
FORMER KENNETT RIVER WORKERS CAMP SITE

Location

1-13 AND 17 GREAT OCEAN ROAD, KENNETT RIVER 3234 AND 9 RIDGE DRIVE KENNETT RIVER 3234
KENNETT RIVER, COLAC OTWAY SHIRE

Municipality

COLAC OTWAY SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7620-0021

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 1, 2022

What is significant?

The Great Ocean Road originated as a scheme to employ soldiers returning from World War One (WWI). At the time the southwest coast of Victoria was only accessible by sea or rough bush tracks. The plan was to connect isolated settlements along the coast, to provide a vital connection for the timber industry, to promote tourism and to create a memorial for WWI. Initial surveys to establish the route of the road occurred in 1918 (VHD report, 2013). Construction began on 19th September 1919, as a joint effort between the Great Ocean Road Trust and the Country Roads Board. A combination of returned servicemen from WWI and civilians worked to construct the road. At least 3000 returned servicemen were involved in the project.

There are thirteen known camps along the Great Ocean Road, some are already included on the VHI and VHR. The camps were known to resemble military establishments. Camps usually comprised a communal dining marquee, kitchen, and recreational facilities. In the early 1920s recreational activities within the camps were limited, so the Salvation Army helped established large wooden recreation huts with a piano, gramophone, games, writing materials, newspapers and magazines.

Photographs demonstrate that individual tents were rectangular canvas structures with an additional sheet of canvas supported over the top for additional protection/insulation. Both the tent and the overlying canvas were supported by rough timber branches/trunks which were presumably locally sourced. The tents were described as

barely 8 feet by 6 feet in length and width and five feet six inches from the ground to the ridge pole. Most people could not stand upright in the tents, and they were dark and gloomy, with damp earthen floors.

The site has the potential to contain archaeological evidence of the size and form of the camp, provide insight into the working and living conditions of the workers.

How is it significant?

The site is of historical, social and archaeological significance.

Why is it significant?

The site historical significance for its association with the construction of the Great Ocean Road, the memorial to WWI, the returned servicemen who occupied the camp and the early occupation of Kennett River.

Hermes Number 209025

Property Number

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/>