

# CAULFIELD RACECOURSE



2022 view east from Hiskens stand



Aerial - extent of registration



2022 aerial view showing main features



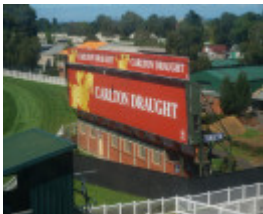
2022 - view from Hiskens stand



2002 Boomerang Buffet



2002 Rear of tote board



2022 Tote Board



2022 Scratchings Board building



2022 Main entry building



2022 Seating Hiskens stand



2022 Day Stalls



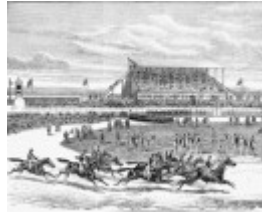
DSC07309



2022 - Afternoon Team Rooms



1890 hurdles race looking south



1880 Illustration of the Caulfield Cup



1930s aerial image showing realignment of Station Street



c1970s Scratchings board buildings Source - Victorian Places

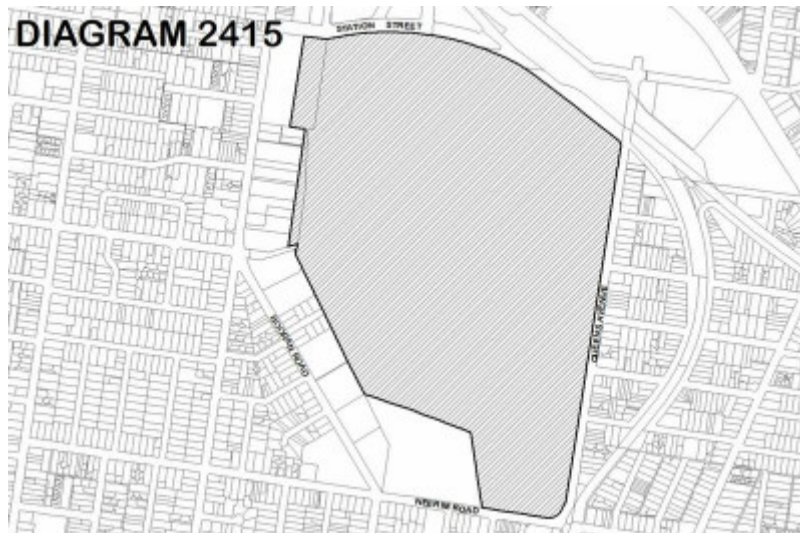


DIAGRAM 2415

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## Location

NORMANBY ROAD AND STATION STREET CAULFIELD EAST, GLEN EIRA CITY

## Municipality

GLEN EIRA CITY

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

## VHR Registration

February 23, 2023

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - February 27, 2023

### What is significant?

The Caulfield Racecourse, a premier racecourse in metropolitan Melbourne, which has been the site of horse racing since the late 1850s and was more formally developed from 1876 by the Victoria Amateur Turf Club (VATC). It also had long standing use for training and stabling. Buildings and features of particular significance include the racetrack; the Flat and North lake at the centre of the course; the Boomerang Buffet building (1919); the Scratchings Board building (c.1920s); main entry gate (1928), east and west delivery gates and boundary walls (1920s and 1950s); surviving mature exotic trees; Race day stalls (dating c.1920s onwards); the Hiskens Stand (1935); the Afternoon Tea Room (1939); Maple building (c.1958); Betting Indicator Board (c.1952); the Norman Robinson Stand (1960); and Stewards' towers.

### How is it significant?

Caulfield Racecourse is of historical, architectural, aesthetic and social 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 D – Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.
- Criterion E – Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.
- Criterion G – Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.
- Criterion H – Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

### Why is it significant?

The Caulfield Racecourse is historically significant as one of Victoria's and Australia's premier racecourses, and as one of only three major metropolitan racecourses in Victoria in operation since the nineteenth century. The place was permanently established as a racecourse reserve in 1876, although races have been run in this location since the late 1850s. Since 1879 it has been home to the Caulfield Cup, an internationally renowned handicap race, and a key lead up and qualifying event to the Melbourne Cup.

Since the 1870s it has been associated with the VATC one of three major metropolitan racing clubs, continuing as the Melbourne Racing Club (MRC). Caulfield is an evolved complex comprising a range of buildings and site features associated with racing operations (including the preparation of horses, betting, officiating of races and the provision of hospitality). Collectively, these reflect both on Caulfield's long history and status as a major and prestigious metropolitan racecourse in Victoria and on the different phases in that history. In particular, Caulfield is distinguished by its cohesive collection of racecourse-related buildings and elements dating from the interwar period. [Criterion A]

The Caulfield Racecourse is significant as a notable example of a racecourse within Victoria. It demonstrates a great number of the principal characteristics of a racecourse and can be considered a fine example. It retains a collection of comparatively intact racecourse-related buildings and elements of some distinction, dating from the first half of the twentieth century. These include the 1919 Boomerang Buffet building; 1928 Gatehouse at the main entrance; sections of the boundary wall to the racecourse, 1920s Scratchings Board building; 1939 Afternoon Tea Room (Luncheon Room); 1935 Hiskens Stand and the extensive collection of race day horse stalls

(1920s–1950s). The 1950s Betting Indicator ('tote') Board is an early, rare and substantial surviving example. More generally, the buildings and structures, in their planning and arrangement, demonstrate aspects of the historic layout and function of the racecourse, including the concentration of racecourse-related structures at the northern end where they are the focus of race day operations, members' facilities, and the spectator experience. The built elements of the place are complemented by a landscape that is characterised by the expanse of the track, central flat and mature trees. [Criterion D]

Aesthetically, the landscape of the racecourse is also significant, with the powerful combination of the course, the expanse of the central flat and the remaining mature trees in the northern precinct which enhance the setting of the collection of historic buildings, augmenting the race day experience and provide valued amenity for race goers. A number of the interwar buildings which share design features that are of aesthetic distinction. [Criterion E].

The setting, including the Central Flat, and mature landscape character, as well as the collection of brick buildings from the first half of the twentieth century, also conveys a strong sense of an historic racecourse [Criterion E].

