

# BESSIEBELLE SHEEPWASHES AND YARDS



H02033 bessibelle



H02033 bessibelle 1



H2033 Bessiebelle sheep wash 18 july07 reneeg



H2033 Bessiebelle sheep wash 18 july07 reneeg 13



H2033 Bessiebelle sheep wash 18 july07 reneeg 20



H2033 Bessiebelle sheep wash 18 july07 reneeg 27



H2033 Bessiebelle sheep wash 18 july07 reneeg 29



H2033 Bessiebelle sheep wash 18 july07 reneeg 47



H2033 Bessiebelle sheep wash 18 july07 reneeg 24



Bessiebelle sheepwash 2008



Bessiebelle sheepwash 2008



Bessiebelle sheepwash 2008



Bessiebelle sheepwash 2008



Bessiebelle sheepwash 2008



Bessiebelle sheepwash 2008



Bessiebelle sheepwash 2008



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Bessiebelle sheepwash 2008



Bessiebelle sheepwash 2008



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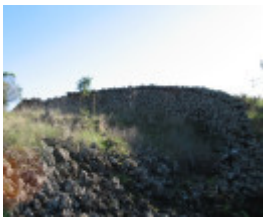
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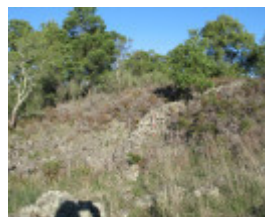
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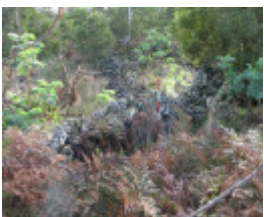
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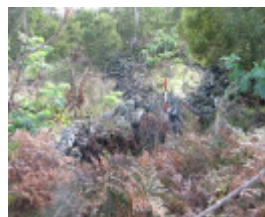
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Bessiebelle Sheepwash.jpg



Bessiebelle Sheepwash looking north.jpg



Partial collapse of Bessiebelle July 2013



Partial collapse of Bessiebelle July 2013



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IMG\_8074.jpg





h02033 bessiebelle extent v2

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## Location

PYES ROAD BESSIEBELLE, MOYNE SHIRE

## Municipality

MOYNE SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2033

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO38

## VHR Registration

July 10, 2003

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 10, 2003

What is significant?

The Bessiebelle Sheepwashes and Yards complex is located on the former 14,000 acre Ardonachie Run, established in 1848 by pastoralist Samuel Gorrie, then carrying 6,000 sheep. In 1864 this run was subdivided into smaller runs, and the sheep washes were located within Mount Eccles and Lake Gorrie Run. The date of construction of the washes and walls is not known, although they were probably constructed within the period 1848-1864.

The Bessiebelle landscape is on the southern edge of a rock-strewn lava flow punctured with large natural depressions. Until the region was drained in the 1880s, the water table was high enough for the depressions to be regularly filled with water. The two sheep washes, identified as north and south, both utilized the natural terrain, complemented by the construction of massive drystone wall races, and a network of pre and post washing yards. The large and sophisticated network of races and yards are skillfully constructed of field stone. The races, which are highly intact, are in some places more than two metres thick. Drystone wall sheep yards also existed south of the washes until the 1950s, when they were demolished for road metal. In the north-east corner of the site, a complex of impressive dry stone walls, with battered profiles up to two metres in height, also survive mostly intact. Their function is not known, but they were possibly folding yards.

The custom in Britain of washing wool on the sheep's back prior to shearing was centuries old and was brought to Australia. Many creeks, streams and crossing places in Victoria bear the name Sheepwash Creek or similar. It was the practice to wash the sheep in a pool of water or a river, in which men were placed, often in barrels or tubs, to rub and squeeze the wool in order to remove gritty materials, mud and droppings, which would not only deteriorate the quality of the wool, but would also blunt the edge of the shears. Additionally, by the 1820s London manufacturers were demanding growers wash their sheep to rid fleeces of their contaminants, and this prompted several developments, from the use of spouts to obtain a high pressure jet of water onto the sheeps back, to sophisticated hot water washes with boilers, of which a number of examples survive in Victoria. No evidence of hot water technology has been identified at Bessiebelle.

Freight costs on greasy wool were also significantly higher than washed fleeces and so scourers also appeared on Victorian pastoral properties, circumventing some of the labour intensive washing process. Hot water was the only means of dissolving the grease, and this practice continued until the 1880s, when technological advances in dyeing processes meant that woollen manufacturers preferred to receive the wool in grease. Sheep washes were labour intensive. In the 1840s, up to 35 men were employed at Bontharambo washing and shearing, and a similar number were employed at the hotwater wash at Glen Isla station in the 1880s.

How is it significant?

The Bessiebelle sheepwashes and yards are of historical, landscape and archaeological significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

The Bessiebelle Sheepwashes and Yards are probably the largest and most sophisticated surviving example of a traditional pastoral property sheepwash in Victoria. They clearly demonstrate the large network of races, yards and folds necessary for washing thousands of sheep over a short period of time. The Bessiebelle sheep washes apparently predate later technological changes and the necessity for hot water washing.

The Bessiebelle sheepwashes and yards are of landscape significance as a cultural landscape which has been both modified by, and cleverly adapted to, an annual process that was of critical importance within the pastoral calendar. The drystone walls and races appear to evolve from the rocky terrain, and have a strong organic affinity with the prevailing harsh landscape. The drystone walls demonstrate a high level of craftsmanship and skill in their construction, and reflect the extensive scale of pastoral operations across the landscape.

The Bessiebelle sheepwashes and yards are of archaeological significance to the State of Victoria. The site has not been fully surveyed but its complexity strongly suggests a potential to reveal more about the washing processes and associated pastoral occupation and activity in the area.

## **Permit Exemptions**

### **General Exemptions:**

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General



exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must **notify** the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

General Conditions: 1. All exempted alterations are to be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents damage to the fabric of the registered place or object. General Conditions: 2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable. Erection or construction of fencing, gates, stockyards or any other forms of access and enclosure necessary for the continuation of pastoral or agricultural activities on the property provided that such works do not alter or destroy the drystone walls, sheep washes, races and yards or any other surviving cultural heritage feature, such as building footings.

Vermin control

Removal of plants listed as noxious weeds in the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*

Construction dates	1848,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place, Registered archaeological place,
Hermes Number	11118
Property Number	

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## History

*Hamilton Spectator* 29/1/1870. Sale notice. For Messrs (John and Archbold) Taylor. (Set up Presbyterian Church in Macarthur) 10,000 sheep. Fenced in and subdivided by stone wall. Well watered, frontage to Eumerella River.

Improvements – overseers house, huts, woolshed, sheeppyards formed of stone walls 6 ft high, sufficient for double the present stock.

Val. Macarthur Historical Society. tel.55761255

## **Extent of Registration**

1. All of the land and archaeological and historic relics shown L1 & L2 on Diagram 2033 held by the Executive Director.

*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/>*