

# THOLOGOLONG HOMESTEAD



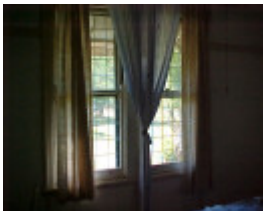
1 thologolong homestead walwa may99 pm1 general view



thologolong homestead walwa may99 pm1 front elevation



H01832 thologolong homestead barn pm1 mar02



H01832 thologolong homestead inside window detail mar02 pm1



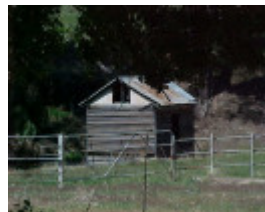
H01832 thologolong homestead leanto pm1 mar02



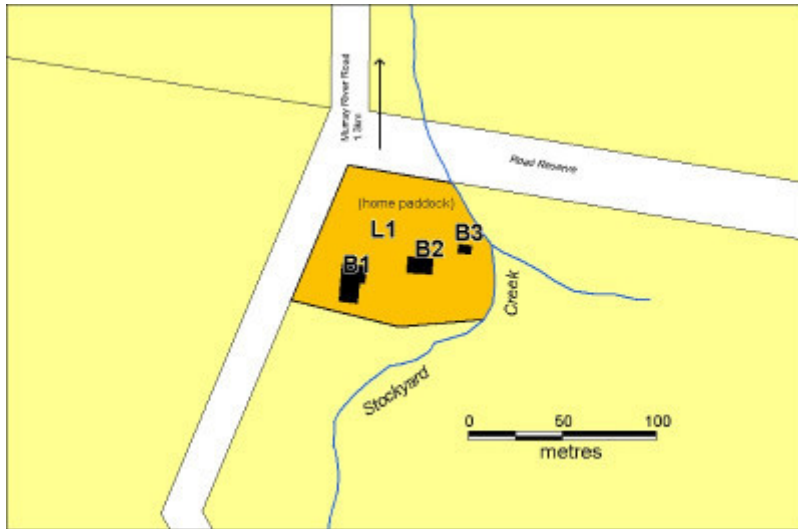
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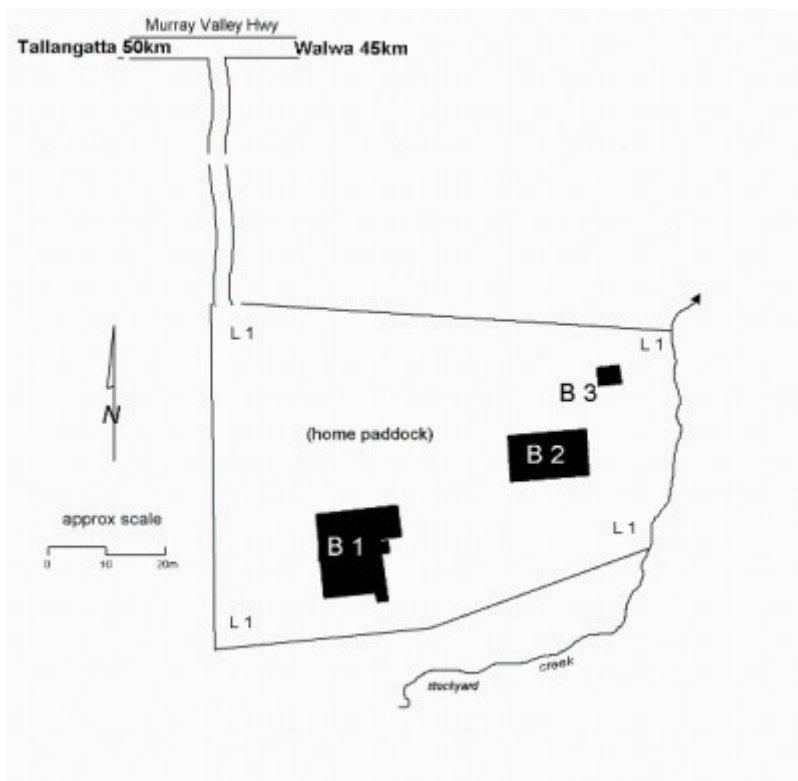
H01832 thologolong homestead window detail mar02 pm1



