatshed, ten cottages, remains of a pier, rail tracks, crane remnants, a flagstaff, boardwalk, two jetties, and other relics.

How is it significant?

The New Works historic complex at Lakes Entrance, West Gippsland, is of historical and scientific / technical significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The New Works complex at Lakes Entrance is of scientific / technical significance as the site of a major engineering feat of the nineteenth century, and one of the biggest public works undertaken in the colony of Victoria until that time.

The New Works complex is of historical significance due the major development of Gippsland which resulted from its completion. The groups of cottages are also important as examples of the housing which was often provided onsite for workers during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The complex is also significant as an early example of a seaside resort hamlet, which was visited by notable Gippsland identities such as watercolourist Flora (Minter) Gregson and children's author Mary Grant Bruce. This seaside hamlet is also remarkable for its continuity of occupation in some of the cottages by successive generations of the same families for almost a hundred years.

*[Online Data Upgrade Project 2004]*

Hermes Number 11035

Property Number

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*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/>*