
Barkly River Bridge

Location

Licola-Glencairn Road,, LICOLA VIC 3858 - Property No B6841

Municipality

WELLINGTON SHIRE

Level of significance

Demolished/Removed

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 2, 2007

Built in 1931, the Barkly River Bridge is historically, socially and aesthetically significant at the State level. It is an all-timber three-span stringer bridge, with longitudinal timber deck 23 metres long and 3 metres wide, complete with timber kerbs and side-rails. Its two timber piers are of the simplest type, consisting of three driven-log piles with one waling and cross-stays. It also possesses traditional solid-timber abutments and wingwalls, and features traditional early-twentieth-century squaring of outer-stringer faces. This is a traditional medium-sized all-timber road-over-river bridge, built for ordinary Victorian farmers who fought hard and long to get it. Its heritage claim lies in its very representativeness.

The crossing place has a much longer history than the bridge, and it has an unusually rich photographic record for such a remote river crossing. Few such rural river crossings can boast photographs of early rustic low-level pedestrian bridges and of alternative "flying fox" river-crossing technology, as well as the opening ceremony for a first bridge. The story of the long struggle to obtain this simple timber bridge that was first opened in 1931, has become a significant element in the recorded folklore associated with the high country that sprawls between Licola and Jamieson.

The Barkly River Bridge is today one of a fast-shrinking group of medium-sized all-timber road-over-river bridges in Victoria. It is the best example of its type to survive in the Macalister Valley, and a good intact representative example of a type of bridge once found almost universally across the State. It gains added significance because of its position as one of a group of historic timber bridges adorning the Macalister River Valley, along with Cheynes Bridge and the Glenmaggie Truss Bridge on the Heyfield-Licola Road.

Aesthetically, this rustic all-timber structure combines well with its forested high-country environs on a clear and fast-flowing mountain stream, to constitute a very pleasing visual experience. This exceptionally beautiful part of our State must increasingly attract nature lovers and other visitors. The historic old river-crossing site that in days past provided a not-so-pleasant enforced camping spot for many settlers barred from crossing by its violently surging floodwaters, today provides an attractive picnic, fishing and camping spot.

It is fitting to give the last word on the Barkly River Bridge to the prominent Gippsland historian whose painstaking research uncovered its colourful story, and put it on the historical and social map: "Given the hazards of floods and log trucks, it is amazing the bridge has survived so long. Of rough timber construction, it is one of the last of its type in the shire. It is also a powerful symbol of the struggles of the families at Glencairn".

Classified: 'State' 05/10/1998

Destroyed by bushfire - December 2006

Hermes Number 69995

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/>