H01832 thologolong homestead workman s hut mar02 pm1



H01832 plan



Thologolong Plan

**Location**

4770 MURRAY RIVER ROAD THOLOGOLONG, TOWONG SHIRE

**Municipality**

TOWONG SHIRE

**Level of significance**

Registered

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

H1832

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO8

## **VHR Registration**

September 9, 1999

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

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## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on -

What is significant?

Thologolong is a timber homestead complex built in the late 1920s beside the Murray River of hardwood felled and milled on the property. It consists of a 10 roomed house, a stables and loft, and a worker's cottage. The house was built for and lived in by Helen Sullivan (1908-1986) and her husband Keith Sutherland. The builder was Frank Turner of Albury. At Thologolong in the 1930s Helen Sutherland developed the Murray Grey breed of cattle from mulberry coloured animals which had appeared in the Aberdeen Angus herd of her husband's cousin, Peter Sutherland, since before the First World War. Self-taught in genetics, she bred a strain of cattle which is now internationally recognised for its hardiness, temperament and high beef yield such that Murray Greys are known as "the gentle builders of beef". The Thologolong property has remained in the Sutherland family and has become something of a shrine both to Helen Sutherland and to the Murray Grey breed. The homestead displays a high level of integrity from its era of building with very few physical changes from the 1920s.

How is it significant?

Thologolong Homestead is of historical, scientific and social significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Thologolong is of historical and scientific significance for its associations with the development of the world renowned Murray Grey breed of beef cattle, Australia's only internationally recognised breed.

Thologolong is historically and socially significant as the home of Helen Sutherland who is credited with the development of the Murray Grey breed. An amateur geneticist, she is an important figure in the history of Australian cattle breeding and the homestead, which has changed little since the 1920s, was her home for most of her life.

## **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:**

#### General Conditions:

1. All alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the significant fabric of the registered place or object.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations 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 alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.
5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

#### Exterior:

- \* Repairs and maintenance, including restumping, which replace like with like.
- \* Painting of previously painted surfaces provided that preparation or painting do not destroy evidence of previous paint or decorative schemes.
- \* Removal of extraneous items such as air conditioners, pipe work, ducting, wiring, antennae, aerials etc, and making good.
- \* Repair or replacement of fences and gates.
- \* Erection of small, plain (not 'period') outbuildings including sheds, aviaries, kennels and the like.
- \* The process of gardening, mowing, mulching, bedding displays, removal of dead plants, disease and weed control, emergency and safety works and landscaping.
- \* Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard Pruning of Amenity Trees AS 4373.

#### Interior:

- \* Repairs and maintenance which replace like with like.
- \* Painting of previously painted walls and ceilings provided that painting or preparation do not destroy evidence of previous paint or decorative schemes .
- \* Removal of paint from originally unpainted or oiled joinery, doors, architraves and skirting.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of carpets and/or flexible floor coverings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of curtain track, rods, blinds and other window dressings.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of devices for the hanging of mirrors, paintings and wall mounted artworks.
- \* Refurbishment of bathrooms, toilets and or en suites including removal, installation or replacement of sanitary fixtures and associated piping, mirrors, wall and floor coverings.
- \* Refurbishment of kitchens including installation, removal or replacement of kitchen benches and fixtures including sinks, stoves, ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers etc and associated plumbing and wiring.

- \* Installation, removal or replacement of ducted, hydronic or concealed radiant type heating.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of electrical wiring provided that all new wiring is fully concealed.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of bulk insulation in the roof space.
- \* Installation, removal or replacement of smoke detectors.

