

# BIG HILL RAILWAY PRECINCT (MURRAY VALLEY RAILWAY, MELBOURNE TO ECHUCA)



big hill railway precinct  
bendigo coliban system water  
race apr1998

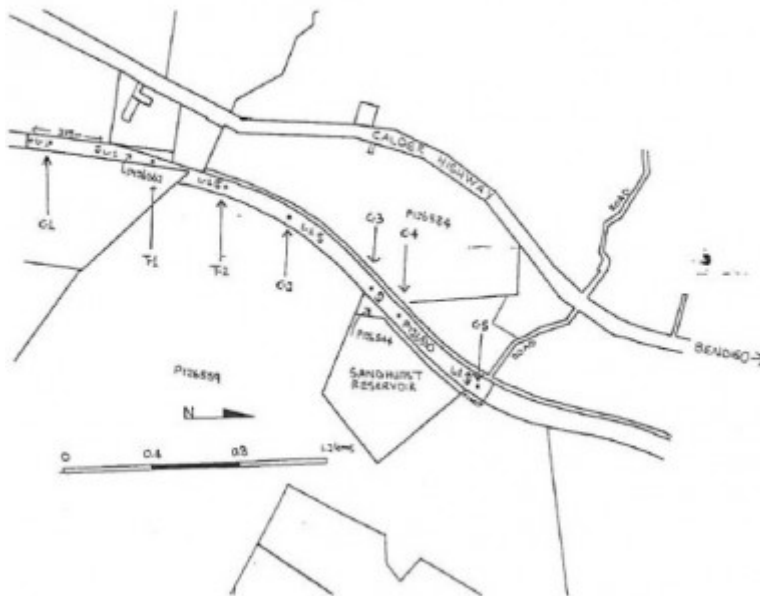


BIG HILL RAILWAY  
PRECINCT (MURRAY  
VALLEY RAILWAY,  
MELBOURNE TO ECHUCA)  
SOHE 2008



1 big hill railway precinct  
bendigo tunnel portal apr1998

DIAGRAM NO. 608475



H1787 big hill plan

## Location

OFF CALDER HIGHWAY BIG HILL AND MANDURANG AND MANDURANG SOUTH AND RAVENSWOOD,  
GREATER BENDIGO CITY

## **Municipality**

GREATER BENDIGO CITY

## **Level of significance**

Registered

## **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H1787

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO711

## **VHR Registration**

February 25, 1999

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

---

## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - August 30, 1999

### **What is significant?**

The Big Hill Railway precinct forms part of the Murray Valley Railway (Melbourne to Echuca line). Opened in five stages from February 1859 to September 1864, the Murray Valley Railway was the largest of the Colony's first two main trunk lines. The inability of the line's original private promoters - the Melbourne, Mount Alexander and Murray River Company to raise sufficient funds to construct the line, led to the government purchasing the company and embracing a public railway system. The Government's decision to construct the line in 1856 was accompanied by the formation of the Victorian Railways Department. The building of the line during the early 1860s reflected the strategic economic issues of the day: servicing the important goldfields of Castlemaine and Bendigo, and capturing the Murray River and Riverina trade for the Port of Melbourne. With a labour force of more than 6,000 men, the Melbourne to Echuca line was the Colony's largest capital works project of its time. The line is still used today for public transport and freight services and comprises a very large number of structures and facilities of varying ages, conditions and degrees of operational and business significance.

### **How is it significant?**

The Big Hill Railway precinct is of historical, scientific and archaeological importance to the State of Victoria.

### **Why is it significant?**

The Big Hill Railway precinct (comprising the Big Hill tunnel, five culverts, cuttings, embankments, archaeological deposits, mullock heaps and a section of the main Coliban system water race system) is historically and scientifically significant as an integral part of the railway line and is an important representative sample of one of the earliest and grandest capital works projects in Victorian history. The identified features comprising the precinct are all substantially intact and provide a crucial reminder of the adoption of English engineering and architectural standards and the role of the Victorian Railway Department in developing the Colony's engineering expertise.

The Big Hill tunnel is significant as an one the largest construction undertakings on the line being of similar size and design to the Elphinstone tunnel. The associated railway engineering works are excellent examples of the range of materials, building techniques and design types used on the Kyneton to Bendigo section of the line. The

precinct makes an important contribution in defining the character of the Victorian Railway network.

The Big Hill Railway precinct also has the potential to contain buried evidence of the workers' camp that accommodated the massive work force undertaking the major works.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Construction dates	1859,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place, Registered archaeological place,
Hermes Number	5602
Property Number	

---

## Extent of Registration

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended in that the Heritage Register Number 1787 is now described as a Heritage Place and Archaeological Place:

Big Hill Railway Precinct (Murray Valley Railway, Melbourne to Echuca), Calder Highway, Bendigo, Greater City of Bendigo.

### EXTENT:

1. All of the railway engineering works known as:  
. granite semi-circular culvert (C-1), map reference 7724-529170,

- . south portal of Big Hill tunnel, (T-1), 7724-530175,
- . north portal of Big Hill tunnel, (T-2), 7724-531178,
- . brick culvert, (C-2), 7724-532181,
- . Coliban system water race and railway culvert, (C-3), 7724-535184,
- . box culvert, (C-4), 7724-536186,
- . brick semi-circular culvert, (C-5), 7724-539190, and
- . all associated mullock dumps, cuttings, embankments, archaeological objects and deposits within the registered land on Diagram No. 608475 held by the Executive Director.

2. All of the land 300 metres south of the southern portal Big Hill tunnel and 1500 metres north of the northern portal marked L-1 on diagram number 608475, being parts of Crown land parcels P126562 and P126510 vested in the Public Transport Corporation.

Dated: 4 February 1999

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 8 25 February 1999 p.506]

*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/>*