The Caulfield Racecourse is socially significant for its associations with the horse racing community since the mid-nineteenth century. Caulfield Racecourse is renowned as the location of several of Australia's premier horse races and there is a high degree of public recognition for the place. It is home to the most Group 1 races in Victoria apart from Flemington. For much of its history it has been visited in person by sizeable crowds who have gathered to participate in, officiate, work at, watch or bet on horse races. Caulfield is popular and valued for these reasons, including by punters, members of the Victorian racing community and people associated with the industry, and members of the Melbourne Racing Club. [Criterion G]

The Caulfield Racecourse is significant for its associations with the VATC, now known as the MRC. From the late nineteenth century, the VATC became one of the most influential racing associations in Victoria, having founded one of the state's most prestigious horse racing events (the Caulfield Cup) and premier racing and training facilities (Caulfield Racecourse). The VATC/MRC has continually developed, expanded and improved the racecourse since selecting Caulfield as its home venue in 1876. The club's principal event, the Caulfield Cup, has also been held at the racecourse annually for close to 140 years. [Criterion H]

## 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:**

### **General exemptions applying to the place**

- Works or activities, including emergency stabilisation, necessary to secure safety in an emergency where a structure or part of a structure has been irreparably damaged or destabilised and poses a safety risk to its users or the public. The Executive Director, Heritage Victoria, must be notified within seven days of the commencement of these works or activities.

### **General exemptions applying to the exterior of specified buildings and structures**

The following general exemptions apply to specified buildings and structures, being the Boomerang Buffet building, Scratchings Board building, Main entry gate, east and west delivery gates, boundary walls, Race day stalls, Hiskens Stand, Afternoon Tea Rooms, Maple building, Betting Indicator Board, Norman Robinson Stand, Rupert Clark Stand, and Stewards' towers:

- Minor repairs and maintenance which replaces like with like. Repairs and maintenance must maximise protection and retention of significant fabric and include the conservation of existing details or elements. Any repairs and maintenance must not exacerbate the decay of fabric due to chemical incompatibility of new materials, obscure fabric or limit access to such fabric for future maintenance.
- Painting of previously painted external surfaces in the same colour, finish and product type provided that preparation or painting does not remove all evidence of earlier paint finishes or schemes. This exemption does not apply to areas stencilling, hand-painting, murals or signwriting.
- Repair to, or removal of items such as antennae, aerials and air conditioners and associated pipe work, ducting and wiring.
- All works to manage and remove graffiti, including but not limited to painting and surface treatment.
- General exemptions for the exterior of all other buildings and structures
- All external works to all other temporary and permanent buildings and structures providing these do not increase the external envelope.

### **External services**

- Maintenance, repair, inspection, disconnection and removal of existing external services including plumbing, electrical, gas, surveillance systems, communications, fire services etc.
- Replacement of above ground plumbing, electrical, gas, surveillance, communications and fire infrastructure which does not involve changes in location or scale.
- Works to install or maintain services where located outside of the specified tree protection zone of any tree. Existing lawns, gardens and hard landscaping, including paving, paths and roadways are to be returned to the original configuration and appearance on completion of works. [Note: planning and location of subsurface works must be informed by a documented professional tree assessment nominating tree protection zones].
- Disconnection and removal of redundant services infrastructure (including substations, electrical cabling, gas meters and switchboards) and making good where located outside of the specified tree protection zone of any tree. [Note: Such works must be informed by a documented professional tree assessment nominating tree protection zones].
- Installation of temporary power feeds in support of events or the day-to-day operations of the place.
- Repair to, or removal of items such as antennae; aerials; and air conditioners and associated pipe work, ducting and wiring.
- Other than where these impact on the external appearance of the Boomerang Buffet building, the Afternoon Tea Building, the Scratchings Board or the main gate:
- Installation of temporary services such as water, fibre, and gas.  
Disabled access infrastructure comprising access ramps, handrails and door furniture.  
Communications cabinets, pits.  
Installation of services normal to a building, including chimneys, flues, skylights, heating and cooling systems, hot water systems, security systems and cameras, downpipes, window shading devices.

### **Racetrack and training tracks maintenance and management**

- All works and activities to the existing racetrack and training tracks, their immediate surrounds and associated infrastructure, to facilitate the running of horse races. This includes works such as

maintenance, repair and replacement of existing track surface and fences, the removal, replacement or installation of stormwater and drainage infrastructure and replacement, movement or introduction of infrastructure such as moveable track rails and jumps.

- [Note: this exemption does not include the removal of any of the Stewards' towers or construction of new buildings.]

### **Venues / public places / events**

- The installation and/or erection of freestanding temporary elements associated with short term events. Temporary elements should be in place for no longer than a total of three months per calendar year. This includes:
  - Erection of temporary structures where located outside of the specified tree protection zone of any tree. [Note: planning and location of temporary structures and elements must be informed by a documented professional tree assessment nominating tree protection zones].  
Temporary fencing, scaffolding, hoardings or surveillance systems to prevent unauthorised access or to secure public safety.
  - Temporary infrastructure, including wayfinding/directional signage, generators, lighting, stages, decking and pedestrian access structures, rides, public address systems, planter boxes, furniture and the like in support of events and performances.  
Installation of above ground broadcast equipment and associated infrastructure.  
Alterations to all existing promotional elements such as billboards and flagpoles provided there are no structural changes.

### **General exemptions applying to the interior of specified buildings and structures**

The following general exemptions apply to specified buildings and structures, being the Boomerang Buffet building, Scratchings Board, Main entry gate, east and west delivery gates, boundary walls, Hiskens Stand, Afternoon Tea Rooms (excluding Glasshouse addition), Maple building, Betting Indicator Board, and Norman Robinson Stand.

If original or early interior features and finishes that are not currently visible are uncovered during permitted works, they should cease and Heritage Victoria should be contacted.

