
Belmont Tower



B6917 Belmont Lookout Tower

Location

32 Belmont Avenue,, UPWEY VIC 3158 - Property No B6917

Municipality

YARRA RANGES SHIRE

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 3, 2006

The Belmont lookout tower, built in 1923, is of State historical, architectural and social significance:- as the oldest-known wooden lookout tower in Victoria; as the last of the wooden lookout towers which once dotted the Dandenong Ranges, an area of particular significance in Victoria's bushfire history; and for its associations with Dandenongs' residential development, tourism, and fire safety provisions.

The tower is part of the history of the urbanisation of the Dandenongs, particularly after the First World War, when rising car ownership enabled subdivision of beauty spots beyond Melbourne's rail network. It was built in 1923 as a land selling feature for the Mount Upwey Estate, one of the Dandenongs' largest subdivisions, to provide potential purchasers with panoramic views of the Estate's beautiful setting.

The tower also became a vital component in the community's continuing struggle with the fire menace. It was used as a fire spotting lookout for the Upwey Fire Brigade, which was formed in 1918, the first of the Dandenong townships to set up a brigade. It remains as a distinctive symbol of the prominent and sometimes tragic part which fire has played in the life of the Dandenongs.

The Belmont tower became such a well known tourist landmark in the Dandenongs that by 1927 the Rose Postcard company had included the tower in its special three-dimensional series on Victoria. The Dandenongs have long been, and remain, a leading tourist attraction in Victoria, and visitors have enjoyed the scenic outlook from the tower over many years.

The nearby tea room, now a private residence, enhances the significance of the tower. The tower was once a destination and starting point for many of the area's walks, and the tea room provided refreshments for weary hikers. The tea room was one of numerous such facilities which were established to cater for hikers and cyclists at popular tourist destinations on the periphery of Melbourne during the inter-war period.

The tower's unobtrusive timber structure with its bush feel blends into the forest atmosphere of the turn of the century when many timber structures - such as the trestle bridges on the 'Puffing Billy' line and the now demolished timber lookouts on the region's many hill tops - were landmarks in the Dandenongs. With sympathetic repairs the tower will continue to add to visitors' enjoyment of the Dandenongs.

Classified: 22/06/1998

Other Names Upwey Lookout Tower,

Hermes Number 66932

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/>