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# PRINCES PIER



Princes Pier Port Melbourne  
March 2003 002



Princes Pier Port Melbourne  
March 2003 003



Princes Pier Port Melbourne  
March 2003 001



Princes Pier Port Melbourne  
March 2003 004

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## Location

PIER STREET AND BEACH STREET PORT MELBOURNE, PORT PHILLIP CITY

## Municipality

PORT PHILLIP CITY

## Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

## Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-0573

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

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Interpretation  
of Site

The pier is intact, though in a generally poor condition, with some evidence of isolated fires along its length. Most ancillary structures have been removed besides the gatehouse, and the railway lines are still extant. Loose piles were also discovered along the foreshore to the west, along with further piles from the structure evident in a PMA yard nearby. Extensive dredging operations have been conducted around the pier to accommodate increasingly larger vessels over time, but archaeological discard sites may be evident on the outer edge of the adjacent channels, possibly up to 50 m from the pier. Given the prolonged use of this site over time it is highly probable that extensive archaeological deposits exist under the jetty itself, given its various phases of construction. Lee (1993) maintains that extensive soil farming to decontaminate the site would have removed most archaeological sites between Princes and Station Piers, but Peter Taylor's (pers comm) reports of archaeological material recovered during seawall construction in the mid 1990's clearly contradict this (see H7822-0472).

See VHR H0981.

Hermes  
Number

13865

Property  
Number

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## History

In 1887, the Melbourne Harbour Trust recommended a new pier be constructed, but it was not until Matthews recommendations of 1910 for an 1800 ft long pier west of the Railway Pier, that construction began with onsite dredging operations in 1912.

The new railway pier, which included a railway line to the Port Melbourne junction, was 1252 ft long and 186 ft wide in 1914. The pier's construction led to the end of the Straight Cut Canal and thereby opened up the Fishermen's Bend Area for industry. The pier was used for troopship berths in 1914, and when completed in 1915 was 1902 ft long and 186 ft wide. The passenger and cargo facilities were built in 1915, with the outer berths available for passenger liners, and the inner facilities designated for the Royal Mail Service which received its first mail in 1916. The pier received its name from the Prince of Wales who visited Victoria in 1920. A rail service was introduced to meet passenger ships in 1921, but was discontinued in 1930. Road, rail and pedestrian access routes were improved from 1925 onwards and included the new Centenary Bridge over railway line in 1934. The red gum deck was replaced by brush box and 600 ft of central roadway was dismantled in 1934. In 1935 Union unrest led to the construction of gatehouses with Customs facilities that allowed the pier to be closed off. The bulk of Port Melbourne trade was handled here from 1945 onwards. The pier saw increased traffic associated with World War II and was used extensively in conjunction with assisted Immigration ships from 1947-1980. The pier's development was limited by its narrow apron and sheds, and the decentralisation policy for Harbour Trusts in the 1950's. Trade peaked from 1960-1970, and the pier was converted to oil bunkering facility pier and was closed to public in 1969. By 1985, the pier was closed to commercial shipping.

*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/>*