- Minor repairs and maintenance which replaces like with like. Repairs and maintenance must maximise protection and retention of significant fabric and include the conservation of existing details or elements. Any repairs and maintenance must not exacerbate the decay of fabric due to chemical incompatibility of new materials, obscure fabric or limit access to such fabric for future maintenance.
- Works to maintain or upgrade existing bathrooms, kitchens, including installing new appliances, re-tiling and the like.
- Painting of previously painted surfaces provided that preparation or painting does not remove all evidence of earlier paint finishes or schemes. This exemption does not apply to areas where there are specialist paint techniques such as stencilling, hand painting, graining or marbling, murals or signage, or to wallpapered surfaces or to unpainted, oiled or varnished surfaces.
- Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings, window furnishings, and devices for mounting wall hung artworks.
- Installation, removal or replacement of existing electrical wiring. If wiring is currently exposed, it should remain exposed. If it is fully concealed it should remain fully concealed.
- Installation, removal or replacement of existing lighting, inclusive of tracks, fittings, switches and dimmers, providing the works do not require new penetrations to existing fabric.
- Removal or replacement of light switches or power outlets.
- Removal or replacement of smoke and fire detectors, alarms, CCTV, exit signs and the like, of the same size and in existing locations.
- Repair, removal or replacement of existing ducted, hydronic, split system or concealed radiant type heating provided that the central plant is concealed, and that the work is done in a manner which does not alter building fabric.
- Repair, removal or replacement of plant within existing plant areas, providing that it does not impact on the external appearance of the building or involve structural changes.
- Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof spaces.

### **Additional exemptions applying to the interior of the specified buildings and structures:**

Hiskens Stand, main gate, east and west delivery gates, Betting Indicator Board, Norman Robinson Stand, Maple Building:

- Installation or removal of lightweight partition walls
- Works to existing bar, hospitality and associated back of house areas
- Repair and maintenance of existing vertical transportation including lifts and escalators, mechanisms and associated elements.

### **General exemptions for the interior of all other buildings and structures**

The following internal exemptions apply to all buildings and structures (temporary and permanent) with the exception of the Boomerang Buffet building, Scratchings Board, Main entry gate, boundary walls, Hiskens Stand, Afternoon Tea Rooms (excluding Glasshouse addition), Maple building, Betting Indicator Board, Norman Robinson Stand, east and west delivery gates, Race day stalls:

- All internal works.

### **Landscape/outdoor areas**

#### *Hard landscaping*

- Repair and maintenance of existing hard landscaping including paving, car parks, walls, curbs, edging, roadways, footpaths, vehicle and pedestrian tunnels and driveways.
- Repair and maintenance of existing gates and fences and replacement where colour, material and scale remain the same.
- Maintenance, repair or removal of light and pole fittings and replacement where new light poles adopt the same height, form, style, light orientation and materiality.
- Subsurface works to existing watering and drainage systems where located outside of the specified tree protection zone of any tree (including any trees that have been relocated). Existing lawns, gardens and hard landscaping, including paving, paths and roadways are to be returned to the original configuration and appearance on completion of works. [Note: planning and location of landscaping must be informed by a documented professional tree assessment nominating tree protection zones].
- Repair, removal or installation of rubbish receptacles, bicycle parking, drinking fountains, park benches and the like.
- Installation of cycling and pedestrian paths.
- Installation, removal or maintenance of features required for vehicle access and carparking operations such as line marking, bollards, speed humps, wheel stops and automatic and boom gates.
- Installation of physical barriers or traps to enable vegetation protection and management of vermin such as rats and mice.
- Installation of planter boxes.

#### *Gardening, trees and plants*

- The processes of gardening including mowing, pruning, mulching, fertilising, removal of dead or diseased plants (excluding trees), replanting of existing garden beds, disease and weed control and maintenance to care for existing plants.
- Works and management of trees in accordance with Protection of Trees on Development Sites AS4970, and Pruning of amenity trees AS4373, removal of plants listed as noxious weeds in the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994.
- Emergency tree works essential to maintain public safety provided they are carried out by a qualified arborist and the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria is notified within seven days of the removal or works occurring.
- Establishment of new garden beds and low level planting except where this involves excavation in Tree Protection Zones of existing trees (including trees that have been relocated). [Note: planning and location of such works and planting must be informed by a documented professional tree assessment nominating tree protection zones].
- Planting of new trees.

## **Theme**

### 9. Shaping cultural and creative life

Construction dates        1919,

Architect/Designer	Walkley, Albion Heath,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	1588
Property Number	

## History

### Timeline

#### Continuity of use as a reserve for racing, horse training and public recreation 1850s to 1876

- 1838 First organised Melbourne race meeting west of Batman's Hill
- 1840 (March) First race meeting at Melbourne Racecourse (Flemington) 1850 Trustees appointed for Melbourne Racecourse (Flemington)
- 1854 Advertisement for the 'Wattle Tree Hotel Races, Lower Dandenong Road' for 9 December (Argus, 5 December). Location not more exact but possibly over the future Caulfield racecourse land. [Details of the location of the Wattle Tree Hotel and land 'situate on the south side of Lower Dandenong Road' are in an insolvency advertisement, Argus, 23 December 1854]
- 1856 Advertisements for February 'Wattle-Tree Annual Races and Pigeon Shooting... The course is first rate and plenty of birds for shooting'. Stewards named. (Argus, 30 January). 'At the Wattle Tree Hotel on the Lower Dandenong Road': race details advertised including steeplechase, Argus, 5 February; reports, Argus 7 Feb.
- 1857 Plan of portions marked in the Parish of Prahran indicate the layout of an existing racetrack circuit at Caulfield
- 1858 Detailed advertisement for two day February 'Wattle Tree Annual Races'. 'The entrance to the course is at the Wattle Tree Hotel, Middle Dandenong Road, 2 miles from the Junction, St Kilda'. (Argus, 30 January) 1858 First references to licence for Racecourse Hotel on the Dandenong Road (Argus, 8 December)
- 1858 'Caulfield and Gardiner Racecourse': John Payne and Thomas Miller are a deputation 'from the inhabitants of Caulfield and Gardiner for the purpose of urging on the President [of the Board of Land and Works, Charles Gavan Duffy] the necessity of vesting the racecourse reserve in that locality in certain trustees, with a view to its good management. The racecourse had been already used.' (Argus 7 Dec)
- 1859 'Caulfield Racecourse': A further local deputation to Duffy: 'anxious to know whether the land would accorded to them in its integrity. The Caulfield Road Board had planned a line or road through its centre, and this plan, if carried out, must render the site quite worthless as a racecourse...' 'Mr Duffy said that the land referred to would be reserved exclusively as a racecourse. The Board would, however, reserve the right of naming the trustees...'. (Argus 8 March)
- 1859 'Messrs J.B. Bennett, J. Payne, H. Newton. T. Miller and the Chairman for the time-being of the Caulfield District Road Board, to be trustees of the ground reserved for racing and other purposes of public recreation at Caulfield'. (Argus 6 April)
- 1859 23 April: 'First' Caulfield races (under the new trustees): in the neighbourhood of The Kennels on an open heath commanding a magnificent view: reference to sand, low scrub. Note George Watson (Master of the Melbourne Hounds) is one of the Stewards. John Payne is judge.
- 1859 Australian Champion Race held at Flemington
- 1860 19 May: Races held at Caulfield include a steeplechase and a 'Mulgrave and Caulfield Cup' (3 entries). About 200 patrons attend: '... the Caulfield course is one particularly fitted for winter running, the soil being sandy, and it is also well laid out for a view of the racing...'. (Bell's Life 26 May)
- 1861 References to the Racecourse Hotel, Caulfield, advertised to let. (Also known as Racecourse Hotel, Gardiner, advertised as early as 1859)
- 1861 References to Hunt Club hunts starting from the Caulfield Racecourse meeting point. James Henderson's pack of hounds, in pursuit of deer. But note, the hunt proceeds to Oakleigh and Brighton across country. George Watson frequently involved in similar events over the next decade.
- 1861 First Melbourne Cup run at Flemington, November



