
SMOKEYTOWN WATER RACE

Location

MIDLAND HIGHWAY SPRINGMOUNT AND CASTLEMAINE ROAD CRESWICK AND SAWMILL ROAD
NEWLYN, HEPBURN SHIRE

Municipality

HEPBURN SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7623-0334

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Interpretation of Site

The uncertain history of this race requires further investigation to fully understand the development and functions of this race.

This site has a high level of archaeological significance.

The race is well preserved for its entirety and is a representative example of an 1860s water race that was utilised over several decades for mining purposes. Archaeological features include the race alignment, negative cut features, spoil and sediment deposits,

Archaeological
Significance

dams, diversions, and potential gauges, flume remains, pipes, and sluice lining materials.

Although water races are common on Victorian Goldfields very few races in Victoria have

been documented and mapped in detail and the integrity of remaining goldfield water management complexes is largely under researched.

The site has a HIGH level of historical significance at a local level. Due to the excellent

preservation of a large part of the Creswick goldfield, the intertwined narratives of mining,

water supply, environmental consequences and rapidly evolving legislation can be read in

the landscape. At a state level the site contributes to broader narratives of water supply

and mining (Victorian Historical Theme 4.5 & 4.6) and informs the development of both

Historical Significance

mining and water management laws for the State of Victoria.

The race system is one of many on the Creswick alluvial goldfield that together make up

an important and well preserved cultural landscape of water management.

Combined with Creswick's strong forestry education facilities and proximity to Melbourne

and Balfarat, an increased awareness in this well preserved mining complex could provide

Creswick with excellent educational and tourism opportunities illustrating mining techniques and how mining shaped Victoria's water laws.

Hermes Number 195091

Property Number

History

The origins and history of this race are uncertain.

Tropman and Associates (1991) suggest that construction of the race commenced in 1870 and took two and a half years to complete, with fluming used to cross creek gullies in several sections. It ended at the site of a quartz mine near the head of Frenchmans Gully where it supplied water to a crushing battery. Later, during the 1930s Depression, the race was cleaned out and supplied enough water pressure for sluicing. This ceased after four years due to the amount of sludge entering Creswick Creek.

Alternatively, there is historical evidence that the race dates from an earlier period. In September 1860 the Chairman brought to the notice of the Creswick Council an abandoned water race that had been cut some time earlier from Birch's Creek around by Spring Gully and the Eastern Hill. The race could, he suggested, be cleaned and repaired for about £100, with a reservoir built on Eastern Hill to supply domestic water to the township, along with water to miners around Clark's Hill. The council obtained Water Right No.153 for this race but the plan to supply water from this source was never carried out (VPRS 3730).

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/>