

Heritage Listing

Golden Plains Shire

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

The former Railway Water Tank is located within the Lethbridge Lake and Public Reserve, within the township of Lethbridge. The site was originally gazetted as a Railway Reservoir, located on Bruce's Creek which was dammed to form the 'Muddy Waterholes' reservoir and to supply water to replenish the boilers of the steam engines arriving at Lethbridge Station. The reservoir was located approximately 500 metres from the station and sidings. The Ballarat-Geelong line was of particular importance before the more direct route between Melbourne and Ballarat was built. The former Railway Water Tank was constructed in the 1860s from riveted cast iron, mounted on a rectangular basalt base which housed the pump station. The bluestone was sourced from the local Lethbridge quarry, which supplied the bluestone used to construct the Lethbridge Railway Station and numerous railway bridges. The structure is particularly well-built. By the mid-twentieth century diesel locomotives were introduced along the Ballarat-Geelong line, superseding the need for fresh water to facilitate the operation of steam engines. In 1974 the site was acquired by Shire of Bannockburn as a Recreation and Amusement Reserve. The former Railway Water Tank, although rusted, retains a high degree of integrity and is in good condition.

How is it significant?

The former Railway Water Tank, at the Lethbridge Lake and Public Reserve is of architectural and historical significance to the Golden Plains Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Railway Water Tank is of architectural significance as a representative example of a water supply station constructed in the 1860s from rectangular riveted cast iron mounted on a basalt base. The Railway Water Tank is also significant as a surviving example of the use of locally quarried bluestone, which is synonymous with the railway infrastructure throughout Lethbridge and district.

The Railway Water Tank is historically significant for its association with the earliest phase of the Victorian Railways and 19th century steam engines, demonstrating a past way of life and superseded technology.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Golden Plains - Golden Plains Shire Heritage Study Phase 2, Heritage Matters P/L, 2009;
Hermes Number	31690
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The former Railway Water Tank is situated on Allotment 33a, township of Lethbridge, within the Lethbridge Lake and Public Reserve, adjacent to the former 'Muddy Waterholes' reservoir. The lake is now a public swimming hole, and the reserve features recreation and BBQ shelters and the former Railway Water Tank.

The former reservoir was constructed on the upper reaches of Bruce's Creek to hold a capacity of approximately 6 million gallons. A diesel pump station, located within the base of the tank (since removed) was capable of pumping approximately 30,000 litres of water into the tank per hour. Water from the tank was fed through a pipe to a standpipe at the Lethbridge Railway sidings, to replenish the boilers of early steam locomotives on the Ballarat to Geelong line.

The former Railway Water Tank held a capacity of 90,000 litres of water within the riveted iron rectangular tank. The tank is mounted on a rectangular rock-face basalt or bluestone base, which features two segmental arched doorways located in the western and southern elevations and two arched window openings in the northern and eastern elevations. The window frames and panes do not survive. The base comprises a total of twelve courses of locally quarried bluestone including a plinth, a stringcourse at the springing of the arches and a fully dressed cornice as the penultimate course. The masonry is particularly well-built. The former Railway Water Tank, although rusted, and the base retain a high degree of integrity and are in good condition.

The tank and base can be compared with later standard designs such as a circular brick tower supporting an iron tank and iron posts supporting an iron tank.

Historical Australian Themes

The Australian Heritage Commission devised the Australian Historic Themes in 2001. The following themes have influenced the historical development of the Lethbridge Railway Water Tank.

3 Developing Local, Regional And National Economies

3.11 Altering the environment

3.11.1 Regulating waterways

3.11.5 Establishing water supplies

3.8.6 Building and maintaining railways

Integrity

The former Railway Water Tank, although rusted, and the base retain a high degree of integrity and are in good condition.

Physical Description 2

Extent of Registration: To the extent of the Lethbridge Lake and Recreation Reserve, including the Railway Water Tank being the whole land situated on Allotment 33a, township of Lethbridge. The extent excludes the BBQ shelter, rotunda, plantings and seating.

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/>