- 1862 References to Racecourse Hotel and the nearby swamp [land at the northeast corner of the racecourse site, later used for Frankston line railway].
- 1862 'The Caulfield racecourse is very handy to Mr [Phil] Dowling's stables and his horses have been doing their work there'. Reference to loose, sandy ground.
- 1863 'Strange to say, the training quarters for the greater part of the Melbourne horses will now be found in the neighbourhood of the Caulfield racecourse... Mr Tait [leading NSW owner-trainer] has his string of horses in training at the Wattle Tree Hotel, near the Caulfield ground.' (27 July)
- 1863 November: reference to Caulfield races.
- 1864 Detailed press descriptions of 'The Caulfield Stables', trainer Phil Dowling using the nearby racecourse for training: 'it drains easily and there is no deep holding mud. The locality seems, besides, to be altogether one of those healthy spots where man and beast especially thrive; and here, with great judgement, three of the most successful of the amateur trainers of race horses have taken up their quarters'.
- 1866 Press references to races at Caulfield in April
- 1867 New Year's Day races advertised as 'Caulfield annual races', 2 miles from Chapel Street railway station. Organisers include local publican J.G Heywood. Small attendance, extreme heat.
- 1868 Expression 'Caulfield Amateur Racing Club' is used satirically to describe race meeting for stable boys at the Caulfield racecourse, Involves pony races, a hurdle race. (Bell's Life 12 Oct). So please note, no formal institution ever existed called the Caulfield Amateur Turf Club except in this context. This meeting was repeated in 1870
- 1868 May: a private 'match race' steeplechase held at Caulfield by horses ridden by two army officers.
- 1868 The erroneous story that Caulfield Racecourse was proposed as a cemetery: A public meeting at St Kilda urged the relocation of the St Kilda cemetery: 'Mr [Clement] Hodgkinson 'had pointed out a suitable piece of ground near the Caulfield racecourse... The same proposal had been made several years ago, and the Commissioner [for Lands] had offered a piece of swampy ground near the Caulfield racecourse...'. (Argus 24 July)
- 1869 24 June: fully organised race meeting at Caulfield with leading racing men as stewards including George Watson: programme includes a steeplechase and 15 hurdle race. Steeplechase is won by Maid of Wannan ridden by Mr [Adam Lindsay] Gordon, to 'loud cheering'. (Leader, 26 June). Note, Gordon also riding in Melbourne Hunt Club hunts starting from Caulfield in July. Note also, the VATC instituted an annual '[Lindsay] Gordon Steeplechase' from 1899.
- 1870 May: Governor of Victoria attends Caulfield races for the first time. 1870 Emerald Hill (South Melbourne) racecourse and training ground is discontinued
- 1870 (Aug): J.G. Heywood rebuilding his Racecourse Hotel, 'applies to the trustees for a lease of the racecourse, with a view of clearing the paddock and laying down the running ground with English grass... At all events, any improvement on the present sandy ground which characterises the Caulfield course is very desirable... [rather] than leave the course in its present primitive state'.
- 1870 (Oct); Heywood 'has arranged with the trustees to form a new course over Caulfield heath and that he intends to have a fresh track cut on the outside of the present one, 20ft wide, and lay it down with English grass', and to have a stand erected on the rising ground .. to which a straight run of a quarter of a mile can be made...' (Australasian 8 Oct)
- 1870 Boxing Day races at Caulfield: stewards include major racing identities George Watson, John Cleeland, Robert Power. 'Since last season the rickety framework which does duty for a judge's box has been strengthened by a few battens, and the judge was able to stand upon it while the races were run with comparative safety'. Refreshment tent. Other reports suggest 1000 attend, some walking from Windsor station; dusty.
- 1871 References to the training of jumpers at Caulfield racecourse
- 1872 Reference to Heywood and a 'new track which is supposed to be much better than the old one'; races described as the 'Pahran and St Kilda' meeting. Meeting postponed to 29 June to take advantage of Separation Day holiday.
- 1872 Boxing Day: 'Gardiner Races' at Caulfield Racecourse.
- 1873 'The trustees of the Caulfield Racecourse called upon the Minister of Lands... to ask that the ground constituting the course should be permanently reserved to them by the Government. The ground consisted of 140 acres on which £360 had already been expended... Mr Casey [Minister] 'promised that a certain reserve, the boundaries of which should be settled by the Department, should be granted not only for racing purposes, but also for recreation grounds, on condition that a racing committee was appointed. He also suggested that the ground not actually used for a course should be suitably laid out and planted.' (Herald 7 May).

