

# NERRE NERRE WARREN



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## DIAGRAM 2348

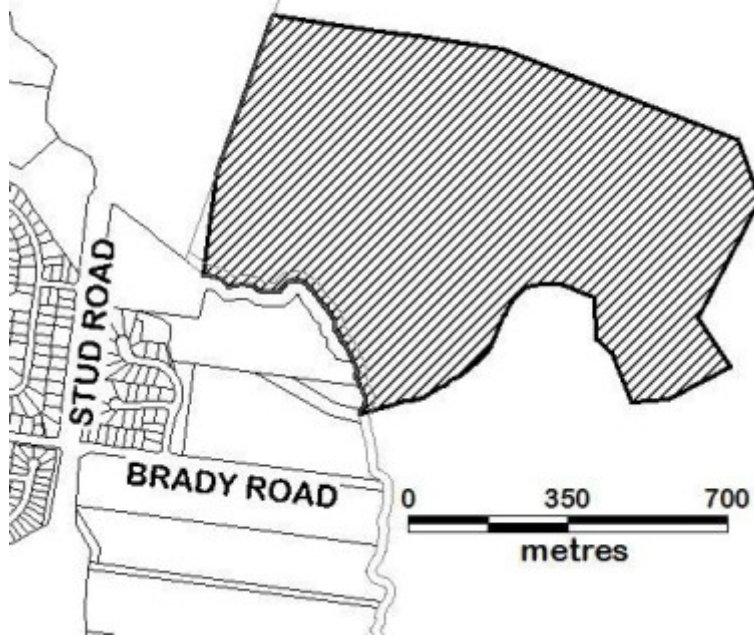


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### Location

CHURCHILL PARK DRIVE ENDEAVOUR HILLS, CASEY CITY

### Municipality

CASEY CITY

### Level of significance

Registered

### Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2348

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO2

### VHR Registration

April 14, 2016

### Heritage Listing

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 29, 2022

### What is significant?

Nerre Nerre Warren is an area of sloping land along a ridge overlooking the Dandenong Creek and river flats which includes the surface and subsurface remains of the Native Police Corps Headquarters, the Westernport Aboriginal Protectorate Home Station, and the Dandenong Police Paddocks and Horse Stud Depot.

#### *History Summary*

Nerre Nerre Warren was the site selected in 1837 for the headquarters of the first Native Police Corps in Victoria that was established by Captain Christaan de Villiers. The same site became the home station for the Westernport District of the Port Phillip Protectorate under Assistant Protector William Thomas between 1841 and 1843. Between 1842 and 1852 the site functioned as the headquarters of the Native Police Corps raised by Henry Edmund Dana. In 1853 ownership of the place passed to the Victorian Police and it became the Police Paddocks and Horse Stud Depot of the Victoria Police: horses were bred, trained, broken and spelled on the site. From 1879 to 1931 the site was home to a succession of Queensland Aboriginal trackers, initially brought to Victoria to assist in the search for the notorious Kelly Gang in 1879. All the buildings and structures (nineteenth and twentieth century) standing on the site in 1962 were demolished in that year due to safety concerns prior to a Scout Jamboree held 1964-65. This place is currently known as the Dandenong Police Paddocks.

#### *Description Summary*

Nerre Nerre Warren is located in Endeavour Hills approximately 30 kilometres south east of Melbourne. It consists of parklands which contain a number of archaeological ruins and deposits along a prominent ridge line. Brick and granite ruins can be seen at surface level, including one brick wall. The presence of surface fabric indicates that there is a high level of subsurface archaeological intactness. Nerre Nerre Warren is on the traditional land of the people of the Kulin nation.

### How is it significant?

Nerre Nerre Warren is of archaeological and historical significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criteria for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

#### **Criterion A**

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

#### **Criterion C**

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.

### Why is it significant?

Nerre Nerre Warren is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

Nerre Nerre Warren is historically significant as one of the most important sites in the Melbourne area for Aboriginal-settler interactions in the first years of the Port Phillip settlement. It is the place where the first Native Police Corps was established in Victoria in 1837 and was its headquarters from 1842-52. The Native Police Corps performed duties throughout Victoria and were recruited from communities across the Colony. Nerre Nerre Warren was also the home station for the Westernport District of the Port Phillip Protectorate 1841-43. The place demonstrates the significant role that Aboriginal people played in the settlement and policing of Victoria and the ways in which Aboriginal people experienced colonisation by way of both agency and co-option within British imperial policies and processes. It is also significant in the history of the Victorian Police and demonstrates the important and changing role of horses in policing from the inception of the force in 1853 to 1931. [Criterion A] Nerre Nerre Warren is of significance for its potential to contain archaeological remains, features and deposits relating to the Native Police Corps (1837 & 1842-52), the Westernport District of the Port Phillip Protectorate (1841-43), and the Dandenong Police Paddocks and Horse Stud Depot (1853-1931). Important information is likely to be yielded about the first Native Police Corps in Victoria; the daily lives of the people in the Westernport District of the Port Phillip Protectorate; construction phases of the buildings; and the workings of the Horse Stud Depot of the Victoria Police. [Criterion C]

