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# Margaret Baskerville - Thomas Bent Statue



B6674 Thomas Bent Statue

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## Location

Cnr Nepean Highway & Bay Street,, BRIGHTON VIC 3186 - Property No B6674

## Municipality

BAYSIDE CITY

## Level of significance

State

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2023

## Heritage Listing

National Trust

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 19, 2005

The statue is of Sir Thomas Bent (1838-1909), prominent Brighton politician and former Premier of Victoria (1904-1909). The large bronze figure is mounted on a tall granite plinth and is currently located beside a busy intersection on one of Melbourne's major highways, centrally situated in Bent's former Parliamentary constituency.

How is it significant? The statue of Sir Thomas Bent, unveiled in 1913, is significant for historic and social reasons at a State level.

Why is it significant? The Statue is significant for two major reasons. The commemoration of Bent's long and active political career in Victoria, and the fact that it was the first large public commission to be given to a woman

sculptor in Victoria . It is also significant in that because of its monumental scale a new technique of welding the bronze sections of the statue with an oxy-acetylene jet was introduced.

Scarlett in *Australian Sculptors 1830-1977*, (1980) notes that "it is unusual that such an important public commission was given to a woman sculptor in Melbourne in the 1910's". This work helped the sculptor, Margaret Baskerville, preserve her name as Victoria's first "professional" woman sculptor and resulted in her gaining further public commissions in later years.

Sir Thomas Bent was a famous, some would say infamous, politician and land speculator, serving in the Legislative Assembly for over 32 years and, finally achieving a knighthood and the position of Premier of Victoria. He was responsible for many important speculative ventures within his electorate and the wider context of Victoria, developing communication networks, road and rail, and promoting public utilities such as gasworks. Although often accused of promoting his own ends he also contributed significantly to the development of the State.

The statue serves as a reminder that someone who started out as a poor market gardener with little education could, by his efforts, climb to such a high position within Victoria.

Classified: 14/12/1994

Revised: 06/05/2002

Hermes Number 64547

Property Number

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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/>*