- 1873 Report of the same matter (Weekly Times, 27 May): ‘...could be made one of the best training grounds in the colony. It is entirely sand, and once cleared of the scrub, and several inches of good soil laid on it, with couch grass sown, it would be quite equal to the best racecourse in the colonies.’
- 1873 August: Races at Caulfield (‘Caulfield Annual Races’): Stewards include Watson, Power. Approx. 3000 attend ‘the heathy downs’. ‘A new track had been laid out and the going on this was really excellent’.
- 1873 November: press advertisement: ‘ Any person TRESPASSING upon Caulfield R Racecourse will be prosecuted. By order of the trustees. Key to be had of J.G. Heywood, opposite entrance gate.’
- 1874 1 July: Separation Day holiday: ‘Caulfield Annual Races’. Crowd approx. 5000.
- 1875 May races – cold and wet on the ‘black heath’, no stand or shelter for the public. Small crowd. Races include a steeplechase.
- 1875 August Caulfield Annual Races: Watson etc. Heywood secretary.
- 1875 November: ‘I have great pleasure in being able to announce that an attempt is to be made to procure a lease of the Caulfield racecourse for the Victorian [sic] Amateur Turf Club. If this can be effected, the course, which is now little better than a howling wilderness, will be converted into one of the pleasantest retreats in or around the good city of Melbourne, for the scrub which now infests the place would soon be cleared away, an excellent grandstand would be erected, and handsome trees and shrubs would take the place of the unsightly ferns and heather that now run wild all over the ground.’ (Australasian 27 November)
- 1876 ‘A few days ago a deputation from the Victoria Amateur Turf Club waited on the Minister for Lands, for the purpose of asking for a permanent reservation of the Caulfield Racecourse, the club undertaking to make important alterations and improvements so as to beautify the place and render it a popular place of resort for the general public... Mr Gillies expressed himself in favour of granting the request, providing the present trustees agreed. It was mentioned that a survey of the Gipps Land Railway route had embraced a portion of the course, but... a slight detour can be made so as not to interfere with the racecourse itself’. (Australasian 29 January)
- 1876 Minister of Lands agrees to new trustees: George Watson, James Watson, Robert Power. H.N. Wilson, Andrew Chirnside jun., Charles Airey and E.C. Moore.
- 1876 Description of the course: substantially and closely fenced in; slightly undulating, moderate inclines; grandstand proposed, lawns and terraces. ‘The steeplechase run is inside the flat running course’ with nine jumps (5 post-and-rail, one paling, one bank-and-rail, one log and one sod wall.’ Two entrance gates – one for public, one for members; uninterrupted views; not yet turf-like. Gratis advice from Robert Cooper Bagot, Secretary of the VRC at Flemington. E.C. Moore secretary

### Other key dates 1876–1879

- 1876 ‘The Victoria Amateur Turf Club will probably succeed in getting the Caulfield racecourse. The old trustees have resigned, so as to leave everything in the hands of the young blood, who have taken the matter in hand, and Mr. Gillies, I am told, is favourable to the grant. The Gipps Land railway will have a platform close to the course.’ (Leader, 5 February)
- 1876 24 March: first race meeting of VATC at Dowling Forest, Ballarat
- 1876 July – first races at Caulfield after VATC took over, run by Melbourne Hunt Club 1876 ‘A very well shaped course has been marked out of nearly a mile and a quarter in length, from which the heath has been cleared away, and all the knotted roots carefully removed. ...’ Paling fence 6 feet high around course replacing post-and-rail. Temporary stand built to hold 500. (Argus, 12 July)
- 1876 Some more detail on land and clearing. ‘The course is not yet thoroughly cleared, but the furze and heath have been cut quite close, so that the going will be sound and good.; The flat course has been thoroughly cleared of all furze and heath, all roots having been taken out. It is rather heavy going through the sand...’ (Weekly Times, 15 July) 1876 5 August: the VATC runs its own first race meeting at Caulfield, with a spring meeting in October
- 1876 (November) suicide of the first VATC Secretary E.C. Moore after claims of Fraud
- 1877 Ref. to a partly-finished grandstand (July)
- 1879 April: first running of the Caulfield Cup 1879 Gippsland railway opened: Caulfield Station opens

### 1880s onwards

- **1880s:** Caulfield Cup gains in popularity and prestige with increasing prize money and interstate and international entrants.
- **1919:** Boomerang Buffet building constructed (earliest extant structure).
- **1920s:** Several fires destroyed many of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century structures, including the 1876 timber grandstand and the former Guineas Stand. Commencement of a building campaign which

resulted in new entry gates and boundary walls and realignment of Station Street to the north, a scratchings board building and a new Guineas Stand.

- **1930:** Use of the 'totalisator' for betting on horse races legalised.
- **1935:** Completion of the Hiskens Stand (earliest extant grandstand).
- **1939:** Afternoon tea rooms constructed.
- **1940-44:** Racecourse occupied by military.
- **1948:** Caulfield one of four remaining major metropolitan racecourses.
- **1950s:** Expansion of racing facilities westward by incorporation of Bond Street and adjacent freehold land. Establishment of the community stables along Booran Road.
- **1959:** Construction of Maple Building to the north-west of the site
- **1960:** Completion of the Norman Robinson Stand.
- **1960s:** Most early plantings removed.
- **1975:** The Flat in the centre of the track was closed to race day crowds.
- **1980s:** Rupert Clark Grandstand constructed, replacing the Guineas Stand which was until that time the earliest surviving grandstand.
- **1990s:** Administration building to the north-east of the reserve constructed.
- **1995:** Racetrack upgraded.
- **2017:** Passing of the *Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Act 2017* and establishment of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust.
- **2018:** The cessation of training at the site is announced.
- **2021:** Trainers vacate the site.