### **Nerre Nerre Warren is also significant for the following reasons, but not at the State level:**

Nerre Nerre Warren is significant as the location of the Seventh Australian Boy Scout Jamboree, held from 30 December 1964 to 9 January 1965 and attended by 15,000 scouts. All buildings and structures (nineteenth and

twentieth century) were demolished in 1962 to prepare for this event. The place is popular for recreational walkers as an area of natural beauty and includes areas of significant indigenous flora.

## 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](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

It should be noted that Permit Exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.42(4) of the Heritage Act). Permit Exemptions can also be applied for and granted after registration (under s.66 of the Heritage Act)

#### General Condition 1

All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object.

#### General Condition 2

Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of works that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible.

#### General Condition 3

All works should be informed by Conservation Management Plans prepared for the place. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan, and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

#### General Condition 4

Nothing in this determination prevents the Heritage Council from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

#### General Condition 5

Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the relevant responsible authority, where applicable.

## Specific Permit Exemptions

### Landscape Exemptions:

- . The process of gardening, including mowing, disease and weed control, and maintenance to care for existing plants.
- . The removal or pruning of dead or dangerous trees to maintain safety. If the tree is identified as being of primary or contributory cultural heritage significance, the Executive Director must be notified of these works within 21 days of them being undertaken.
- . Removal of vegetation that is not significant in order to maintain fire safety and to conserve significant buildings and structures.
- . Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Pruning of Amenity Trees AS 4373-1996
- . Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard; Protection of Trees on Development Sites AS 4970-2009.
- . Removal of plants listed as noxious weeds in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994
- . Vegetation protection and management of possums and vermin.
- . Landscape maintenance works provided the activities do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits.

### Fire Suppression Duties

The following fire suppression duties are permit exempt: a) Fire suppression and fire fighting duties provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) Fire suppression activities such as fuel reduction burns, and fire control line construction, provided all significant historical and archaeological features are appropriately recognised and protected.

Note: Fire management authorities should be aware of the location, extent and significance of historical and archaeological places when developing fire suppression and fire fighting strategies. The importance of places listed in the Heritage Register must be considered when strategies for fire suppression and management are being developed.

### Weed and Vermin Control

The following weed and vermin control activities are permit exempt: a) Weed and vermin control activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits.

Note: Particular care must be taken with weed and vermin control works where such activities may have a detrimental affect on the significant fabric of a place. Such works may include the removal of ivy, moss or lichen from an historic structure or feature, or the removal of burrows from a site that has archaeological values.

### Public Safety and Security

The following public safety and security activities are permit exempt: a) public safety and security activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground structures or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) the erection of temporary security fencing, scaffolding, hoardings or surveillance systems to prevent unauthorised access or secure public safety which will not adversely affect significant fabric of the place including archaeological features; c) development including emergency stabilisation necessary to secure safety where a site feature has been irreparably damaged or destabilised and represents a safety risk to its users or the public.

Note: Urgent or emergency site works are to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified specialist such as a structural engineer, or other heritage professional.

### Signage and Site Interpretation

The following Signage and Site Interpretation activities are permit exempt: a) signage and site interpretation activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground structures or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) the erection of non-illuminated signage for the purpose of ensuring public safety or to assist in the interpretation of the heritage significance of the place or object and which will not adversely affect significant fabric including landscape or archaeological features of the place or obstruct significant views of and from heritage values or items; c) signage and site interpretation products must be located and be of a suitable size so as not to obscure or damage significant fabric of the place; d) signage and site interpretation products must be able to be later removed without causing damage to the significant fabric of the place.

Note: The development of signage and site interpretation products must be consistent in the use of format, text, logos, themes and other display materials. Note: Where possible, the signage and interpretation material should be consistent with other schemes developed on similar or associated sites. It may be necessary to consult with land managers and other stakeholders concerning existing schemes and strategies for signage and site interpretation.

