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# COLERAINE HERITAGE PRECINCT

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## Location

Gleneleg Highway COLERAINE, Southern Grampians Shire

## Municipality

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

## Level of significance

Stage 2 study complete

## Heritage Listing

Southern Grampians Shire

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 5, 2004

What is significant?

The township of Coleraine is located on the Hamilton Highway, 30.0 km west of Hamilton. The town developed at the road crossing of Bryant's Creek, particularly for traffic between Adelaide, Melbourne and the southern ports of Portland and Port Fairy (Belfast) from the early 1840s. Traditionally, Coleraine has been an important service centre for the surrounding pastoral properties. The great pastoral runs of Muntham and Konongwootong surrounded Coleraine prior to their subdivision in the 1840s. After the subdivision of Konongwootong, the township began to develop, servicing pastoralists, farmers and later closer and soldier settlement schemes. The first buildings were hotels and stores to serve the large pastoralists and the people who were travelling between Adelaide and Melbourne. Merchants were particularly influential in the development of early Coleraine. George and Thomas Trangmar established Trangmar's Store near the intersection of the Portland and Melbourne - Adelaide Roads 1852, and in 1859 Abraham Lesser started Lesser's Stores at the western end of Whyte Street. Both the Lesser and Trangmar families were particularly important over several generations in Coleraine. Some pastoralists were also important to the development of the town, particularly the Pastoral and Agricultural Societies. William Moodie was important in the development of the P & A Society, as well as being involved in the Shire of Wannon. Adam Turnbull, of Mount Koroite run was a pastoralist as well as the first President of the municipality. It is important to note that the earliest squatters who held vast tracts of land, such as Edward Henty of Muntham, the Winter-Cookes of Murndal and the Whyte Brothers of Konongwootong did little to advance the small hamlet of Coleraine in its early days, nor did they contribute to community life. The division of some of the great runs in the mid 1840s led to smaller (still vast) squatting runs being taken up. Many of the 'secondary' squatters were involved in the community life and advancement of the township. One example of involvement is the organising of the Great Western Steeplechase from 1857 onwards, and subsequent development of the racing club. The steeplechase became an annual fixture, a notoriously demanding race held over a shifting course around the town. The race was made famous by poet Adam Lindsay Gordon, who competed in the race several times, memorialising it in his poem 'The fields of Coleraine'. By the mid 1860s the town could boast

substantial public buildings such as a National School, three hotels, two general merchants, a number of brick cottages and three churches. The first churches to be built were the Anglican and Catholic, representing the dominant denominations in the area. The township serviced the surrounding squatting runs not only in a commercial and mercantile sense, but also for social purposes. This is clear from the annual Coleraine Show which continues today. In 1872, Coleraine became the civic administrative centre of the newly formed Shire of Wannan. This had an impact on the architecture, development and commercial district of Whyte Street, as well as influencing the direction of the town on a social and economic level. The population increased, more fine buildings were constructed and trade was brought to the town. Efforts were made by the townspeople and squatters to develop and beautify the town in the later nineteenth century. Three large public open spaces were set aside, and street tree plantings commenced in Whyte Street. Industrial and transport development was lobbied for, and eventually Coleraine was linked to Hamilton by rail. The arrival of the railway was relatively successful in the promotion of the town. Although it did support other industries such as the rabbit freezing and the butter factory, ultimately, it made the larger towns such as Hamilton more accessible. This led to a changing focus for the provision of goods and services to the people of Coleraine. The town has been influenced by the breaking up of large estates, at the end of the nineteenth century and after the two World Wars. However, the town's population has declined in parallel with a reduction in other local services. This is a general trend across the state and is due to a combination of factors, not least the decline of the wool industry and an increased mobility. In the later twentieth century, one of the public open spaces, the town common, was planted out with Australian native plants in an effort to 'beautify' the landscape. This has developed over the past forty years into a nationally significant arboretum, the Peter Francis Points Arboretum which is now the largest collection of Eucalyptus species in the world.

How is it significant?

The township of Coleraine is of historical, social, cultural and architectural significance to the community of Coleraine and the Shire of Southern Grampians

Why is it significant?

The township of Coleraine is of historical significance as one of the oldest permanent urban settlements in the Shire, of social significance as the focus for the community in the Coleraine area. Coleraine is of cultural significance as the recreational focus for the pastoral hinterland of the township for recreational activities such as sports, racing and the annual Pastoral and Agricultural Show. It is of architectural significance as a planned town including a typical range of buildings including public facilities and utilities, churches, commercial buildings and private residences. Of further architectural significance is the range of fine architect designed buildings which date from the late nineteenth century in Whyte Street.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002;
Construction dates	1840,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	23519
Property Number	

## Physical Description 1

The grid of the township of Coleraine is aligned parallel with Bryant's Creek and is therefore set on a rigid north-south orientation. The earliest formal subdivision of the township provided for town allotments in twenty sections, and suburban allotments beyond. The sections, for the most part, include ten standard allotments of 50,000 square feet or two roods (4,644 square metres). These allotments increase in size further from the town centre, ranging from little more than one acre (.407 hectares) to six acres (2.428 hectares). The main streets are Whyte Street (Melbourne - Adelaide Road) and Winter Street (Portland Road). Whyte Street still crosses Bryant Creek at

the same point where the original river ford was located. The 1856 plan shows reserves for the Church of England (where the Catholic Church was built) and a Cultivation Paddock. The practicalities of the plan can be traced back to the subdivision for towns in the colony of New South Wales promulgated by Governor Darling in the 1820s and adopted, more or less, by the colonial government of Victoria. The theory behind the plan can be traced back as far as the colonial towns and cities of the ancient Roman Empire.

