
Melbourne/Williamstown Railway Line



B6452 Melbourne
Williamstown Railway



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Location

WILLIAMSTOWN VIC 3016 - Property No B6452

Municipality

HOBSONS BAY CITY

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1599

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 14, 2004

The Melbourne to Williamstown Railway Line is culturally significant at the State level owing to its historic, aesthetic, social and scientific (technical) values. The factors which establish its historic importance are as follows:

- 1) It is, together with the Spencer Street to Sunbury portion of the Echuca railway, the first and oldest Government-built line in the State, having been opened on 13/01/1859.
- 2) It was the railway built to serve the Government port at Williamstown, giving it great economic importance to the Colony and establishing its role as an international passenger port.

3) It provided access to and was closely associated with the infrastructure required by the Victorian Railways to maintain its Statewide railway network from its foundation in 1859 (the now demolished Williamstown Workshops) throughout the nineteenth century (the Newport Workshops) and into the post Second World War period (the Spotswood Workshops, Newport Power Station, demolished, and the Spotswood Stores).

4) It was closely linked with the industrial development of the inner western metropolitan area not only through its public sidings, now removed, but through its private sidings, many of which are in situ and some continue to be used.

The factors which establish its aesthetic value are as follows:

1) It includes bridges and a station building and platform (Williamstown) recalling the opening of the line in 1859.

2) It includes an aesthetically distinguished junction station (Footscray) which is located in fine, mature public gardens.

3) It includes the aesthetically distinguished Newport Workshops complex.

the factors establishing its social value are as follows:

1) It includes Williamstown Station which served as a point of departure for international visitors from 1859.

2) It includes and conveyed workers trains to the Railway Workshops which have served from 1888 until the present as a work place in the State's largest industrial enterprise which was not only associated with railway operations but the national war effort during both World Wars.

Factors establishing its scientific (technical) interest are as follows:

1) The Yarraville interlocked gates, although representative of their type have a unique proximity with the hand operated gates formerly providing access to the Yarraville sidings, and all owing comparison to be made between the two gate types, once common throughout the metropolitan and country network.

2) The Newport substation as evidence of the original electrification scheme.

3) The Newport Workshops.

The significance of the railway as summarised above is especially demonstrated by the following sites:

- Bridges at the Maribyrnong River, Nicholson Street, Stony Creek, Cole Street and Thompson Street. The Maribyrnong River bridge abutment and the Thomposon Street bridge are unique.

- The Williamstown station building is a unique demonstration of one of the Government's first station designs, once similar to Woodend and Spencer Street; as demonstrated by the platform elevation and verandah and by the platform coping detail which survives also in a reconstructed form at Diggers' Rest and in fragments at Sunbury.

-Footscray Station, which adopts and imposing form comparable with Brighton Beach and is uniquely and intimately associated with the McNab Avenue gardens.

- The Newport Workshops

- The Newport Substation, relating to the initial phase in the electrification of the suburban railway system and one of the largest and most intact buildings of its type, visually linked with the Workshops at Newport.

- The Yarraville gates, as noted.

Classified: 21/07/1993

Hermes Number 66004

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/>