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## Darbyshire Hill No.1 & No. 2 Bridges



B6949 Darbyshire Hill No. 1 Bridge



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B6949 Darbyshire Hill No. 1 Bridge



B6949 Darbyshire Hill No. 2 Bridge

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### Location

Wodonga-Cudgewa Railway, midway between Bullioh & Darbyshire,, BULLIOH VIC 3700 - Property No B6949

### Municipality

TOWONG SHIRE

### Level of significance

State

### Heritage Listing

National Trust

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 15, 2005

What is significant? Darbyshire Hill Nos. 1 and 2 Bridges are single-track rail bridges of three-storey pier design and combine standard fifteen feet timber-beam approach spans with twenty feet rolled-steel-joist spans over the main channels. The timber piers on these bridges are fitted with rare double-longitudinal walings.

No. 2: timber and steel composite rail bridge 96.6 metres (317 feet) long, with unusually tall 4 pile timber piers (max. height, 21.3 metres, 79 feet), six timber-beam approach spans each of fifteen feet (4.6 metres), eleven rolled-steel-joist spans each of twenty feet (6.1 metres), and a straight deck of standard transverse-timber design. This bridge, 21.3 metres high, is the tallest railway bridge of timber and steel joist construction to survive in Victoria.

No. 1 timber and steel composite rail bridge 65.48 metres (215 feet) long, with unusually tall 4 pile timber piers (max. height, 16.45 metres, 54 feet), and a curving transverse-timber deck. This bridge has five timber-beam spans each of standard fifteen feet (4.6 metre) Victorian Railways design, and seven rolled-steel-joist spans each of twenty feet (6.1 metres).

Darbyshire Hill Nos.1 and 2 Bridges were built in 1916 as part of the Wodonga-Cudgewa railway. The line was closed in 1981.

How is it significant? Darbyshire Hill Nos. 1 and 2 Bridges are significant for technical, historic and aesthetic reasons at State level.

Why is it significant? Darbyshire Hill Nos.1 and 2 Bridges are of technical significance as a major engineering feature of the steepest and most twisty section of line on the Victorian Railways system. They were first built in 1916 as all-timber-beam bridges on very tall four-pile timber piers, on a line mainly intended to carry mountain cattle towards metropolitan markets. After World War 2 this railway was the main supply line for the massive infrastructure works of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme. The original timber superstructure design was then modified by substitution of steel-joists for timber beams on twenty feet (6.1 metres) spans, to meet increased load demands. This timber-steel joist composition is very unusual.

Darbyshire Hill Nos.1 and 2 Bridges are of historic significance as part of the Wodonga-Cudgewa line, which was the main supply rail line during the construction of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme. These are the tallest bridges surviving on this line.

Darbyshire Hill No. 2 Bridge is of historic significance as the tallest railway bridge (70 feet, 21.3 metres) of composite timber and steel construction to survive in Victoria.

Darbyshire Hill Nos.1 and 2 Bridges are aesthetically significant because of the unusual height of their three-storey timber trestles, and provide a striking spectacle, visible from the Murray Valley Highway against the backdrop of the Koetong Hills. The bridges are on the developing (as of 2011) High Country Rail Trail.

Classified: 10/11/1998

Hermes Number 69833

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

### Description

No. 2: One single-track timber and steel composite rail bridge 96.6 metres (317 feet) long, with unusually tall 4 pile timber piers (max. height, 21.3 metres, 79 feet), six timber-beam approach spans each of fifteen feet (4.6 metres), eleven rolled-steel-joist spans each of twenty feet (6.1 metres), and a straight deck of standard transverse-timber design.

No. 1: One single-track timber and steel composite rail bridge 65.48 metres (215 feet) long, with unusually tall 4 pile timber piers (max. height, 16.45 metres, 54 feet), and a curving transverse-timber deck. This latter bridge has five timber-beam spans each of standard fifteen feet (4.6 metre) Victorian Railways design, and seven rolled-steel-joist spans each of twenty feet (6.1 metres).

The timber piers on these bridges are fitted with rare double-longitudinal walings.

These two bridges of very similar but unusual design are situated within one kilometre of each other, immediately west of what is known as 'the horseshoe curve' which takes the rail line south under the Murray Valley Highway. They are the most impressive of a significant series of timber and timber-composite bridges in the general vicinity of Koetong

#### Context

Darbyshire Hill Nos. 1 and 2 bridges cross steep valleys with intermittently-flowing creeks on the southern side of the Koetong Hills. This section of hills has been cleared, and the farmlands between the bridge and the Murray Valley Highway are clear and open, allowing distant viewing of the structures by passing motorists. The bridge decks provide magnificent platforms from which to view the farmlands and adjacent timbered hills. These bridges are on railway reserve and a proposed rail trail, but surrounded by private land. The nearest public access point is several kilometres south-east, where the railway passes under the Murray Valley Highway.

#### Intactness

Main frames are sound, but timber decking becoming dangerous.

#### Assessment against Criteria

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

Darbyshire Hill Nos. 1 and 2 Bridges are of historic significance as part of the Wodonga-Cudgewa rail line, which was the main supply line during the construction of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme.

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

Darbyshire Hill Nos. 1 and 2 Bridges are the tallest bridges surviving on the Wodonga-Cudgewa line. They very unusually combine standard fifteen feet timber-beam approach spans with twenty feet rolled-steel-joist spans over the main channels, modified from all-timber post World War II. The three-storey 4 pile piers are unmodified.

#### Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

Darbyshire Hill Nos. 1 and 2 Bridges have unusually high three storey timber trestles, and provide a striking spectacle, visible from the Murray Valley Highway. The bridges are on the developing (as of 2011) High Country Rail Trail.

#### Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period

Darbyshire Hill No. 2 Bridge is the tallest railway bridge (70 feet, 21.3 metres) of composite timber and steel construction to survive in Victoria. Over the 12.8 km section of the line between Darbyshire and Bullioh, the altitude changes by 992 feet (302 metres). This section has several significant big timber-trestle bridges.

### **Usage/Former Usage**

rail bridges, no longer in use; on route of a proposed rail trail

### **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/>*