Construction dates        1927,  
 Heritage Act Categories   Registered place,  
 Other Names                MICHAELONG, HELEN SUTHERLAND HOMESTEAD,  
 Hermes Number            5629  
 Property Number

## History

Thologolong is intimately associated with noted cattle breeder Helen Playford Sutherland (1908-1986) who developed Australia's only unique cattle breed, the Murray Grey.

From "Birth of the Greys" a pamphlet by David Palmer

There have been many great achievers in the Australian cattle industry, but none greater than Helen Sutherland. This determined woman, a natural cattle-breeder of talent and vision, did what few people had done before. She created and nurtured a new breed - an Australian breed, the Murray Grey. When she died in 1986, she had the satisfaction of seeing her beloved Greys established across Australia and overseas. Her overall place in pastoral history is assured. And, through the efforts of her sons, Murray and Macian, and daughter Fiona, the more personal achievements of her lifetime are being extended into another generation. Murray has ensured the continuance of the great tradition of Michaelong Murray Greys; held and enhanced the blood-lines developed so painstakingly by his mother; and maintained the family connection with Thologolong, the property - 80 km upstream from Albury/ Wodonga on the Murray River where the Murray Grey story really began.

It was 1932 and Helen Sutherland - the former Helen Player - was living at Thologolong with her husband, Keith. The family partnership was dispersing its Angus stud and Helen, already a keen breeder, had her heart set on acquiring eight mulberry-coloured cows from the herd and commissioned her father, Frank Player, and J.G. Sutherland to buy them. "If you don't come back with them, I'll be leaving," she is supposed to have said before they set off for the sale. When they returned, the eight cows were hers, purchased for £64. A new breed was in the making.

Helen read genetics books widely, taking particular note of Mendel's revolutionary genetic theories, first published 70 years previously. In 1935, Jock Buik arrived as herdsman for the Angus stud her husband Keith was running. He recognised the value of the Murray Greys and was a great help to Helen in implementing Mendel's theories in her efforts to improve them. By 1940, the breeding programme was firmly established with the eight purest cows divided into groups of two, and four different bulls being used over them to fix the breed. Unfortunately, Jock went off to fight in World War 2, and the droughts of the early 1940s meant the cattle had to be agisted some distance away. Only eight cows and a few calves came back in 1945, and Helen set out again to build up her herd. Meanwhile, the Add family, 20 km up the Murray River, had recognised the value of the Murray Greys and bought bulls from Helen before the War. "The Gadds went all out to improve their Murray Greys at a time when my mother had only limited opportunities to breed up the original herd as her husband was more interested in the Angus herd than the Murray Greys," says Murray Sutherland. "And the Gadds made the breed bloom. However, the eight families my mother selected to form the basis of the stud, when it was registered as Thologolong in 1962, are the same eight families that are dominating the breed today." The Murray Grey Beef Cattle Society would not register her cattle in the named stud prefix, Michaelong, but used the name Thologolong. The progeny of those animals were given the prefix, Michaelong, which was named after Murray's brother, Michael, who died at the age of 13.

Murray believes Thologolong Boadicea, born in the mid 1950s, a daughter of one of the eight original grey cows,

was the fountainhead of the breed. She lived to the age of 19 and produced 17 calves in that time. One interesting feature was her folding udder. When it was full, it folded out from her centreline towards her flanks. When she was milked out, it tucked away underneath her. The most recent expression of Boadicea's quality was in a great grandson, Michaelong Genetic, that Murray is now using extensively in the stud. He has the same loose skin along his belly that Boadicea used to fold her udder. The other original families Helen concentrated on were Amethyst, Agricola, Freesia, Lotus, Magnolia, Moonflower and Riverina.

In 1969, the Sutherlands bred Michaelong Mesa Grandee - a son of Michaelong Roman Invasion - who was grand champion at the Royal Easter Show in Sydney in 1972, and a bull, according to Murray, that reshaped the size and muscle configuration of the breed. But, when they first showed Mesa Grandee, popular opinion had it he was so much better than bulls that had gone before in the breed that he could not have been a pure-bred animal. However, he was successfully blood-typed and matched with his sire and dam to confound the critics. "When we took him to the Royal Easter Show in 1972 they just kept looking. A leading Argentinian Angus breeder visiting Australia at the time said we would not breed another bull of that quality for 15 years," Murray said. The decade and a half is more than up, and now Murray has produced a second bull, this time from the Lotus family. He predicts he also will have a major impact on the breed.

