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# DEEP CREEK INLET

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## Location

INTERSECTION OF RIVER TRACK, RED RISE TRACK AND BELLS BEND ROAD, LEITCHVILLE

## Municipality

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7726-0010

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 3, 2023

### What is significant?

Deep Creek Inlet constitutes an archaeological site containing a number of archaeological and structural features related to the history of water management in the Gunbower region. These features include a culvert, gate and wheel on a constructed platform, a low-timber edged platform of unknown purpose overlooking pondage within the main channel.

### How is it significant?

The Deep Creek Inlet is an archaeological site of local historical and research technological significance.

### Why is it significant?

Deep Creek Inlet has association with water supply processes in the Gunbower region and irrigation history in the region which is a key historic theme for the local area. While some structural features have been removed, and the inlet is disused, no longer allowing water from the Murray River to flow into the channel, many of the original features of the site remain, such as clay pipes, a culvert, a gate and wheel on a constructed platform, and a low platform overlooking pondage within the main channel. There is potential for the site to contain buried features related to the construction and operation of this water delivery/management system. As such, Deep Creek Inlet is significant at a local level.

Interpretation  
of Site

Deep Creek Inlet constitutes an archaeological site dating from 1890 containing a number of archaeological and structural features. These features include a culvert, gate and wheel on a constructed platform, a low-timber edged platform of unknown purpose overlooking pondage within the main channel. Deep Creek Inlet has association with water supply processes in the Gunbower region and irrigation history in the region which is a key historic theme for the local area: On the western side of River Track, Deep Creek terminates in an area of pondage (which was dry at the time of field survey). A culvert under River Track is opened and closed with a gate operated by a wheel connected via a wooden platform at the high bank immediately west of River Track. Immediately north of the pondage area is a low platform constructed of earth, timber and brick. The purpose of this platform is unknown. East of River Track the channel continues to the Murray River, which is situated to the immediate north. On the north side of the channel there is a concrete footing, measuring 1.2 m x 1.2 m and sitting approximately 30 cm above the ground surface. This footing may have once housed machinery associated with water supply. To the west of the footing there are two large clay pipes of approximately 40 cm in diameter. A number of timber beams, resembling a wharf structure extend from the bank of the Murray River. As the beams and associated aquatic timber structures are located in the bank of and within the Murray River itself, this wharf structure is technically located within NSW and is not considered as part of this VHI site. Deep Creek Inlet constitutes an archaeological site containing a number of archaeological and structural features. These features include a culvert, gate and wheel on a constructed platform, a low-timber edged platform of unknown purpose overlooking pondage within the main channel. Therefore, the Deep Creek Inlet site meets Threshold A (archaeology). Deep Creek Inlet has association with water supply processes in the Gunbower region and irrigation history in the region which is a key historic theme for the local area. As such, Deep Creek Inlet is significant at a local level. The Deep Creek Inlet site thus meets the Threshold B (place history).

Hermes  
Number

209338

Property  
Number

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## History

Between 1877 and 1881 there was a severe drought which resulted in the Victorian Government passing the Water Conservation Act 1883, which provided for the establishment of Irrigation Trusts. Between 1883 and 1905 the water supply for Victoria was administered by these Irrigation Trusts. Under the local management of Irrigation Trusts, channel systems were rapidly constructed, however, there was inadequate conservation of water and Trusts had to rely on seasonal flows to meet the landowner's requirements (McCoy 1988, p. 10). The proposed water schemes for Gunbower Island relied on headworks being built at Deep Creek for domestic and stock supply. When irrigation works were completed by the Trust in 1890, two 34-inch steam-driven Weymouth pumps delivered water via Deep Creek (via gravitation when the River Murray was high) or pumped from the River Murray into the Cohuna Main Channel constructed across Gunbower Island to Gunbower Creek and Barr Creek to flood irrigate 150 acre feet per day (Kaufman and Ballinger 2014, p. 70). Due to supply issues during summer months (when the Murray River was low) another pumping station was established at Cohuna Headworks. A channel was cut from Deep Creek Inlet connecting it to what is now the Old Cohuna Channel. To combat drought conditions in 1914, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission installed two pumps at Deep Creek to supply Gunbower residents, however these were removed in 1915 (McCoy 1988; McKinna et al 2012; North Central Catchment Management Authority 2014, p. 24). With the introduction of the Water Act 1905 most irrigation areas fell under the control of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. Under the administration of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, the Torrumbarry System was developed between 1906 and 1915 along the same lines as adopted by the Irrigation Trusts, an extension of irrigation served by pumping units. However, with the completion of the Torrumbarry Weir and Lock (near Gunbower) this approach changed due to the ability to control the water supply from the River Murray. As a result, water supply works via Deep Creek became redundant (Kaufman and Ballinger 2014, p. 71; McCoy 1988, p. 24). In 1935, Deep Creek was blocked off at the Murray River by the Forests Department to alleviate flooding on Gunbower Island (Kaufman and

Ballinger 2014, p. 71). The Cohuna connection spur channel between Deep Creek Inlet and the Main Channel is visible in aerial imagery dating to 1945.

*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/>*