## Thematic History

### Horse racing in Victoria

Before the proliferation of motorised transport, horses were a vital part of everyday life in Australia. Horse racing was one of the earliest sporting events imported to Australia from Great Britain during the late eighteenth century. In the flourishing settlement of Port Phillip (now Victoria) horse racing was a pastime which had broad appeal. While horse racing and breeding were largely confined to the colony's gentry, spectating and gambling were open to all. In the early decades of European settlement in Victoria, race meetings were typically held on private land, unused police paddocks or Crown reserves.<sup>[1]</sup>

Some of the earliest races were held near present-day Southern Cross Station in 1837-38, with the slopes of Batman's Hill used as a temporary grandstand. Following their success, annual race meetings were introduced to Melbourne and the need for a formal, permanent venue was recognised. The first organised horse race meetings in Victoria began in 1839 at Flemington. Land was reserved for a Melbourne racecourse at Flemington in 1840, and the annual Melbourne race meetings moved there from that date.<sup>[2]</sup> The first 'turf' and jockey clubs appeared in the 1840s.

Horse racing events increased in popularity following the Victorian gold rush, and crowds for race meetings rose to several thousands. Local turf and jockey clubs lobbied for the reserve of land for local racecourses. In regional Victoria, racecourses reserved during the 1850s included Casterton, Buninyong, Bendigo, Diamond Creek, Kilmore and Wangaratta. In addition to the racecourse at Flemington, racecourses appeared in the developing suburbs of Melbourne in the mid-nineteenth century. The first Melbourne Cup was run at Flemington in 1861.

The popularity of horse racing was cemented in the 1880s and became a marker of an increasingly wealthy city. By 1881, 96 racecourses were reserved across Victoria and by the close of the nineteenth century they were the most common type of recreation reserve in the colony.<sup>[3]</sup> A number of privately owned (propriety) racecourses opened across the Melbourne. In an effort to better regulate horse racing and race betting, the Victorian government closed a number of racecourses in Melbourne in the interwar and postwar period. By 1948, only four major racecourses were able to operate in metropolitan Melbourne: Flemington, Moonee Valley, Sandown and Caulfield.

### Formation and growth of the Victorian Amateur Turf Club

From the 1840s, amateur turf and jockey clubs proliferated throughout Victoria, mirroring the establishment of racecourses across the colony. Early groups included the Port Phillip Turf Club (established in 1840, disbanded

in 1842) and the Pyrenees Turf Club (1842), which held the first recorded race meeting outside Melbourne.<sup>[4]</sup> The swelling number of amateur clubs, riders and competitions necessitated the formation of a central body – the Victorian Amateur Turf Club (VATC). Distinct from the Victorian Racing Club, a professional racing group, the VATC was formed in October 1875 in Ballarat and held its first race meeting at Dowling Forest in the autumn of 1876. It was conceived of as a club for privileged gentlemen, many from wealth squatter families, to conduct races for their own pleasure. The meeting was comprised of six events with the main attraction being the Victoria Gold Cup, a three-mile steeplechase. Although the VATC had intended to rotate its annual races between hosting racecourses, the success of the Dowling Forest meeting prompted the club to seek out its own racing reserve.<sup>[5]</sup>

Following the success of the VATC's inaugural race meeting at Dowling Forest in 1876, the club sought and obtained trusteeship of the Caulfield racing reserve that year. Faced with the immense task of converting the heathland into a suitable racetrack, the club began opening its race meetings to the general public in order to fund developments.<sup>[6]</sup> During the early years of their trusteeship, the VATC improved the conditions of the track and constructed a single-tiered timber grandstand.

By the close of the nineteenth century, the VATC had established itself as one of Victoria's leading racing associations, with a membership of over 450 during the 1899-1900 season.<sup>[7]</sup> Throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the VATC continued to develop Caulfield Racecourse in response to evolving threats and demands. An extensive building campaign during the late 1920s was prompted by two fires that destroyed many of the earlier structures built by the VATC. Later building campaigns of a larger scale were carried out during the late 1950s to early 1960s, and again from the 1970s into the late 1980s.

From 1963, membership of the VATC further expanded with the incorporation of the Melbourne Racing Club, which had been formed in the late 1940s by the merging of the Williamstown Racing Club and the Victorian Trotting and Racing Association.<sup>[8]</sup> In 2002 the VATC changed its name to the Melbourne Racing Club (MRC). Along with the Victoria and Moonee Valley racing clubs, the MRC is one of three remaining major horse racing associations in metropolitan Melbourne.

#### Caulfield Racecourse development

##### *Establishment and early years*

Initially known as 'the Heath', the land currently comprising Caulfield Racecourse was a popular local destination for bushwalking, picnicking and hunting. Although blanketed with sandy ridges and marshes, horse racing began at the Heath as early as 1857.<sup>[9]</sup> The site was temporarily reserved as a site for racing and public recreation in 1859. In the same year, trustees were appointed and race meetings began. While it was used seasonally by both the Caulfield Amateur Turf Club and the Melbourne Hunt Club, the reserve attracted little financial support for improvements.<sup>[10]</sup> Race meetings, as well as deer hunts and steeple chases, were held throughout the 1860s on a racetrack characterised as sandy and of poor quality. In 1867 the Caulfield Amateur Racing Club was formed. Attendees at races in this time numbered in the hundreds. The Crown Land temporarily set aside in 1859 was permanently reserved for 'racing, recreation and public park purposes' in 1879. In the same year the first Caulfield Cup was run.

##### *Late nineteenth and early twentieth century*

As the VATC's races attracted increasing crowd numbers, it undertook numerous improvements in this period, including fencing of the track, establishment of a grandstand, improvement of the track surface and drainage. Additional buildings were added, including a weighing room, clocktower and telegraph office (all no longer extant).

In 1908, plans show gradual development of the land along Station Street, to the immediate north of the racetrack. The racecourse featured one grandstand with four smaller stands, a casualty room, judge's box and a shade house (all no longer extant). Other structures included a rolling shed to the east of the racetrack and various stalls and booths located across the reserve. In the centre of the racecourse were ornamental lakes and a walking track, surrounded by an inner steeplechase track and the outer racing track. The racecourse reserve extended to the intersection of Neerim Road and Queens Road to the south-east, with several horse sheds located in this part of the site.<sup>[11]</sup> Horse trainers began establishing stabling and training centres such as Lord Lodge (VHR H0071), which was constructed on Booran Road with direct access to the racecourse.