In early 1990, there were about 80 females in the herd, with Murray rapidly expanding the best female lines by transferring seven to 12 embryos from each of the best females to recipients twice in a year. He has a substantial bank of semen, dating back to the 1960s, and is recycling old but valuable genes. "We don't want 30 or 40 eggs at a time because they won't fertilise," he says. "And we only flush donors twice before we join them naturally. Otherwise, they can be ruined with too many hormone injections. My aim is to keep the female families my mother concentrated on and select bulls from them to breed from. I never put a bull back over his own family. We haven't got a wide enough genetic base to do it because we are line-bred anyway. With ET, I can maximise the genetic power to put this herd right back on top, because they are the only direct descendants left together," he said.

In 1969, Helen and the three youngest of seven children - Murray, Macian and Fiona - moved to Mingay, a 460 ha property, 13 km north of Gundagai. They continued to breed Murray Greys successfully, achieving their greatest show-ring success at the 1977 Royal Easter Show in Sydney. They gained seven championship ribbons with eight head, and came within one point of gaining the on-the-hoof and the on-the-hook steer championships. "We missed by one point for lack of fat cover," Murray said. At other Royal Shows, they gained eight single bull championships in that period.

In the early 1980s, they recognised the stud's need for some outcrossed bulls and paid \$37,500 for a quarter share in Balmoral Elation - the inter-breed beef champion at the

1981 Royal Melbourne Show, and a grandson of Michaelong Mesa Grandee - and Parknook Mustang. Elation clicked with the Michaelong females and his descendants are dominating the sire battery there. Murray is using two Elation grandsons, Genetic and Federation, and two sons, Shogun and Inspiration, with great success. He is also using a son of Shogun called Shogun 7. By 1982, the herd had grown to 200 head, despite several production sales, and the Sutherlands, when at Mingay, staged what they billed the Sale of the Century, selling every Murray Grey under 12 years of age. In 1986, Murray and his mother made a decision to return to Thologolong while Fiona kept some cattle and decided to live at Cootamundra, and Macian moved to Yass. But Helen had to go into hospital about the time of the move and she died before she could go south. Murray completed the move, as she would have wished. He has also set up a trust to ensure that the stud will maintain its connection with Thologolong - both because of its links with the origin of the breed and because of the long family involvement with the property. Murray's grandfather, Peter Alexander, of Scottish Canadian descent, arrived in the Upper Murray in 1885.

When Helen Sutherland died in 1986, at the age of 75, Murray kept the nucleus of the herd, retained the Michaelong prefix, changed the company name from the Michaelong Pastoral Company to the Helen Sutherland Pastoral Company, and moved the stud back to the property where she started the Murray Grey breed. At that time, Thologolong was badly run down, so Murray first concentrated on building fences and generally getting it back into shape. Wild dogs were a problem. It was not until the Victorian Government and land-owners built a 69 km dog-proof fence - from Thologolong to Tallangatta - that livestock on properties facing the Hume Weir were protected.

Murray calves the herd in autumn and late winter, although he prefers the growth rate and acclimatisation of autumn-born calves because they are better able to utilise the spring flush and associated flow of milk. Pastures

on Thologolong are mainly sub clover and native pasture. Murray conserves only a few thousand bales of hay for across-the-herd winter

feeding. He feeds sale bulls mainly oats for about three months before the sales. As well, in spring 1989, he started feeding powdered mineral supplements, in lick-type feeders in every paddock. The minerals needed were determined by dung analysis. He believes the claims of the firm selling the minerals, namely that the cattle will look, reproduce and grow better, have been substantiated.

