

# LOVERIDGE LOOKOUT AND VOLUNTEER AIR OBSERVERS CORPS (VAOC) OBJECTS



Loveridge-Lookout 2020



Aerial Photo 2020



VAOC Registered Object



VAOC Registered Object



VAOC Registered Object



VAOC Registered Object



VAOC Registered Object



Historical Image LL



VAOC Registered Object



VAOC Poster (AWM)



Extent Diagram 2403

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### **Location**

HARVEY STREET, ANGLESEA, SURF COAST SHIRE

### **Municipality**

SURF COAST SHIRE

### **Level of significance**

Registered

### **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H2403

### **VHR Registration**

August 13, 2020

### **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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### **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - May 13, 2022

#### **What is significant?**

The Loveridge Lookout and objects integral to the place including four logbooks, one roster book, a Morse Code key instrument, and a VAOC badge.

#### **How is it significant?**

Loveridge Lookout is of historical significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

**Criterion A**

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

**Criterion B**

Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

**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 Loveridge Lookout is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

The Loveridge Lookout is historically significant as one of two remaining Volunteer Air Observers Corps (VAOC) posts in Victoria established to support the defence of Australia during World War II. The Lookout was continuously occupied by a group of VAOC civilian volunteers, most of whom were women, from its establishment in June 1942 to its decommissioning in September 1945. Its operation is recorded in a complete set of logbooks (1942-45), a roster (1943), the original Morse Code Key instrument used to relay messages, and a VAOC badge worn by one of the volunteers held by the Anglesea and District Historical Society. [Criterion A]  
The Loveridge Lookout is rare as one of two known VAOC observation posts in Victoria and the only which survives with associated objects that explain its use and operation. This class of place is endangered to the point of rarity in Victoria due to the destruction or loss of the VAOC observation structures and their associated records following the end of World War II. [Criterion B]

The Loveridge Lookout and Volunteer Air Observers Corps (VAOC) Objects together demonstrates how the VAOC made a strong contribution to the course of Victoria's history through the work of its volunteers, mainly women, in supporting the defence of the coastline and inland sites from enemy attack during World War II. [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:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXEMPTED WORKS OR ACTIVITIES (PERMIT EXEMPTIONS)

It should be noted that Permit Exemptions can be granted at the time of registration (under s.38 of the Heritage Act). Permit Exemptions can also be applied for and granted after registration (under s.92 of the Heritage Act).

Under s.38 of the Heritage Act 2017 the Executive Director may include in his recommendation categories of works or activities which may be carried out in relation to the place or object without the need for a permit under Part 5 of the Act. The Executive Director must not make a recommendation for any categories of works or activities if he considers that the works or activities may harm the cultural heritage significance of the place or object. The following permit exemptions are not considered to cause harm to the cultural heritage significance of the Loveridge Lookout.

#### 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 ideally 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

##### General

Minor repairs and maintenance which replaces like with like. Repairs and maintenance must maximise protection and retention of 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 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. Note: The Executive Director, Heritage Victoria, must be notified within seven days of the commencement of these works or activities.

Cleaning including the removal of surface deposits by the use of low-pressure water (to maximum of 300 psi at the surface being cleaned) and neutral detergents and mild brushing and scrubbing with plastic not wire brushes.

Temporary infrastructure, including wayfinding/directional signage, lighting, public address systems, furniture and the like in support of events and performances which are not attached to the Loveridge Lookout.

Removal and replacement of information, interpretive, directional and advertising signage within existing signage cases.

Restoration or repair of the Inverloch shipwreck memorial.

Public events

The installation and/or erection of temporary elements associated with short term events after which time they must be removed and any affected areas of the place made good to match the condition of the place prior to installation. This includes:

Temporary marquees, tents, stages, and the like which are located no closer than three metres from the Lookout.

Temporary security fencing, scaffolding, hoardings or surveillance systems to prevent unauthorised access or secure public safety.

Temporary structures, vendor and toilet vans which are located on existing hardstand and paved/asphalted areas and pathways or on turf areas with a protective surface (board or track mats).