The intersection of Whyte and Winter Streets became the major intersection because of its central location and as the intersection of the major routes. The Koroite Inn, built in 1846 was located on the south east corner of this intersection prior to subdivision, and may have influenced the precise alignment of the streets.

The introduction of the Hamilton-Coleraine railway line in the early twentieth century was an intrusion on some of the eastern allotments of the township. A substantial area was allocated to the line and the station ground, including a large water pool for re-filling the engines. The station has been restored, and is operated as a tourist information centre, although the railway tracks have been removed.

Several large public open spaces were reserved on three sides of the township. Queens Park, located to the north of the township, over Bryant's Creek comprises about 90 acres which was planted out with a variety of Australian and European trees (mainly *Quercus robur* [English Oak]) in celebration of Queen Victoria's jubilee in 1887. The park fell into disuse and a sporting oval, grandstand and tennis and netball courts were built adjacent to the creek in the early twentieth century. Although Queens Park is largely abandoned, Silvester Oval continues to be a popular local recreational ground. The Coleraine Pastoral and Agricultural Showgrounds are located west of the township, over Bryants Creek. They consist of a large oval, corrugated iron display sheds, undercover sheep yards and several corrugated iron booths. The showgrounds are still used for active recreation as well as the annual Pastoral and Agricultural Show. The other public open space is a large town common, now the Peter Francis Points Arboretum located to the south of the township, on the crest of the hill.

Many substantial buildings survive. The churches, and the residences associated with them, are all in the central south of the township. The residential density of the township is low to medium in the centre and lower on the outskirts. The shops that survive extend west down Whyte Street from the central civic area. The banks of Bryant's Creek have been beautified and have facilities for picnicking. The main road bridge across Bryant's Creek dates from the 1960s.

A number of English Elms (*Ulmus procera*) were planted to beautify Whyte Street in the late nineteenth century. Most trees were removed in the 1960s, but those few trees that survive provide a reminder of how Whyte Street once appeared. Efforts to beautify the streetscapes have been made in the twentieth century. Most of the streets running parallel with Whyte Street have been planted with street trees.

#### Other Notable Houses-

Tippett's Butcher's and Residence, 108 Whyte Street, Coleraine RSL Clubrooms, 17 Winter Street, Coleraine  
*Araucaria bidwillii* (Bunya Bunya Pine), 83-85 McKebery Street, Coleraine.

Timber Residence, 26 Glenelg Highway, Coleraine.

Timber Residence, 105 McKebery Street, Coleraine

Dental Surgery (former), 89a Whyte Street, Coleraine

Nash House (Former), 109 Church Street, Coleraine

Methodist Church (Former), 26 Winter Street, Coleraine

Store and residence, 57 Whyte Street, Coleraine

Timber House, 91 McConochie Street, Coleraine

Wisharts Department Store (former), 99 Whyte Street, Coleraine Marienfels, 79 McConochie Street, Coleraine

Warralong, Coleraine-Balmoral Road, Coleraine

## Historical Australian Themes

Theme 2 Peopling Australia

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.5 Developing primary production

3.5.1 Grazing stock

3.5.2 Breeding animals

### 3.5.3 Developing agricultural industries

Theme 5: Working

5.8 Working on the land

Theme 6 Educating

6.2 Establishing schools

6.5 Educating people in remote places

Theme 8 Developing Australia's cultural life

8.12 Living in and around Australian homes

8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

## **Usage/Former Usage**

Continuing as a township.

## **Integrity**

Good degree of integrity

## **Physical Description 2**

George Trangmar, merchant

James Blair, Police Magistrate Portland Bay

Thomas Trangmar, merchant

Abraham Lesser, merchant

Rev. F. T. Cusack Russell , Anglican Minister

Dr. Robert Poynter, Dentist

Whyte Brothers, first owners of Konongwootong

Edward Henty, first owner of Muntham

John McConochie, owner of Konongwootong Creek

John S Jenkins, Hamilton architect for alterations in 1867

Isaac Gelston Gray, policeman, publican, auctioneer

Adam Lindsay Gordon, horseman and poet

Arthur Pilleau, first owner Hilgay Station

John S Jenkins, architect

Arthur Hill, Shire Engineer

Cuthbert Fetherstonhaugh, colonial administrator and horse enthusiast

Whyte Brothers, pioneering squatters

Adam Turnbull, pioneering squatter

William Young

J F Kirby, owner and winner of the 1911 Melbourne Cup with Parisian

Cr. Eugene Silvester, after who Silvester Oval is named

*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/>*