## Theme

2. Peopling Victoria's places and landscapes 5. Building Victoria's industries and workforce 7. Governing Victorians 8. Building community life

Construction dates	1837, 1842, 1853,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place, Registered archaeological place,
Other Names	DANDENONG POLICE PADDOCKS,
Hermes Number	13456
Property Number	

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## History

### HISTORY

#### Native Police Corps in Victoria

During the nineteenth century, armed Indigenous forces - or Native Police Corps - were a feature of British colonial rule throughout its empire, including in India, South Africa, the West Indies and the Australian colonies. In Victoria, a Native Police Corps was established in the Port Phillip District on three separate occasions - 1837, 1838 and 1842. The philosophy behind the Native Police Corps was that its Aboriginal members could be gradually educated in military discipline and English, and that they would come to see the benefits of 'civilised society', abandoning their 'erratic' ways, and pass these qualities on to their families. At Nerre Nerre Warren (1837 and 1842-52) the Aboriginal police could work in the gardens, hunt and fish under supervision, but were to **give up many traditional activities** with the exception of tracking a necessary skill for police work. Another condition of joining up was that members of the Native Police were to distance themselves from Aboriginal people that did not belong to the Native Police as well as the lowest classes of white society that might have sought to corrupt them. In Victoria, the Native Police Corps performed duties across, and were recruited from communities throughout, the Colony.

#### Native Police Corps Headquarters - 1837, Nerre Nerre Warren

In 1837 Captain Christaan Ludolph Johannes de Villiers, who had worked with a similar native police force in South Africa, was tasked by Police Magistrate Captain William Lonsdale to create a force of Aboriginal men to be stationed at Nerre Nerre Warren. A site along Dandenong Creek twenty miles from Melbourne, was selected in consultation with the Aboriginal men of the Boon wurrung and Woi wurrung. Traditionally a gathering place, Nerre Nerre Warren was approved by the Colonial Secretary and a large area of 3840 acres was secured so that squatters were prevented from having land nearby. The land formally became a reserve in early 1838. On 1

January 1838 Superintendent de Villiers resigned his position because of interference and complaints by the missionary George Langhorne. Subsequently Langhorne was appointed Superintendent and he arranged for the Mission overseer at Nerre Nerre Warren to take charge of the Native Police Corps, buildings and stores. The Native Police refused to serve under Langhorne and left Nerre Nerre Warren, and the force lapsed.

The 1837 Native Police Corps lasted only ten weeks from 28 October 1837 to 7 January 1838. Their activities mainly involved establishing routines (marching and military drilling) and building structures. With the aid of two convict labourers they constructed the Corps Headquarters: de Villier's quarters, convict quarters, a parade ground and a flagstaff. These early structures were made from timber and no remains are likely to survive.

Native Police Corps Headquarters - September 1838-January 30, Jolimont

In September 1838 Lonsdale made a second attempt at establishing the Native Police Corps again with de Villiers as Superintendent. This time it was located to the east of his own cottage at Jolimont at a place known as the Police Magistrates Paddock, within the area now known as the Melbourne Park Sporting Precinct. This attempt lasted from 18 September 1838 to 15 January 1839.

Native Police Corps Headquarters - 1842-52, Nerre Nerre Warren (Secondary base at Merri Creek)

The most successful Native Police Corps was established and commanded by Henry EP Dana between 1842 and 1852. The Corps began with twenty men and was stationed at Nerre Nerre Warren between 1842 and 1852, with a secondary base closer to Melbourne at Merri Creek. Between 1841 and 1843 Nerre Nerre Warren was also used the home station for the Westernport District of the Port Phillip.

Many of the Aboriginal men who joined the 1842 Corps were the Elders of the country surrounding Port Phillip Bay, including Billibellary and his nephew Beruk (later known as William Barak). William Thomas, Assistant Protector of Aborigines, wrote that when the idea of establishing the Native Police Corps was put to them, the Aboriginal Elders discussed it for many days. They seem to have concluded that the colonists intended to stay and that it was in their interest to form some kind of alliance. Joining the Native Police Corps was a chance to have some influence on the new government. In addition, through their involvement in the Native Police they would be able to exert an influence in territories outside their own clan alliances. The Native Police were given horses, uniforms and weapons, food and accommodation. They were also promised a salary. While on duty, they had to act under specific orders, rules and regulations. These usually written instructions governed what was considered to be proper conduct for both the Aboriginal troopers and the European officers under whom they served. As exemplars for the behaviour of the Corps, they were part of a hierarchy of responsibility within the colonial government. Whenever it became known that a member of the Native Police had not acted according to these rules, an explanation was required higher up the ranks. Many of the records that document the activities of the Native Police discuss such breaches of discipline. In addition, there was a system of reports that senior officers had to submit to their superiors at regular intervals. These also provide information about the workings of the Native Police Corps.