Temporary infrastructure, including wayfinding/directional signage, lighting, public address systems, furniture and the like in support of events and performances which are not attached to the Loveridge Lookout

Landscape/ outdoor areas

Hard landscaping and services

Repair, resurfacing and maintenance of existing carparks, paving, footpaths or shared paths and access roads.

Subsurface works to existing watering and drainage systems.

Maintenance, repair and replacement of existing above surface services such as plumbing, electrical cabling, surveillance systems, pipes or fire services which does not involve changes in location or scale.

Removal or replacement of external directional signage provided the size, location and material remains the same.

Installation of physical barriers or traps to enable vegetation protection and management of small vermin such as rats, mice and possums.

Gardening, trees and plants

Management and maintenance of vegetation including pruning, removal of deadwood and pest and disease control.

Emergency tree work to maintain public safety.

Removal of noxious weeds.

Fire suppression and firefighting duties such as fuel reduction burns and fire control line construction, provided all heritage features and values of the place are identified and protected.

Objects Integral to the Registered Place held at the Anglesea and District Historical Society

The temporary relocation or movement of the Registered Objects Integral within the building where they are currently located.

Temporary external movement, relocation or loan of the Registered Objects Integral to Australian or Victorian government cultural institutions which have materials conservation departments where the activity is undertaken or supervised by qualified conservators, and performed in accordance with the accepted standards, policies and procedures of the borrowing organisation concerned. The Executive Director must be notified of all such activities and the before and after loan reports prepared by the materials conservation department of the government cultural institution must be forwarded to the Executive Director.

## Theme

7. Governing Victorians 8. Building community life

Construction dates 1937, 1942,

Architect/Designer	Coburn and Associates,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place, Registered object integral to a registered place,
Hermes Number	206243
Property Number	

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## History

# HISTORY

### Defence of Australia during World War II

The entry of Japan into the war in December 1941 brought about a sense of urgency for the need to upgrade Australia's defence capabilities.

Fears of an invasion of the Australian coastline intensified and the attacks by Japan on Darwin in February 1942 and Sydney and Newcastle in late May and early June of that year exposed Australia's vulnerability.

The Federal Government appointed the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) as responsible for developing an effective early warning system against attack and the concept of what would become the Volunteer Air Observers Corps (VAOC) was devised by the RAAF Directorate of Intelligence during the latter months of 1941.

The VAOC was based on the Royal Observers Corps, an organisation of British men and women whose work in spotting and reporting enemy aircraft movements is officially acknowledged to have played an important role in the Battle of Britain. The VAOC was intended to have a similar purpose to support the RAAF by sighting and observing aircraft over Australia.

On 22 December 1941 the Air Board issued the directive to RAAF Southern Area Headquarters to establish the VAOC. The first observation post at Bairnsdale became operational just three days later and formal War Cabinet approval followed on 31 December 1941. The VAOC operated, in effect, as a civilian arm of the RAAF.

### Civil Defence

To assist the war effort, many people who were working in reserved occupations or precluded from military service (through age or some other reason) accepted the opportunity to involve themselves in civil defence activities.

All civil defence work was voluntary, but it was mostly organised along formal and hierarchical lines and involved a level of interaction with the armed services.

At the beginning of the war, civil defence activities were managed by State governments, but this led to an ad-hoc approach and so in June 1941 as the war escalated the Federal Government established the Department of Home Security to co-ordinate civil defence on a national scale.

The numbers of volunteers increased markedly following the Japanese attack on Australia in 1942.

The VAOC was one of three main civil defence organisations. The others were the Air Raid Precautions (ARP) groups and the Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC).

## **Volunteer Air Observers Corps**

Following the formation of the VAOC, observation posts were swiftly established across Australia. Geographically, VAOC posts covered a 150-mile band inland, ranging from Port Douglas, Queensland to Port Lincoln, South Australia, and from Albany to Northampton, Western Australia.

