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# BAARMUTHA HYDRAULIC SLUICING AREA

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## Location

BUCKLAND GAP ROAD BEECHWORTH, INDIGO SHIRE

## Municipality

INDIGO SHIRE

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8225-0148

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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### Interpretation of Site

This large area represents continual mining activity from the earliest phases (c-1850s) to the mid 20th century. The various phases of mining represented include puddling, ground sluicing and hydraulic sluicing. The site was opened by small scale alluvial miners in the 1850s, and as European miners left Chinese miners continued ground sluicing. In the 1860's miners with capital began to construct long races to increase the water supply to Three Mile and Hodgsons Creek and large scale hydraulic sluicing commenced. Many miners consolidated, particularly in the 1880s when water rights were up for renewal and John Pund came to dominate the mining in this area. Legislation for sludge control required Pund to construct several sludge dams. Pund's company was taken over in 1918 and continued until 1950s, being one of Beechworth's longest running hydraulic sluicing companies. The environmental impacts of mining here can be identified downstream over 25 km away.

Archaeological  
Significance

This site has a high level of archaeological significance. The site contains multiple examples of mining techniques practiced over 80 years and provides tangible evidence of complex water management systems (co-ordinates for notable extant features are provided in S.21 of this site card). Archaeological features include head & tail races (negative cuts), puddler, spoil and sediment deposits, sludge dams, wooden flume base, dams, ground sluices and deep gullies. Sludge and tailings deposits from periods of upstream mining are stratigraphically identifiable in sludge dams and eroding gully walls. Many water races can be traced via historic documents to complex water management systems originating over 20 km away causing identifiable environmental effects more than 25km downstream. Lidar imagery has assisted in identifying many features during field work and many more features require ground truthing. Historical maps indicate sites of potential archaeological deposits such as hut, school, chapel, and garden sites, although LiDAR imagery suggests subsequent hydraulic sluicing has removed traces of these features.

Although alluvial mining sites are common on Victorian goldfields, very few sites have been documented and mapped in detail, and the integrity of remain water management complexes is largely under researched.

Historical  
Significance

The site has a high level of historical significance at a local level. Despite the disturbed and fragmentary preservation of the Beechworth goldfields, the intertwined narratives of mining, water supply, environmental consequences and rapidly evolving legislation can be interpreted in this 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 mining and water management laws for the State of Victoria. The evolution of Beechworth mining laws played a pivotal role in establishing Statewide laws particularly with regard to water rights.

The Three Mile mining landscape and extant water races are able to be linked by historical documents to other mining areas around Beechworth that together make up an important cultural landscape of water management. Differences between Beechworth mining and water management practices and other mining areas are only now becoming apparent as more detailed research of these complex mining environments is being undertaken. The environmental impacts of mining are still largely under researched.

Hermes  
Number

197466

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/>*