Although Aboriginal troopers had to submit to forms of military discipline, there were some allowances made for their traditional ways of life. During the summer months they were generally allowed leave to rejoin their communities and take part in activities relating to their own culture. Some of these activities were not in accordance with the ideals of the Native Police, however the colonial government believed that the best way to eventually 'civilise' the troopers was by not forcing them to abandon all their traditional practices immediately. Another concession introduced by Henry Dana was the provision of rations to family dependants of his Aboriginal troopers. The wives of troopers also received their own separate rations. European food and clothing were distributed so that they could care for themselves, their children and any aged dependants. The Aboriginal troopers were expected to supplement their food rations through hunting. As another compromise, Dana allowed troopers' families to live at headquarters. These were some of the main reasons why Dana's Native Police lasted longer than the original corps that Christaan de Villiers had set up in 1837.

The names of the 1842 corps members are as follows: **Billibellary**, Wawoorong headman, known as Jacky Jacky; his cousin **Murrem Murrem Bean** (Mr Hill), headman of the Kurnang-willam at Bacchus Marsh; Billibellary's son **Culpendure**, known as Robin; Billibellary's nephew **Yeaptune**, a Tonguerong from the Goulburn; **Perpine** (Mr McNoel) and **Pereuk** (Poky Poky), Westernport men who had assisted in the capture of the five Palawa men in 1841; **Nangollilbel**, known as John Bull or Captain Turnbull, the leader of the Konugwillam, in the Mt Macedon area; **Tomboko** (Henry), a young Konugwillam man; **Nerimbineck**, also a Konugwillam man, brother to Windberry who was shot by the Army in 1840; **Nunuptune** (Billy Langhorne),

Konugwillam man, he had been a member of De Villiers' police and assisted in the capture of five Palawa men; **Polligary** (Tommy); **Waverong** (Mr Murray), one of another powerful section of the Wawoorong, whose country includes the upper Yarra; **Yanki Yanki**, a Westernport man who had been captured by sealers in the early 1830s, taken to Preservation Island in the Bass Strait, from where he escaped to Launceston, took passage to the Swan River in Western Australia, worked there, then returned to Port Phillip via Adelaide; **Munmungina** (Dr Bailey); **Beruke** a man very visible in European society, one who cultivated friendships with Europeans; **Giberuke**, a Goulburn man; **Boro Boro**, known as George or Mr. Walpole, and **Curra Curra** (Davy) and **Buckup** were all Bunerong men, as was **Talliorang** (Mr King), while **Yammabook**, known as Hawks' eye or Charley, was a Marinbulluk man.

More than 100 Aboriginal men served in Dana's Native Police. In 1851 the number of Aboriginal troopers was 45, while European members numbered 15 out of a total of 60 members at that time. The Aboriginal men were recruited from all over Victoria and parts of New South Wales. Throughout the 1840s there were 40-50 men serving Aboriginal men at any time. The Corps were organised into three divisions, two of which were stationed in the field during winter and a third that was comprised of older men and recruits, who remained at Nerre Nerre Warren. The Corps was disbanded after Dana's death in 1852. There were a number of contributory factors, including the Corp's dissatisfaction with their wages and duties and the dramatic changes caused by the gold rush.

#### Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate (1838-1849)

The Port Phillip Protectorate was created by the British House of Commons in 1838. The primary purpose of the Protector was to promote the wellbeing of the colony's Aboriginal people and to represent their interests and grievances to the Colonial Executive or British government. The long-term objective of the scheme was to 'civilise' the Aboriginal residents, to teach them agriculture, house-building and other endeavours, to educate them to a settled European peasant lifestyle and to convert them to Christianity. Under the scheme, the Protector was to move with the Aboriginal groups they were responsible for, learn their customs and gather information on their numbers and tribal areas. In 1839 George Augustus Robinson became the Chief Protector of Aborigines and four assistants were appointed to particular regions: William Thomas to the Melbourne and Westernport regions, James Dredge to the Goulburn region, Edward Stone Parker to the Loddon and Northwest District and Charles Sievwright to the Western District.