Tasmania was covered by observation posts around industrial centres. Observation posts were staffed on a 24-hour basis by volunteers and were supported by reporting posts (often a station homestead or farmhouse) which reported on an intermittent basis. The network of observation posts each reported to their own Zone Control Post, which in turn relayed the information to a central State Control room in each capital city.

Each State Control room reported directly to RAAF Air Defence HQ in Brisbane. In Victoria, there were eight control zones based at Melbourne, Bairnsdale, Geelong, Warrnambool, Shepparton, Bendigo and Ballarat, with another at Launceston in Tasmania.

The State Control room was located at Preston Town Hall and the VAOC was organised under Commanding Officer Flight Lieutenant C.W. Hyland, who was based at the National Herbarium at the Botanic Gardens.

At its peak in 1944 there were about 25,000 VAOC volunteers (although some sources put the figure as high as 34,000) spread across 2,656 posts and 39 control zones, which reported an average of 120,000 aircraft sightings each month.

It is estimated that the VAOC during its time of operation saved at least 78 aircraft, aided another 710 substantially and gave assistance to a further 1,098. As the threat of invasion eased the need for the VAOC lessened and it was progressively disbanded from January 1945.

Following VP Day in August 1945 the role of the VAOC effectively ended and the VAOC was formally disbanded on 17 May 1946.

## **VAOC training and the role of women**

Most VAOC observers were women and some of them made the transition to the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF), which played an important role in coordinating and responding to the messages posted by VAOC posts. WAAAF members, stationed at the central control rooms in the capital cities plotted the courses of aircraft movements, as reports were received from the posts that observed them. In March 1943 Section Officer Honor Darling of the WAAAF was appointed to visit country VAOC posts to advise of the latest developments within the organisation such as aircraft recognition, and to act as liaison between the VAOC and the RAAF Directorate of Public Relations on VAOC publicity matters.

She is credited with encouraging many women to become VAOC volunteers. VAOC observers were provided with basic training in aircraft identification and silhouette sheets showing types of friendly and enemy aircraft operating in the South Pacific area (in 1943 these were reproduced in a series of articles prepared by the Department of Air published in newspapers). VAOC observation posts At first, observation posts were established on existing buildings (examples include hotel buildings or church towers) or structures such as fire spotting towers, or natural features, usually in prominent or elevated positions such as hilltops or coastal promontories that afforded wide views of the surrounding area. As no funds were provided to the VAOC purpose-built facilities could only be provided if the volunteers raised the money themselves. Typically, these were modest structures that included small cabins placed on the ground or elevated on simple timber or metal frames.

Examples of the latter type of lookouts include those erected at Benalla and Melton (both in 1943), and Lakes Entrance (1944).

After the VAOC was disbanded these temporary structures were usually removed.

### **Loveridge Lookout - civilian origins**

Designed by Ballarat architect, Herbert Leslie Coburn(1891-1956), the Loveridge Lookout was constructed in 1937-38 for Mrs Bertha Loveridge in memory of her late husband, James.

It was situated on coastal land near the family property, known as 'Anglecrest'. Mrs Loveridge died at Ballarat in 1941.

Although not constructed as one of the original viewing points along the Great Ocean Road, its construction in 1938 came as traffic was increasing following the removal of tolls and its location on an elevated site with one of the best coastline views saw it become one of the most popular scenic lookouts along the route.

Coburn designed a number of residences, civic and other buildings, as well as remodelling facades, in Western Victoria from the 1910s to the 1940s, predominantly in a Moderne style.

### **Loveridge Lookout - VAOC use**

The elevated location of the Lookout with sweeping views of the coastline in both directions and out to sea made it an ideal location for the VAOC observation post, which was established here in June 1942.

Between 1942 and 1945, a group of 56 local residents, all members of the VAOC, kept the observation post open 24 hours a day, recording aircraft movements in a series of logbooks and relaying the information to the Zone Control at Geelong.

The Loveridge Lookout was known as post number W.Q.1, and there were nearby observation posts at Torquay and Lorne.

