
WOOLSHED FALLS ALLUVIAL WORKINGS



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Location

MCFEETERS ROAD EAST BEECHWORTH, INDIGO SHIRE

Municipality

INDIGO SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8225-0040

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Hermes Number 10954

Property Number

History

Heritage Inventory History of Site:

The Woolshed - a section of Reedy Creek, about 6.5 km below Beechworth, was opened in 1853. Within two years, it was the richest and busiest locality on the field and was renowned throughout the colony. The Woolshed township extended along the creek for 4 km, serving a mining population of thousands.

The alluvial ground on the Woolshed was very wet and deep, making it difficult to work. Innovation and money were required to tackle the problems of drainage and tailings disposal. In the ground-sluicing claim of Bawden's (or Rawden's) Steam Co. in 1861, 'an endless band of vulcanised india rubber', 15 ft long, was employed to raise tailings and water in buckets and discharge them over the bank into the creek.' Deep tailraces, cut through rock, were the order of the day. By the mid-1860s, Chinese miners predominated: working in large parties, they were able to profitably work ground that others had given up as worthless.

The Woolshed and its tributaries yielded not just gold, but 'black sand', or tin. By 1870 tin 'streaming' was proving more profitable than gold mining.

In 1890, the Woolshed Valley Co. was formed, to re-work the creek by the new system of 'dredging'. This pioneering dredging operation employed a barge-mounted Jennings sand (or gravel) pump. The mining surveyor wrote that the Woolshed Valley Co.'s methods 'could lead to opening up of a new era in alluvial mining', and he was right. The yields from the dredge were 'splendid', despite the ground having already been worked over twice. The Woolshed Valley dredge continued work until 1911.

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/>