
QUEENSTOWN GOVERNMENT BATTERY

Location

75 SMITHS GULLY ROAD SMITHS GULLY, NILLUMBIK SHIRE

Municipality

NILLUMBIK SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7922-0230

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO164

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Hermes Number 11657

Property Number

History

Contextual History:History of Place:

Heritage Inventory History of Site:

From 1897 the Victorian government provided assistance to quartz gold prospectors through the installation and operation of small quartz crushing facilities (known as government or State batteries) in localities where no privately-owned batter was available for public use. Their number peaked between the wars, with a maximum of 33 in operation. Government crushing facilities were quite small concerns, at first being equipped with only three heads of stamps, rising in 1904 to a standard of five head, The batteries were originally powered by steam, but

producer gas, oil and electricity eventually replaced steam-power.

The operation of government batteries was never economical. For example, the Mines Department's annual report of 1910 shows that, between 1897 to 1910, £52,717 was spent of the erection, operation and maintenance of 24 plants, with only £7,905 incoming for the crushing of 36,074 tons of stone. In order to reduce expenditure, the Mines Department encouraged the establishment of local committees to manage and operate the batteries. Small cyaniding plants were installed at some of the batteries, in an effort to raise additional income by processing battery tailings.

At the end of the Second World War, the numbers of government batteries had declined and by the 1980s, the number of government batteries was reduced to the point that they were all managed by one man. He retired in the mid-1980s and the batteries have seen little operation since. At present there are six substantially intact former State Batteries in Victoria: Maldon, Bright, Mount Egerton, Creswick, Rutherglen, and Wedderburn. The Queenstown Government Battery was opened soon after the First World War. Like most government batteries the facility was used intermittently. The weatherboard battery house was burn down in a bushfire in 1962 and the machinery was subsequently removed to be used elsewhere.

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/>