The first recorded observatory watch was on 22 June 1942. Anglesea's first Chief Observer was Mr. William McDougall and he was succeeded in October 1942 by Miss Joyce Graham. By 1945 VAOC volunteers at Loveridge Lookout had logged a total of 3000 aircraft movement reports.

The log entries reveal the increasing skill of the observers: in the beginning they are often referred to simply as 'aircraft', while later entries specifically identify the aircraft type (Anson, Oxford, Kittyhawksetc.). The last VAOC watch at Loveridge Lookout was on 25 September 1945.

Given the need for constant surveillance, a small flat-roofed shelter for the observers was built at the rear of the Loveridge Lookout on top of the existing concrete slab of the lookout.

A low barbed wire fence encircled the lookout area. The shelter and fence were removed when the use by the VAOC ceased. The observer logbooks and the Morse Code key instrument were retained and eventually came part of the collection of the Anglesea & District Historical Society (ADHS).

### **Postwar Great Ocean Road tourism**

Following the war, the Loveridge Lookout became a popular tourist destination on the Great Ocean Road, and in 1997 the wartime use by the VAOC was commemorated by the installation of a plaque on the Lookout by the ADHS.

In 1983 'Anglecrest' was destroyed in the Ash Wednesday bushfires. After falling into disrepair, in 2008 Surf Coast Shire commissioned Dr. David Rowe to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for Loveridge Lookout.



This guided the restoration and repair works to the Lookout, which were completed in 2010.

## KEY REFERENCES USED TO PREPARE ASSESSMENT

Loveridge Lookout Anglesea, Conservation Management Plan, June 2008, prepared by Dr. David Rowe:  
Authentic Heritage Services Pty Ltd.

'Sky watch: the VAOC - Volunteer Air Observers Corps - 1941/56' by David Wilson in Defence Force Journal, no.64, May/June 1987, p.30-32.

World War II sites and events in East Gippsland, March 1994, prepared for the Historic Places Section, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Allom Lovell & Associates.

War-related heritage in Victoria, August 2011, prepared by Dr. David Rowe for the Veterans Unit, Department of Planning and Community Development.

## Assessment Against Criteria

### Criterion

The Loveridge Lookout is historically significant as one of two remaining Volunteer Air Observers Corps (VAOC) posts in Victoria established to support the defence of Australia during World War II. The Lookout was continuously occupied by a group of VAOC civilian volunteers, most of whom were women, from its establishment in June 1942 to its decommissioning in September 1945. Its operation is recorded in a complete set of logbooks (1942-45), a roster (1943), the original Morse Code Key instrument used to relay messages, and a VAOC badge worn by one of the volunteers held by the Anglesea and District Historical Society. (

### Criterion A)

The Loveridge Lookout is rare as one of two known VAOC observation posts in Victoria and the only which survives with associated objects that explain its use and operation. This class of place is endangered to the point of rarity in Victoria due to the destruction or loss of the VAOC observation structures and their associated records following the end of World War II. (

Criterion B) The Loveridge Lookout and Volunteer Air Observers Corps (VAOC) Objects together demonstrates how the VAOC made a strong contribution to the course of Victoria's history through the work of its volunteers, mainly women, in supporting the defence of the coastline and inland sites from enemy attack during World War II. ( Criterion H)

## Extent of Registration

### Heritage Act 2017

### 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: H2403

Category: Registered Place, Registered Objects Integral to a Registered Place

Place: Loveridge Lookout and Volunteer Air Observers Corps (VAOC) Objects

Location: Harvey Street, Angelsea

Municipality: Surf Coast Shire

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2403 encompassing all of the land shown hatched in Diagram 2403 encompassing part of Crown Allotment 13C Parish of Angahook to the extent of the title boundaries north and west and the edge of the Great Ocean Road to the South and 15m from the midpoint of the access road to the east; and all of the objects integral to the place listed in the catalogue held by the Executive Director, being Four

VAOC logbooks (1942,1943, 1944, 1945); One VAOC roster book (1943); One Morse code instrument (c.1942) and One VAOC badge (c.1942-45).

13 August 2020

STEVEN AVERY

Executive Director

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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/>*