

## VALLEJO GANTNER HUT



h00046 1 gantner hut feb2005 as 001



h00046 gantner hut rear view feb2005 as 002



h00046 gantner hut side view feb2005 as 003



h00046 gantner hut from the lookout feb2005 as 004



h00046 gantner hut crosscut saw from the lookout feb2005 as 005



h00046 gantner hut interior with fireplace feb2005 as 006



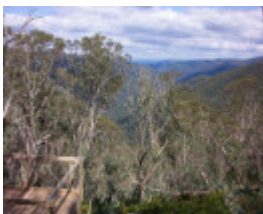
h00046 gantner hut table and benches feb2005 as 007



h00046 gantner hut sleeping loft and north door feb2005 as 008



h00046 gantner hut solid furniture woodbox as bed feb2005 as 009



h00046 gantner hut view from toilet feb2005 as 010



h00046 gantner hut the third toilet feb2005 as 011



h00046 gantner hut loo with a view feb2005 as 012



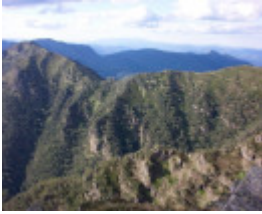
h00046 gantner hut sleeping loft n end  
feb2005 013



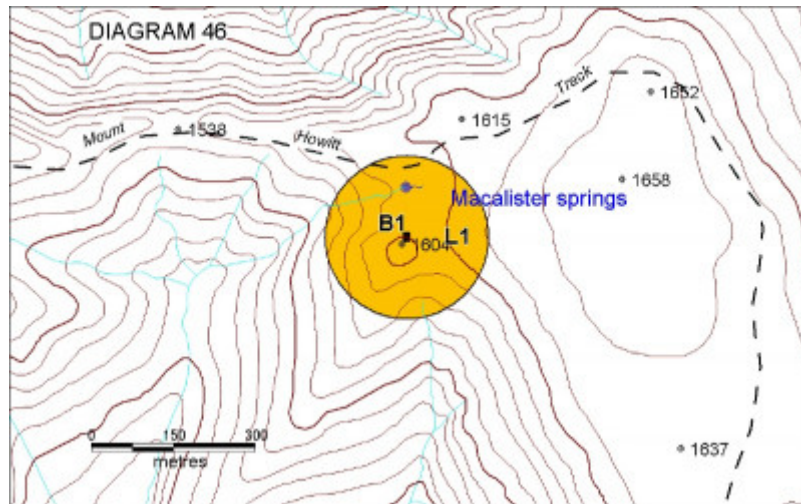
h00046 gantner hut sleeping loft s end  
feb2005 014



h00046 gantner hut the view they come  
for feb2005 as 015



h00046 gantner hut the challenge the  
crosscut saw from mt



h00046 gantner plan

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## Location

MOUNT HOWITT WALKING TRACK HOWITT PLAINS, WELLINGTON SHIRE

## Municipality

WELLINGTON SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0046

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO118

## VHR Registration

November 17, 2005

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 21, 2005

What is significant?

The Vallejo Gantner Memorial Hut is an architect-designed hut in Victoria's high country, near Mount Howitt. It was designed in 1970 by David McGlashan, of architects McGlashan & Everist, and built in 1970-71. The hut was built in memory of Vallejo Gantner, a young man who loved the mountains and who died accidentally in 1962 at the age of 19. The hut was intended for use by all comers.

The Vallejo Gantner Hut is modeled on the concept of a hiker's tent. Two gabled beams at the front hold a long ridge-pole which is anchored by a stone buttress two metres behind the hut. The strong triangular front wall faces the spectacular skyline of the Crosscut Saw. The windows are triangular or diamond-shaped glass in the gables of the front and rear walls. The roof is of copper sheeting, with no breaks in the sweep from ridge-pole to ground. The roof is lined internally with Stramit insulating board. Apart from the roof, much of the building material used is local, including sandstone, basalt and woollybutt poles, in the tradition of the cattlemen's huts.

The Gantner Hut has very high levels of visitation, due to its strategic position. The site was chosen in 1963 because it was remote from all other huts, and is amongst what many regard as the best walking country and the most spectacular mountain scenery in Victoria. The Hut provides a natural overnight stop between Mt. Howitt and the Crosscut Saw for walkers on the Australian Alps Walking Track, which was also established in the 1970s. It is also a convenient camping spot for those traveling from Mt. Howitt down into the Wonnangatta Valley. There is permanent water at Macalister Springs nearby, and firewood from the surrounding snowgums.

