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# INTACT SECTION OF THE FORMER COLAC-BEECH FOREST-CROWES RAILWAY LINE

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## Location

4845 GREAT OCEAN ROAD LAVERS HILL, COLAC OTWAY SHIRE

## Municipality

COLAC OTWAY SHIRE

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7620-0019

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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Site is part of the former Colac-Beech Forest-Crowes railway line. Closure of the line during the 1960s led to the abandonment of the line and the removal of the railway and associated infrastructure.

Interpretation of Site

By the 1950s traffic along the line had declined and the locos that travelled along its length were aged and were in constant need of repair. In November 1960 the Joint Transport Research Committee advised the Minister for Transport that the railway close in 1961. In June 1961 the Minister announced that the line was to close that year, but due to public pressure and urgent road building works, the line stayed open until 1961. It finally closed on 30 June 1962 (see Downs 1963:99 and Houghton 2003:10).

Parliament passed a Bill in November 1963 authorising the dismantling of the Colac-Beech Forest-Crowes railway line. By December 1963 the points at every siding and station had been removed and a tender advertised for the purchase and removal of all the buildings, Ballarat contractor Littlehales and Sons won the tender.

Archaeological Significance

Low potential to contain archaeological deposits.

Hermes Number 194683

Property Number

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## History

A series of land acts were passed in the 1860s in an attempt to create small farm holdings, whilst at the same time recognising the pioneering efforts of the squatters. Under the first land act, the 1860 Land Sales Act, three million acres were surveyed into allotments of between 80 to 640 acres. No person could select more than 640 acres annually, and the land had to be paid for outright, or half paid and half leased. Subsequently more land was made available for selection under the Land Act (1862) and the 1865 Amendment Act. Then in 1869, most land - including unsurveyed land - became available for selection under the Land Act. (Sheehan, 2003:19)

The Otway Ranges, in south west Victoria, were first opened to agricultural selection in 1884, under the *Land Act* 1884, when allotments were selected from pre survey maps prepared by the Lands Department (Minchinton 2011 :2). Within ten years more than 200 allotments had been taken up (Houghton 2005:1). Yet it wasn't until the arrival of the railway, during the 1870s, that Victoria's isolated south western region was considered penetrable. Until this time, the Otway Ranges were virtually impassable and as such, were of little economic value. The introduction of the railway provided the first all weather, fast and reliable transport service into the area, which as Houghton noted was 'characterised by dense timber and high rainfall'

*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/>*