
Royal Exhibition Building



REB.jpg



REB Interior 1.jpg



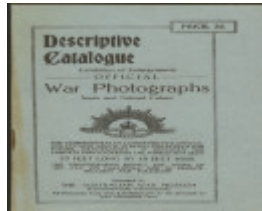
REB interior 2.jpg



REB Meal Ticket.jpg



REB AWM.jpg



REB Catalogue.jpg

Location

Carlton Gardens CARLTON, MELBOURNE CITY

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

-

Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

Veterans Description for Public

The Royal Exhibition Building (REB), situated in Carlton Gardens, was designed in 1878 by Melbourne architect Joseph Reed for the Melbourne International Exhibition (MIE) of 1880-81. Thirty-three nations responded to the invitation to participate in the MIE, and over 32000 exhibits were displayed from every corner of the world. Almost forty nations were represented at the Melbourne Centennial International Exhibition (MCIE) of 1888-89. During the six months the MCIE was open it attracted almost two million visitors, double the population of Victoria at that time.

In May 1901, the building hosted the opening of the first Australian Federal Parliament. A few months later the Australian flag was first unveiled and flown above the dome.

On 4 February 1919, the REB was turned into a hospital to treat Melburnians struck down by the Spanish 'flu'. Initially housing 500 beds, the hospital grew to accommodate 2000 patients. In a six month period, 4, 046 patients were treated at the REB hospital, of whom 392 died.

The Australian War Museum (which became the Australian War Memorial in 1923) opened in the eastern annexe of the REB on 20 August 1921. The first exhibition of photographs ran for five weeks and attracted over 80,000 visitors. A second exhibition of objects of war and dioramas of battle scenes (now in the AWM collection in Canberra) opened on Anzac Day 1922. Over 800,000 visited the Australian War Memorial before its relocation to Sydney in January 1925.

Between March 1941 and December 1945, the RAAF No. 1 School of Technical Training occupied the Exhibition Building. Two thousand personnel were camped on the floors of the great hall; a shower block was set up in the vestibule behind the organ; the concert hall in the western nave was transformed into a recreation room; and a kitchen, hospital, laundry block and store-room was built on the arena to the north of the building.

The annexes built during the RAAF occupation of the REB site became a migrant reception centre in 1949. The centre provided temporary accommodation for thousands of recent arrivals from Britain, who remember the bungalows as being freezing cold in winter and stifling hot in summer. At its close in 1961-62, the centre comprised 29 bungalows over 1.4 hectares.

Since 1880, the REB and Carlton Gardens have hosted bazaars, exhibitions, commercial events, trade shows, international meetings and community events. They continue to be used in this way today, and this was a principle reason for the Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens receiving World Heritage Listing in 2004.

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/>