How is it significant?

The Vallejo Gantner Memorial Hut is of architectural, historical and social significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Vallejo Gantner Memorial Hut is architecturally significant as a rare example of an architect-designed alpine hut. It is one of only three huts in the Victorian Alps designed by architects. The other is Cleve Cole Hut, designed by Malcolm McColl and built in 1937 and the Joyce Brockhoff Hut designed by Buchan, Laird and Buchan in 1949.

The Vallejo Gantner Memorial Hut is architecturally significant as a unique variant on the A-frame design, which became popular in the 1960s for ski lodges and holiday houses, but was rarely used for alpine huts. In Victoria the only other A-frame alpine hut is Diamantina Hut near Mt. Feathertop.

The Vallejo Gantner Memorial Hut is historically significant as a rare example of the practice of establishing memorial huts in the Victorian Alps. Others are Cleve Cole Hut, 1937, Charlie Derrick Hut, 1967, and Bluff Spur Hut, 1987. No new memorial huts have been permitted in the Alpine National Park since 1989.

The Vallejo Gantner Memorial Hut is historically significant as a representative example of a hut associated with

the history of bushwalking as a recreational activity in Victoria, and with the expansion of outdoor education activities in the mountains in the 1970s-80s.

The Vallejo Gantner Memorial Hut is socially significant to a large number of bushwalkers and visitors to the mountains, as reflected in the logbook entries and volunteer commitment to the hut's maintenance. The heavily used hut is demonstrative of the growing popularity of outdoor activities such as bushwalking, horse-riding and cross-country skiing in Victoria's mountain country.

## Permit Exemptions

**General Conditions:** 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 Conditions:** 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 the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component.

**General Conditions:** 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan.

**General Conditions:** 4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.

**General Conditions:** 5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable.

**Regular Site Maintenance :** The following site maintenance works are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) regular site maintenance provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) the maintenance of an item to retain its conditions or operation without the removal of or damage to the existing fabric or the introduction of new materials; c) cleaning including the removal of surface deposits, organic growths, or graffiti by the use of low pressure water and natural detergents and mild brushing and scrubbing; d) repairs, conservation and maintenance to plaques, memorials, roads and paths, fences and gates and drainage and irrigation. e) the replacement of existing services such as cabling, plumbing, wiring and fire services that uses existing routes, conduits or voids, and does not involve damage to or the removal of significant fabric. Note: Surface patina which has developed on the fabric may be an important part of the item's significance and if so needs to be preserved during maintenance and cleaning. Note: Any new materials used for repair must not exacerbate the decay of existing fabric due to chemical incompatibility, obscure existing fabric or limit access to existing fabric for future maintenance. Repair must maximise protection and retention of fabric and include the conservation of existing details or elements.

**Weed and Vermin Control :** The following weed and vermin control activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, 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 under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, 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 under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, 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.

Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Regular maintenance works including regular treatment of the external timbers

Repairs to the platform and flooring of the hut which replace like material with like

Remediation of heavily-used tracks with rubber matting or similar

Replacement of the toilet superstructure, provided the replacement is on the same site with the same orientation

Routine replacement of the logbook by Parks Victoria; the old logbook to be sent to the La Trobe Library Manuscripts Section, SLV.

Materials conservation of logbooks held at the La Trobe Library Manuscripts Section, SLV

Construction dates	1971,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place, Registered object integral to a registered place,
Other Names	Wrongly shown as GANTER on maps,
Hermes Number	13654
Property Number	

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## History

Contextual History

The hut was built by the combined efforts of many people. Vallejo's mother, Neilma Gantner, and a group of Vallejo's closest school-friends, worked closely with the architect on the design of the hut, for example suggesting that it turn 90o north to face the Crosscut Saw, rather than facing downhill towards the springs. For two years, volunteers collected stones and rock from the area, and sorted them into two piles: flat (for the floor, the platform, the walls) and not flat (for the foundations). The Vallejo Gantner Hut was officially opened in April, 1971. The capital cost of the hut was borne by Vallejo's family, and his family and friends were involved throughout its design and construction. The story of Vallejo's life, the history of the building of the hut and those who helped, and the opening service in 1971, are told in typescript at the front of each logbook.

It is historically significant in having played a major role in opening up the mountains to a wider, more urban, public. It was opened in April 1971, at the height of public interest in outdoor activities. Schools were starting to develop outdoor education programs; outdoor clothing and equipment were soon to become big business. Bushwalking was possibly at its peak, and commercial horse-riding tours in large numbers came some years later.