Showing and the intensive feeding and preparation associated with it, used to take up a substantial amount of Murray's time. "But I haven't shown much since 1984. Even so, most of the bulls winning well in the show-ring are by, or are, grandsons of the foundation Michaelong lines. In 1989, for example, the top-priced Murray Grey bull in Australia was Michaelong Solid Gold, with a three-quarter share sold for \$44,000. The top-priced female in 1989, Kimolong Linda 658, which was sold for \$30,000 by Murray's brother, Peter Sutherland, at his stud dispersal, was also by a Michaelong bull. One legacy of Murray's former connection with the show-ring - as a judge rather than an exhibitor - is the knowledge he believes he gained of the origin of the Murray Grey type. He was judging Murray Greys in 1976 at the Royal Highland Show in Scotland and saw 'Murray Greys' bred from a half-breed Charolais put over Angus. The explanation could be that Charolais bulls were first introduced into Britain in 1885, to boost the size of many commercial Shorthorn herds. Descendants brought those infusions to Australia in the heyday of Shorthorns in this country.

Despite his dedication to Michaelong and the Murray Grey breed, Murray has found time for another commendable pursuit. He was the instigator in 1984 of the \$260 million National Agridome project for Albury-Wodonga. Six years later, plans for the agricultural education and demonstration site, with each of seven commodity domes to be housed in a huge steel and teflon complex set on 300 ha, were advancing well. Recently, Federal Primary Industry Minister John Kerin gave the project his full endorsement. Says Murray, "If we can pull this off, it will be the greatest thing in agriculture. At present, there is great potential to improve our income of \$22 billion worth of food and fibre from the \$90 billion invested in agriculture. So we aim to set up mini experimental farms and agricultural commodity processing plants to show visitors what can be done to add value to commodities. Up to 400 trade missions a year visit Canberra. But they can't see or buy any products or manufacturing processes there. At the Agridome, they'll be able to do both." It is a plan of great vision - one with the potential to contribute greatly to Australia's future. It is not surprising that Murray was the founding influence. Who would expect less of the son of Helen Sutherland?

## **Assessment Against Criteria**

### **Criterion A**

The historical importance, association with or relationship to Victoria's history of the place or object. Thologolong Homestead Thologolong is of historical significance for its associations with the development of the world renowned Murray Grey breed of beef cattle, Australia's only internationally recognised breed. It is historically significant as the home of Helen Sutherland who is credited with the development of the Murray Grey breed.

### **Criterion B**

The importance of a place or object in demonstrating rarity or uniqueness.

### **Criterion C**

The place or object's potential to educate, illustrate or provide further scientific investigation in relation to Victoria's cultural heritage.

### **Criterion D**

The importance of a place or object in exhibiting the principal characteristics or the representative nature of a place or object as part of a class or type of places or objects.

### **Criterion E**

The importance of the place or object in exhibiting good design or aesthetic characteristics and/or in exhibiting a richness, diversity or unusual integration of features.

### **Criterion F**

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating or being associated with scientific or technical innovations or achievements.

Thologolong is of scientific significance for its associations with the development of the world renowned Murray Grey breed of beef cattle, Australia's only internationally recognised breed.

#### Criterion G

The importance of the place or object in demonstrating social or cultural associations.

Thologolong is socially significant as the home of Helen Sutherland who is credited with the development of the Murray Grey breed. An amateur geneticist, she is an important figure in the history of Australian cattle breeding and the homestead, which has changed little since the 1920s, was her home for most of her life.

#### Criterion H

Any other matter which the Council considers relevant to the determination of cultural heritage significance

## Extent of Registration

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1832 in the category described as a Heritage place:

Thologolong Homestead, Murray Valley Highway, Thologolong, Towong Shire Council.

#### EXTENT:

1. All the buildings marked as follows on Diagram 1832 held by the Executive Director:

B1 House

B2 Stables

B3 Worker's Cottage

2. All the land marked L1 on Diagram 1832 held by the Executive Director being part of the land described in Certificate of Title Volume Volume 5688 Folio 438.

Dated: 2 September 1999

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G 36 9 September 1999 p.2067]

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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/>*