
Hopkins River (Timber Truss) Bridge



B6701 Hopkins River Timber Truss Bridge

Location

Over Hopkins River,, WARRNAMBOOL VIC 3280 - Property No B6701

Municipality

WARRNAMBOOL CITY

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 12, 2006

The timber truss and beam bridge over the Hopkins River estuary at Warrnambool is technically aesthetically, and historically significant at a State level. It is the oldest of only six surviving timber truss bridges in Victoria and is the most intact timber road bridge of any type for its size and age. Opened in 1895, the Hopkins River Bridge is one of the few 19th century timber road bridges in Victoria still in use today. Although its single 15.2 metre truss span was modified by the addition of steel relieving girders in 1985, and is no longer load bearing, both of the original trusses were retained and remain intact and in-situ. The design of these trusses is unique within Australia and demonstrates important American influences on the local development of timber truss design. They are the only timber bridge trusses in Victoria with cast-iron thrust blocks and clamping plates, a feature often regarded as one of the more advanced aspects of later New South Wales designs.

Historically, the Hopkins River Bridge also holds an important place as the largest timber bridge built in Victoria during the 1890s depression years and as one of the few pre-1900 timber bridges for which original construction drawings survive. The bridge's 23 substantial timber beam approach spans represent one of the best preserved

examples of standard 19th century timber bridge carpentry in the State. Comparison with the construction drawings demonstrates how remarkably intact this part of the structure is, with its original large squared beams, rare scarfed and keyed joints, "ogee" shaped corbels and elements of early timber hand-rail detailing. Aesthetically the Hopkins River Bridge is significant both in its design and its remarkable estuarine landscape setting. Timber bridges of any type in an estuarine setting are now rare and the Hopkins River Bridge is the oldest and second longest example in Victoria. The bridge is a visible but unobtrusive feature of the landscape seen from numerous vantage points both upstream and downstream with its long and comparatively low profile providing a clear contrast to the high limestone cliffs and coastal dunes on either side. It has long been a focal point in the history of Warrnambool, both because of its extraordinarily long life, its importance to the economic development of the region and its presence as a familiar backdrop to the many recreational and leisure activities that have been concentrated on the lower Hopkins River over the past 100 years. It is an important contributory element to a significant cultural landscape that includes coastal dunes, the classified Proudfoot's Boathouse, and impressive limestone cliffs further upstream.

Classified: 16/04/1996

Hermes Number 69895

Property Number

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/>