

Wimmera River Rail Bridge



B6910 Wimmera River former
12 span bridge



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B6910 Wimmera River fmr 12
span bridge



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Location

Wimmera Highway crossing (beside),, QUANTONG VIC 3401 - Property No B6910

Municipality

HORSHAM RURAL CITY

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 24, 2005

What is significant? The Wimmera River single-track railway bridge at Quantong is the surviving remnant of an earlier much longer eighty-seven span rail-over-river bridge built in 1887, as part of the Horsham-Norradjuha spur line. This line of just under twenty miles in length was authorized under Duncan Gillies' 'Octopus Acts' of 1884, later becoming the Horsham-Goroke-Carrolac line. Some bridge sections were converted to earth embankment in the years after World War 1, leaving three independent timber bridges conforming to the standard Victorian Railways fifteen feet timber-beam design of the original bridge. The bridges were of 29, 12 and 5 spans, and since 1996 the smallest has disappeared entirely and only the piers remain of the 12 span bridge. The remaining bridge has a deck length of 133 metres, the others were of 55 metres and 23 metres. The simple pile and beam structure provided an economic rail-over-river crossing for the largely-seasonal wheat traffic on which the area depended.

This section of the line was closed in 1986.

How is it significant? The Wimmera railway bridge at Quantong, is of historical, technical and aesthetic significance at the State level.

Why is it significant? The Wimmera railway bridge at Quantong is historically significant as the surviving remnant of a much larger eighty-seven span rail-over-river bridge built in 1887, the major engineering feature of this section of railway.

This is the last timber railway bridge to survive intact over the Wimmera River, and the largest intact timber railway bridge surviving in Victoria's north-west.

The Wimmera railway bridge is of historical significance, symbolizing the pioneering past of Victoria's western wheat belt. The western Wimmera could not have been successfully opened up for intensive agriculture without timber-beam bridges providing essential infrastructure for wheat trains to cross country near Noradjuha that was almost impassable to road traffic during wet periods.

The Wimmera railway bridge is of technical significance as the remnant of one much larger rail-over-river bridge at this site, and represents the standard type of Victorian Railways fifteen feet timber-beam structure which was commonly used at major rail-over-river crossings in the late 19th century.

The Wimmera railway bridge is of aesthetic significance. It is in relatively good condition, and readily accessible adjacent to a major highway on public river-side reserve, in an attractive setting over a major river and its floodplain, among spreading river red gum trees.

Classified: 06/07/1998

Hermes Number 68627

Property Number

Physical Description 1

Description:

The Wimmera River railway bridge is a single-track timber-beam and timber-pier rail bridge of 29 spans and 133.4 metres length. The piers remain of a similar bridge of 12 spans and 55.2 metres length, west of the intact bridge. This bridge is of the old standard Victorian Railways 15 feet (4.5 metre) timber-beam design, having been built in 1887 as a component of a much longer original bridge built to that design, which crossed the Wimmera River and floodplain.

Context

The Wimmera River railway bridge is on a river floodplain reserve among river red gums, easily accessible from the adjacent Wimmera Highway, with a farm access road passing beneath.

Intactness:

The main structure is in good condition, with timber decks deteriorating.

Assessment against Criteria:

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

The Wimmera River railway bridge had an important historical role, carrying wheat trains and passenger services for almost a century, initially for the Horsham-Noradjuha spur line, later for the Horsham-Goroke-Carrolac line, and over many decades for the Horsham-East Natimuk-Hamilton-Portland wheat route.

The western Wimmera could not have been successfully opened up for intensive agriculture without timber-beam bridges providing essential infrastructure for wheat trains to cross country near Noradjuha that was almost

impassable to road traffic during wet periods.

Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history

The Wimmera River railway bridge is the last timber railway bridge to survive intact over the Wimmera River, and is one of the largest intact timber railway bridges surviving in Victoria's west. Large railway bridges were never very common in the relatively dry north west of the State, and good examples of timber railway bridges of any kind are now exceedingly uncommon in the Wimmera and Mallee, where most have been stripped of deck and sometimes beams, or totally destroyed.

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or objects

The Wimmera railway bridge is the remnant of a much larger rail-over-river bridge at this site, and represents the standard type of Victorian Railways fifteen feet timber-beam structure which was commonly used at major rail-over-river crossings in the late 19th century.

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

The Wimmera River railway bridge is in relatively good condition, in an attractive setting over a major river and its floodplain, among spreading river red gum trees. It is readily accessible, adjacent to a major highway on a public river-side reserve.

Usage/Former Usage

rail bridge - not in use

Physical Conditions

deteriorating; not maintained

Intactness

Intact

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/>