#### The Westernport Home Station of the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate at Nerre Nerre Warren (1841-43)

Between 1841 and 1843 the home station for the Westernport District of the Port Phillip Protectorate was Nerre Nerre Warren under Assistant Protector William Thomas. Between 1842 and 1852 Nerre Nerre Warren was also the location of the Native Police Corps. Thomas believed that the people of the Westernport District could live a European peasant existence, away from the evils of Melbourne. He envisaged a school for the children and a hospital for the sick. He hoped to create a place where men and women would raise their families, tend to fields, rear livestock and learn scripture on the Sabbath. This vision was unrealistic. The Westernport groups tried to maintain traditional movements across the landscape, despite the putting up of fences and the hostility of squatters. Chief Protector Robinson asserted that 'No settler is allowed to occupy land within five miles of the Assistant Protector's hut'. Although there were already three settlers within five miles, it appears that they remained for the duration of the Protectorate. Aboriginal occupation often fluctuated.

Ultimately William Thomas was not successful in convincing the people of the Westernport Protectorate to live permanently at Nerre Nerre Warren, as it was so far from Melbourne. By 1843, Thomas had re-established the Protectorate Headquarters at Merri Creek, but Aboriginal community members still visited Nerre Nerre as required. From 1843 the Native Police at Nerre Nerre Warren also used Merri Creek as an alternative headquarters as required. At this time Nerre Nerre Warren included approximately 1500 acres of well grassed and fenced land, and thirty acres under cultivation. There were five buildings of wattle and daub with bark rooves constructed at this time.

#### The Westernport Home Station of the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate at Merri Creek (1843-47)

From 1843 to 1847, the headquarters for the Western Port District of the Protectorate at Merri Creek was a small hut located on a bluff overlooking the Yarra River. But the Westernport Protectorate community also returned to Nerre Nerre Warren from time to time. By the late 1840s the Protectorate system was seen as a failure, and, unsupported by the government or the public, it was dismantled on 31 December 1849. In 1852 George Robinson returned to England.



## Dandenong Police Paddocks and Horse Stud Depot (1853-1931)

The Victorian Police Force was established in 1853. In that year Nerre Nerre Warren passed into the possession of the Victoria Police as a horse stud and stables which operated until 1931. Horses were bred, trained, broken and spelled on the site. By 1858 there were three resident stallions, 140 brood mares and 93 colts and fillies. Two of the most famous police stallions were stabled at the Dandenong Police Paddocks in the 1920s. Sacedon was the sire and grandsire of the famous police greys, and Gortland was sire to a long line of capable police horses.

In 1879 Aboriginal trackers from Queensland were housed at Nerre Nerre Warren, to aid in the efforts to track the Kelly Gang. In a 1925 article in the *Argus*, it was noted that two Aboriginal Trackers remained in residence at the time. All buildings (nineteenth and twentieth century) standing on the site in 1962 were demolished in that year due to safety concerns prior to a Scout Jamboree which was held over the new year period 1964-65.

### KEY REFERENCES USED TO PREPARE ASSESSMENT

Blake, L 1982 *Captain Dana and the Native Police*, Neptune Press.

Fels, M 1988, *Good Men and True: the Aboriginal Police of the Port Phillip District 1827-1853*, Melbourne University Press.

Fels, M 1990, *The Dandenong Police Paddocks Volume 1: Early Use as a native police headquarters and aboriginal protectorate station 1837-1853*, Victoria Archaeological Survey.

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Goulding, M and Menism, M 2006, *Moreland post-contact Aboriginal heritage study*, Golden Heritage Consulting: Moreland City Council.

Rhodes, D 1990, *The Dandenong Police Paddocks Volume 3: An Archaeological Survey*, Victoria Archaeological Survey.

Clark, D and Heydon, T 2004 *A Bend in the Yarra: A History of the Merri Creek Protectorate Station and Merri Creek Aboriginal School 1841-1851*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.

Public Record Office Victoria, 'Tracking the Native Police', Website, accessed January 2016.

### Plaque Citation

Nerre Nerre Warren is an important site of Aboriginal-settler interactions in the early Port Phillip settlement. It was the Native Police headquarters in 1837 and 1842-52 and the location of the 1841 Westernport Aboriginal Protectorate. From 1853-31 it was the Victoria Police Horse Stud and Paddocks.

### Extent of Registration

#### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the following places in the Heritage Register:

Number: H2348

Category: Heritage Place; Archaeological Place

Place: Nerre Nerre Warren (Dandenong Police Paddocks)

Location: Churchill Park Drive

Endeavour Hills

Casey City

All of the place shown hatched in Diagram 2348 encompassing parts of Crown Allotments 15B and 15E Parish of Narree Worran.

Dated 14 April 2016

TIM SMITH  
Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 15 14 April 2016 p.637]

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*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/>*