
Commonwealth Clothing Factory



B6044 Commonwealth
Government Clothing Factory

Location

1 - 23 Miles Street,, Southbank VIC 3006 - Property No B6044

Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

Level of significance

Demolished/Removed

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 24, 2007

The factory, set up and run by the Commonwealth government, operated at this site from 1912 to 1971. It manufactured uniforms for local, state and Commonwealth instrumentalities and was established as part of a national defence initiative which included compulsory military training and the establishment of specialist factories to supply munitions to the new Australian army.

Built as national symbols of modernity and efficiency, the work practices and employment conditions laid down in these plants were well in advance of those prevailing in the private sector. The clothing factory was purpose-built, well lit and ventilated and equipped with the latest machinery, some of which was not in general use until 1930.

The factory's predominantly female employees worked under an innovative award which provided for paid holiday, sick and long service leave as well as worker's compensation, and paid wages rather than piece work rates. The factory was a stronghold of the Clothing Trades Union, which used these conditions as evidence in arbitration decisions which subsequently flowed on to the rest of the trade.

The significance of the clothing factory lies in its historic, social and scientific interest rather than its architecture.

As part of the first Australian government venture into manufacturing, for its contemporary reputation as a model factory and in its innovations in production control and conditions of employment, the clothing factory is representative of a unique group of industries.

Classified: 26/06/1989

Hermes Number 65346

Property Number

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/>