
Timber Rail Bridge



B7031 Murchison rail bridge



B7031 Murchison Rail Trail
Bridge sub structure 2010



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bridge 2010



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Location

cnr Stewart Road and Bendigo-Murchison Road,, MURCHISON VIC 3610 - Property No B7031

Municipality

GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 8, 2005

This bridge, built in 1890, is scientifically and historically significant at State level. It stands apart from any other surviving Victorian Railways timber bridge for several reasons. It is the most authentic surviving example of its kind. The other known surviving examples of longitudinal-timber-deck rail bridges of similar (eleven-feet) span that preserve their original design relatively intact are a pair of much smaller structures on the Lilydale-Healesville Railway on the outskirts of Yarra Glen, and two small examples on the Castlemaine-Maldon line. No examples of such bridges with seven-foot spans are known to survive. This bridge near Murchison is the largest of its type to survive in its original form.

When this bridge was constructed in 1890, Victoria possessed numerous timber rail bridges with spans of either seven feet or eleven feet featuring longitudinal timber decking, in contrast to alternative designs using fifteen or twenty-foot timber beams topped by transverse-timber decks. The great majority of the once common longitudinal-timber-deck designs of Victorian Railways bridge, have long-since been converted to rail-deck bridges. Early this century there were numerous much longer railway bridges of this eleven-foot-span longitudinal-timber-deck design, but medium-length bridges of this Murchison type were more typical of bridges of that design. Hence it is a rare and representative example of this very typical railway-bridge design.

This bridge, and the section of railway line of which it constitutes a part, were built in the years between 1888 and 1890 when the ambitious 'National' Goulburn River irrigation scheme was under construction. The bridge crosses the broad Stuart Murray Canal, linking the Goulburn Weir at Nagambie with the massive Waranga Basin water storage. It is thus directly associated with the historic Goulburn-Waranga irrigation scheme, pioneered by Alfred Deakin, and engineered by Stuart Murray.

The environmental context of this unusual medium-sized timber-beam railway bridge also contributes to its importance as a heritage place. The stretch of Murchison East-Rushworth Railway of which it forms a part runs along the southern edge of the Waranga Basin, and this unusual low timber bridge crossing a major channel constitutes an integral part of an impressive broader irrigation-area landscape context. No other of the very few remaining examples of this type of timber railway bridge is situated in such a landscape, and very few substantial timber-beam railway bridges of any type survive in such an environmental context. The bridge is also very accessible to the public, being immediately adjacent to the historic main road which has long linked Bendigo and the surrounding Central Goldfields region to New South Wales via Victoria's North-East.

Classified: 08/11/1999

Note: this bridge was substantially modified in 2010 as part of the Murchison Rail Trail. The deck, handrails and beams were completely replaced. The piers were repaired.

Hermes Number 68497

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/>