In 1911 the VATC approved the construction of a new grandstand (the 'Guineas Stand', no longer extant), with an upcoming additional two-tiered public stand also in the works. The new grandstand was completed at a cost of just over £3,258. The Guineas Stand was expanded in 1918 by the addition of a double-storey western extension. Other developments during the early twentieth century included the construction of the Boomerang Buffet (extant) in 1919.<sup>[12]</sup> At this time, the racecourse was also used for other public events such as charity fundraisers during World War I.

#### *Interwar period*

In 1922, on the eve of the Caulfield Cup, a great number of existing buildings and structures at the racecourse were destroyed by a deliberately lit fire. The greatest loss was the original timber members' stand, built in 1876. The fire also resulted in the destruction of the judge's box, the weighing room, committee rooms, the stewards' room, the secretary's office, press reserve and all telecommunications. The public stand was untouched.<sup>[13]</sup>

In 1923, construction commenced on a new, brick members' grandstand (no longer extant) under the Brighton-based architects William Pitt & Son. This grandstand was constructed at a cost of approximately £51,000 and was one of several improvements made at Caulfield Racecourse during the 1920s.<sup>[14]</sup> Other new structures included a double-storey scratchings board building with a clock tower (extant) and a toilet block adjoining the eastern elevation of the Boomerang Buffet (demolished 2022).<sup>[15]</sup> At the north of the site, Station Street was realigned and the boundaries of the reserve increased. Substantial brick entry gates (extant) were constructed at this time. The Guineas Stand (no longer extant) was expanded again in 1925 to accommodate a total of 8,000 spectators with the addition of a double-storey extension to its eastern end.<sup>[16]</sup>

Another fire in 1927 broke out in the Guineas Stand, which had been built in stages since 1911. This prompted an accelerated building campaign which included a brick wall to the north (extant), the replacement of the destroyed Guineas Stand with the 'new' Guineas Stand (no longer extant) and the construction of a two-tiered, open-top stand to the east (the 'Terrace' Stand, no longer extant). Development briefly ceased during the early 1930s but resumed in 1935 with the construction of the Hiskens Stand (extant), named in honour of the former secretary of the VATC. Other additions at this time included a first aid room (demolished 2022) and Afternoon Tea Rooms (extant) in 1935 and 1939 respectively in the streamline moderne style.<sup>[17]</sup>

#### *World War II*

From April 1940, Caulfield Racecourse was occupied for military purposes. It largely served as a 'reception depot' (a centre for conducting medical examinations of new recruits). Recruits were barracked on site for 8-10 days while completing a range of medical examinations and beginning basic training.<sup>[18]</sup> Recruits were then transported to locations such as Puckapunyal via Caulfield train station. Training of volunteer forces and cadets also occurred at the racecourse throughout the early 1940s and large military parades were held. The poor condition of grounds and facilities received some publicity when the military vacated the site in early 1944.<sup>[19]</sup> Races recommenced in August 1944 with the Australian Steeplechase which saw the biggest day of betting in the course's history to that point.<sup>[20]</sup> For many years Legacy held 'Back to Caulfield' days to commemorate those servicemen who had passed through Caulfield Racecourse. In 1995, on the fiftieth anniversary of the conclusion of World War II, a lone pine (removed 2022) was planted at Caulfield Racecourse and provided a point of commemoration.<sup>[21]</sup>

#### *Post-World War II*

In the 1950s, the racecourse land was expanded to the west to take in former suburban allotments originally outside the boundary of the racecourse. A car park was developed in the north-west corner of the site which provided direct access to the Maple Room, which was completed in 1959 to a design by Albion Walkley. A new terraced bar and cafeteria area was also proposed for the members' reserve, located to the west of the Hiskens Stand.

In 1960 a new grandstand, the Norman Robinson Stand, was completed. In an endeavour to draw stabling and training activities out of the surrounding suburb and into the racecourse, community stables were established to the south-west of the site on Booran Road. Additional stables (Booran Lodge) were established adjacent to the community stables on Booran Road in 1972, followed by the Epsom, Western and Aquanita Stables from the 1980s. The latter two are within the grounds of Caulfield Racecourse.

#### 1980s – current day

Modernisation of the racecourse and its visitation facilities accelerated from the 1970s and 1980s with the extension of the Terrace Stand and the construction of an administration block, incorporating the Victorian Racing Museum, in the north-eastern part of the site. This phase of development also resulted in the demolition of many of the surviving late nineteenth and early twentieth century structures, namely the remaining public stands to the east of the Norman Robinson Stand. These were replaced with the Rupert Clarke Stand in 1990.

### **Caulfield Racecourse recreational and public purposes**

There were tensions between the land's three gazetted public purposes from as early as the 1880s. There were concerns from the community that the reserves stated public purposes were not being honoured and the place was not sufficiently accessible for casual recreational use. During the VATC's early years at Caulfield, alternative community uses were proposed including a cemetery and partial demolition of the racecourse to make way for Glen Eira Road. In 1908, the residents of nearby Glenhuntly lobbied for thirteen acres to be deducted from the racecourse for use as a public park. All alternative community proposals were refused.<sup>[22]</sup> The three gazetted public purposes remain in place to this day and casual recreational use and public access, particularly focussed around the centre of the tracks, remains in place to this day. The *Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Act* was passed in 2017 in an effort to ensure the reserve's three gazetted purposes are maintained.

### **The Caulfield Cup**

The first events the VATC held after taking over trusteeship of the Caulfield Racecourse in 1876 mirrored the first event held by the club at Dowling Forest and reflected the preferences of its small and elite membership. Steeple chases in particular formed a substantial part of the program. Requiring significant funds to upgrade the rough track and basic facilities at Caulfield, the VATC turned its attention from events tailored to the preferences of the club members to organising events with mass appeal. Likely inspired by the popularity of the Melbourne Cup, the VATC instituted the Caulfield Cup, a flat handicapped race over approximately one and a half miles, in April of 1879.<sup>[23]</sup> It was initially planned as an Autumn race and run on 5 April. An estimated 3000-4000 people attended the first Caulfield Cup, a number limited, the VATC claimed, by poor weather and limited train services to the newly opened Caulfield Railway Station.<sup>[24]</sup> The 5-year old stallion Newminster was the winner of the first Cup from 15 starters. In 1881 the Caulfield Cup was run in April and for a second time that year in October when the VATC decided to transfer the Cup to spring as part of its first two-day race meeting. Transferring the race to spring proved enormously popular with both crowds and the racing fraternity and the race became the opener of the spring racing season and a crucial lead in to the Melbourne Cup.

