
RAIL GANG CAMP

Location

HUME HIGHWAY CHILTERN, INDIGO SHIRE

Municipality

INDIGO SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H8225-0113

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Interpretation of Site	It is possible that this scatter was the camp site of gang workers working on the railway lines, although the presence of the mining remains suggests earlier origins as well. Both types of settlements are likely to have comprised ephemeral building features i.e. tents, slab that are less likely to be preserved archaeologically and/or documented in detail. Rubbish accumulations, particularly bottle dumps, however are consistent with the disposal practices associated with ephemeral settlement of mining areas and railway camps.
Archaeological Significance	The site is of low archaeological significance as an artefact scatter that may have the potential to inform about conditions with respect to 19th century and 20th century transport and mining. Archaeological analysis of the artefacts and further survey of the location may provide a more intact assemblage and contribute further information regarding the chronology of the site and its function. As potentially a mining site, a type common in this area, the site is of less significance than if it is determined to be a railway camp. The latter are relatively rare in the region.
Historical Significance	The site is significant through its association with 19th century mining and/or railway construction of the early 1870s.
Other Names	Rail Gang Camp,

Hermes Number 14238

Property
Number

History

As part of the Indigo Mining Division, encompassing Chiltern, Indigo and Rutherglen, settlement west of Chiltern did not commence until the gold rush finally reached the north-east part of Victoria. Here Woolshed diggings were worked first, as early as 1853. As the first easy alluvial diggings were exhausted, new fields were opened up at Indigo at Chiltern in 1858; followed by the rush to Rutherglen in 1860.

By the end of the year 1860, seven deep leads and seven reefs were being worked. Thomas Thornely reported that the population of the Indigo Mining Division in December 1860 was 12,905, including 1925 Chinese (Lloyd and Kennedy 2007: 28 and 29).

The mining was mostly shallow alluvial mining and/or search for gold found in deep leads that was easily exhausted. Large alluvial mining companies continued to prosper however. The period from 1880 to 1899 produced the greatest dividends and it is only in the early 20th century, that mining began to decline, with most mines having ceased production prior to the Second World War (Kennedy and Lloyd 2007:38).

A search of the historical and parish maps for Chiltern indicates that although the site is located between two important leads - the New Hibernian and the New Ballarat Lead (Everett 1868) - shallow shafts associated with the artefact scatter are typical of shallow alluvial mining. The subsequent construction of the railway in the 1870s may have further contributed to the disturbance within the reserve and the scatter.

No information was identified as possible Railway Camps in the area.

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/>