
GRETA SOUTH TURQUOISE WORKINGS

Location

147 JONES LANE GRETA SOUTH, WANGARATTA RURAL CITY

Municipality

WANGARATTA RURAL CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8124-0009

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Hermes Number 12280

Property Number

History

Contextual History:History of Place:
Heritage Inventory History of Site:

The turquoise discovered in the district in 1887 was believed to be the first found in Australia. Eighteen months later, the deposit had been traced for 22 km from the discovery site 'on the east boundary of Norton's selection'—16 km up the King River above Edi, and about 3 km east of the river. Samples of the stone sent to England and Germany for valuing in 1889 drew a favourable report, and thereafter the Edi turquoise was largely exported to those countries for use in ornamental inlays (for example, in the panels of top-of-the-range pianos) and cameo cutting. (It was claimed that jewellers in Victoria spurned the local stone.) The turquoise of the district was described as 'of an exquisite blue, which maintains its perfect colour, and is said to equal the best Persian stone'.

In 1893, eight localities were being worked for turquoise between Edi and Cheshunt, by open-face cuttings (often with a shaft at one end) or tunnelling into the hillside. Early this century, turquoise mining was also underway near Greta South, to the west of Edi. By 1912, P.C. Gascoigne (the Edi field's main prospector and promoter) had mined just 3000 carats (0.6 kg) of saleable stone. It appears that turquoise mining ceased in the district in about 1921, after Gascoigne failed to get government backing to develop his mine. An exploratory survey in the 1960s concluded that the turquoise deposits were not commercially viable.

Since the 1960s, the district has been subject to fossicking by lapidary enthusiasts. Access to the turquoise deposits has been curtailed since a renegade rockhound blasted open a hill face with explosives in the early 1970s.

References:

Birch, W.D. & Henry, D.A. (eds), Phosphate Minerals of Victoria, Special Publication No. 3, Mineralogical Society of Victoria, Melbourne, 1993, pp. 83-90

Dunn, E.J., report in Mining Surveyors' Reports, December 1888

Dunn, E.J., 'The Edi Turquoise Field, King River', Records of the Geological Survey of Victoria, vol. 2, part 4, 1908 (report dated 1893), pp. 170-5

Herman, H., 'Victorian Minerals', in Department of Mines Annual Report, 1912, p. 117

Mining Surveyors' Reports (Beechworth Division), December 1889, June 1891

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/>