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# BELL'S REEF QUARTZ COMPANY MINING SITE

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## Location

CORNER OF SAILORS CREEK ROAD AND RYAN'S TRACK, WOMBAT STATE FOREST

## Municipality

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7723-1272

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 5, 2023

### What is significant?

Remains of a late 19th century quartz mine.

### How is it significant?

In comparison to other historic gold mines, the site is not well preserved. However, the lack of historical information on the mine, means that archaeological research holds the key to providing the necessary information to explain the site.

### Why is it significant?

19th century gold mine associated with a minor goldfield.

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|---------------------------|--|
| Interpretation<br>of Site | Given the limited recorded mining history for Bell's Reef, it is most likely that the mining remains belong to the Bell's Reef Quartz Company that was formed in August 1880. However, the nature of the extant remains do not match well with the details on the auction notice. This may mean that the mine was never fully developed. As no tailings were found on the site, it would appear that the battery never crushed ore. Another possible explanation for the recorded mining features is that they related to the 1920s mining venture. The nature of the extant foundations are more suggestive of this time period. Most likely the remains of the 1930s mine are those recorded to the north that are listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory as H7723-0680, Bells Reef Mine Site. |
| Hermes<br>Number          | 210631   |
| Property<br>Number        |  |

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## History

Bells Reef, located at the head of Old Tom's Gully, was discovered and first worked in 1880. Pioneering mining on the reef was carried out by the Bell Brothers. In the late 1870s they had been operating the Telegraph Saw Mill in the area, extracting timber from the upper reaches of Old Tom Gully. The Bell's Reef Quartz Company was formed in August 1880. The prospectus for the company appeared in the Argus (6/9/1880, P.8). The company made terms with the Bell Brothers to erect battery. In February 1881 the battery was christened but reported as being not in operation due to a prolonged drought/lack of water. In January 1882, the mining plant/lease was advertised for sale (Argus, 13/1/1882, P.2). In the 1920s, the Ballarat Star, has two brief reports on another company, Bell's Reef Extended, sinking a shaft (depth 130 feet, Ballarat Star, 13/9/1922, P.8) and erecting machinery. Between 1934 and 1935, Melbourne newspapers (Argus, Age and Herald) have small reports on another company, Bells Reef NL, working two shafts and crushing ore at a State Battery. The Age (15/5/1935, P.15) reported that the main shaft was down 126 feet.

*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/>*