It has associative significance in being connected to the Myer family, through Vallejo's mother, Neilma Gantner. It is part of the long philanthropic tradition of the Myer family, as can be seen in the hut's purpose, being there for all to use.

The Gantner Hut is one of very few memorial huts in the Australian Alps in Victoria. No more memorial huts have been built since 1987, when an application to build a memorial refuge hut was rejected by the Federation of Vic. Walking Clubs, the Ski Touring Association of Vic and the Victorian National Parks Association. "Reasons included threat to the fragile environment, (no more huts on the High Plains), damage to snow trails, and potential hazard luring inexperienced skiers by a false sense of security. " [Victorian Alpine Huts Survey 2004-2005. Draft report for public comment .p. 262) This marked the end of building memorial huts in the Victorian Alps. NSW Parks Service

also has a policy of no memorial huts.

The hut site is on a short north-south ridge which connects the Howitt Plains, Clover Plain and the Wonnangatta Spur to the Mt. Howitt range and the Crosscut Saw. A short walk from the hut (5-10 minutes) brings one to the edge of the Terrible Hollow, looking E to the Devil's Staircase, and north of that to the Viking, the Razor and Mount Despair. The Crosscut Saw is a jagged ridge of mountain peaks curving west of the Terrible Hollow to Mt. Howitt, taking in places like Mt. Speculation, Horrible Gap, and Mount Buggery. This, as the names testify, is some of the hardest walking country in the state.

That a hut is needed there is shown by the number of visitors: these are variously estimated from those who signed the logbook as 10,000 to 20,000 p.a. That the hut is loved is shown by comments in the book, such as those from 2004-2005 below:

My Grandpa helped build this hut and its great to be here!

Kate Dennis, 3 Mar. 2004

Fantastic view from Howitt. Crew a bit rough.

Dave, 18.11.04

Have had my eyes opened, don't wish to return to where I've come from. This is living.

Natalia Swietlik

Thank you to whomever cleans the loft window – beautiful clear view of the stars.

Anon

Ventured here for a few days trying to find my soul. I think I've found it.

Anon, Nov. 04.

In 1996, the Vallejo Gantner Hut was included in Graeme Butler's Victorian Alpine Huts Heritage Survey, Graeme Butler & Associates, 1996. Graeme Butler assessed its significance as State-level, for its architectural and historical values. He says:

"It is also historically significant as the focus of many of Melbourne's arts and academic community of the 1960s-70s in the effort to build it and at its opening."

The Hut Committee helps Ranger Wayne McCallum to maintain the hut, and visits it annually to carry out repairs and maintenance.

### References

Typescript history at the hut: "The Building of the Vallejo Gantner Hut 1970 and 1971". Includes the record of the service opening the hut in April 1971. Also held by the State Library of Victoria.

Butler, Graeme. Victorian Alpine Huts Heritage Survey, Graeme Butler & Associates, 1996, pp. 114 – 117. (unpublished report).

DCNR Lands Wonnangatta County Plan 'Public Refuge Hut' on grant 2 acres, GG1971, p.1881; RS 9477; CP77591 shown east of Mt. Howitt.

Hueneke, Klaus. Huts in the Victorian Alps: and the people who built and care for them. Palmerston, A.CT, Tabletop Press, 2003.

Magnussen, Fiona. Victoria's alpine heritage huts of the High Plains: Bogong, Dargo and Hotham regions. Henty, NSW, Staffback Pty Ltd, 2003.

Siseman, John. Walking the Bogong High Plains and adjacent peaks, [by] John Siseman and Algona guides, Montrose, Vic., Algona Publications, 12978.

Siseman, John. Wonnangatta-Moroka National Park. Northcote, Vic., John Siseman in association with Algona Publications, 1985.

## 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 Heritage Register Number 46 in the category described as a Heritage Place, Heritage Object :

Vallejo Gantner Hut, Mount Howitt Track, Howitt Plains, Wellington Shire Council.

### EXTENT

1. All of the building known as the Vallejo Gantner Hut marked B1 on Diagram 46 held by the Executive Director.
2. All of the land marked L1 on Diagram 46 held by the Executive Director being all the land contained within a circle of 150 metres radius of the Vallejo Gantner Hut.
3. The logbooks of the Vallejo Gantner Hut including any current logbook and past logbooks held at the State Library of Victoria.

Dated 17 November 2005

RAY TONKIN  
Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 46 17 November 2005 p.2625]

*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/>*