Attendance at races was supported by improved services to the nearby Caulfield Station in 1879 and its subsequent expansion. From 1882 the Caulfield Cup achieved a solid reputation beyond Victoria as a premier competition and a good 'guide' to the Melbourne Cup. Horses from New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania began arriving to compete at Caulfield from 1882, and from New Zealand the following year.<sup>[25]</sup> A crowd of 20,000 attended in 1885 and was witness to 'the most appalling scene ever witnessed on an Australian racecourse' when 16 horses were killed or injured and a jockey died in a race accident during the running of the Cup.<sup>[26]</sup> The Caulfield Guineas and Toorak Handicap, two other premier races which still feature at Caulfield, were first run in the 1880s.

The Caulfield Cup became an increasingly global race during World War I. Not only had horse racing virtually been shut down in Britain but European horses could be purchased cheaply by Australian owners or imported for Australian races. European horses proved particularly dominant during the war years and into the 1920s.<sup>[27]</sup> The early twentieth century saw some of the race's largest crowds, and by 1939, attendance at the Caulfield Cup was over 67,000.<sup>[28]</sup> When Caulfield Racecourse was taken over by the military during World War II, the Cup was held at Flemington Racecourse. The Caulfield Cup returned to Caulfield in 1944. A record crowd of 87,000 attended. From 1979 it was classed as Group 1 Race, recognising its national and international standing.

Since its inauguration, the Caulfield Cup has been a major event and achievement in the careers of many prominent individuals and horses in Victoria's racing history. These include the internationally renowned jockey

Arthur 'Scobie' Breasley (1914-2006), five-time winner of the Caulfield Cup and namesake of the Scobie Breasley Medal, and Rising Fast (1949-78), the only horse in racing history to win all three events in the Spring Grand Slam (Caulfield Cup, Melbourne Cup and Cox Plate).

### Caulfield Racecourse in 2022

Caulfield Racecourse continues to be a vital part of thoroughbred horse racing in Victoria and Australia. The Caulfield Cup is run at the Caulfield Racecourse annually and is one of Australia's premier horse races. The Caulfield Cup is one amongst 11 Group 1 races that will be held at Caulfield Racecourse as part of the 2021-22 racing calendar, including the Caulfield Guineas, Toorak Handicap and Oakleigh Plate.<sup>[29]</sup> Races at the course frequently attract mainstream news and sports coverage and the place has a high degree of public recognition. While Caulfield Racecourse is an important location for those involved with the racing industry in Victoria and Australia it also has mass appeal as a gathering place for Victorians and regularly attracts substantial crowds to major race days. Crowd attendances at major race days continue to number between 20,000 and 30,000.

- [1] Doyle, H., *Organising Recreation: an historical survey of recreation patterns in Victoria*, 1999, pp.65-8.
- [2] Haig-Muir, M., Mewett, P., and Hay, R., *Sport in Victoria: a thematic history*, Deakin University, December 2000, p.28.
- [3] Doyle, pp.65-8.
- [4] Lemon, A., *The history of Australian thoroughbred racing*, Hardie Grant, 2008, pp.121-40.
- [5] Cavanough, M., *The Caulfield Cup: special Victoria Amateur Turf Club centenary edition*, Jack Pollard, 1976, pp.3-4.
- [6] Murray, P.R. and Wells, J.C., *From sand, swamp and heath: a history of Caulfield*, City of Caulfield, 1980, pp.169-76.
- [7] Cavanough, M., p.87.
- [8] 'The rise and fall of Williamstown Racecourse', Melbourne Racing Club, 26 November 2015, <https://mrc.racing.com/news/2015-11-26/the-rise-and-fall-of-williamstown-racecourse>.
- [9] Solomon, G., *Caulfield's recreational heritage*, City of Caulfield, 1989, pp.59-75.
- [10] Murray and Wells, pp.169-76.
- [11] MMBW Detail Plan No. 2058, Town of Caulfield, 1908; MMBW Detail Plan No. 2057, Town of Caulfield, 1908; MMBW Detail Plan No. 2054, Town of Caulfield, 1908.
- [12] Cavanough, pp.201-2.
- [13] Cavanough, pp. 59-75.
- [14] Cavanough, p.195.
- [15] MMBW Detail Plan No. 2059, 1940s.
- [16] Cavanough, p.131.
- [17] Lovell Chen, *Caulfield Racecourse Conservation Management Plan*.
- [18] 'Caulfield Racecourse now a Camp', *The Herald*, 2 April 1941.
- [19] 'Caulfield Racecourse as it Emerged from Two Years' "Occupation"', *Sporting Globe*, 23 February 1944.
- [20] 'Crowd was Large', *Sporting Globe*, 21 October 1944.
- [21] Back to Caulfield, Melbourne Legacy collection, Victorian Collections.
- [22] Murray and Wells, pp.169-76.
- [23] Cavanough, p. 6.
- [24] Cavanough, p. 7.
- [25] Cavanough, pp.18-21.
- [26] Cavanough, p. 28.
- [27] McConville, C., 'Cyklon and the Caulfield Cup, 1915-21: Local Bubble or Global Spectacular?', *Global Racecourse: Work, Culture and Horse Sports*, 2008, pp. 13-26.
- [28] 'Crowd was Large'.
- [29] 2021/22 Australian Group 1 Calendar <<a href="https://www.racing.com/group-races-calendar/australian-group-1">https://www.racing.com/group-races-calendar/australian-group-1<>

## Extent of Registration

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 2017**, I give notice under section 53 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including a place in the Heritage Register:

Number: H2415

Category: Registered Place  
Place: Caulfield Racecourse  
Location: Normanby Road and Station Street, Caulfield East  
Municipality: Glen Eira City

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2415, encompassing all of Allotment A at Caulfield, Parish of Prahran, and part of Plan PC380965 including 20 metres west from the brick wall in the northwest corner of the site.

23 February 2023  
STEVEN AVERY  
Executive Director

*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/>*