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# WALLACES HUT



1 wallace's hut high plains  
bogong front view

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## Location

WALLACES TRACK NELSE, EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE

## Municipality

EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE

## Level of significance

Registered

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1616

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO226

## VHR Registration

August 20, 1982

## Amendment to Registration

May 23, 1998

## Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 19, 2024

### What is significant?

Wallaces hut was built in 1889 and is probably the oldest surviving hut on the high plains of north-east Victoria. It was built in six weeks by Irish immigrant brothers Arthur, William and Stewart Wallace among old snow gums on a grassy plain above the snowline. The brothers held grazing leases on the High Plains, and the hut was built to provide shelter for the cattlemen working there. The timber was cut from the forest about four hundred metres east of the hut, and the hearth stone was dragged in from Pretty Valley. The chimney had a base of rubble and above this iron sheeting on a timber frame. The slab walls were lined with hessian and later with tar-paper, and inside there was a bush table, sleeping platform and a rustic fire-side settle. The hut was used by many local cattlemen, as well as stockmen from New South Wales, who brought sheep here during the 1914-18 drought. Many such huts were built in mountain areas, but they were flimsy structures, and at great risk from bush fires, and no others have survived from the nineteenth century. The State Electricity Commission used the hut from the late 1920s until the early 1940s to collect data on precipitation for possible future hydroelectric works, and SEC employee Joe Holsten covered the roof and later the walls with corrugated iron, renewed the chimney and added a skillion for storing firewood and horse feed. In the 1940s the Rover section of the Boy Scout Association took over responsibility for maintenance, and it became an important refuge and destination for walkers and skiers. Wallaces Hut is a rectangular gabled vernacular slab hut, 6.3 by 3.5 metres, with a skillion on the west side. It is a single room with a fireplace and door at the south end. It has a frame of snow gum poles, walls of snow gum slabs, a floor of split logs, split palings in the gable, the roof is covered with woolly butt shingles, now under corrugated iron, and the large fireplace and hearth are of rubble. The original bush table, shelves and mantelpiece survive. Many pioneer cattlemen burned their names into the timber of the roof beams and behind the mantelpiece. The increasingly intense use of the hut by walkers and skiers has meant frequent repairs, and as a result much of the fabric, and also the form, have changed considerably since it was built. The length appears to have been increased, a skillion added, the roof shingles covered with corrugated iron, the paling clad chimney lost, and new wall slabs and a side window added.

### How is it significant?

Wallaces Hut is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

### Why is it significant?

Wallaces Hut is historically significant for its long link with the Victorian High Plains cattlemen, reflected in its siting, construction, materials and form. It is probably the oldest hut on the Victorian high plains. It is also significant for its links with early SEC meteorological data recording in the area and the early history of hydroelectricity in the state.

Wallace's Hut is architecturally significant as one of the few nineteenth century vernacular slab buildings surviving in Victoria, and is important for its demonstration of vernacular construction techniques.

*[Online Data Upgrade Project - 2004]*

## 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 works 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 works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component.

General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: A Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan.

General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. Nothing in this determination exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authorities where applicable. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works must submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Construction dates	1889,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	WALLACE'S HUT,
Hermes Number	153
Property Number	

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## **History**

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above this iron sheeting on a timber frame. The slab walls were lined with hessian and later with tar-paper, and inside there was a bush table, sleeping platform and a rustic fire-side settle. The hut was used by many local cattlemen, as well as stockmen from New South Wales, who brought sheep here during the 1914-18 drought. Many such huts were built in mountain areas, but they were flimsy structures, and at great risk from bush fires, and no others have survived from the nineteenth century. The State Electricity Commission used the hut from the late 1920s until the early 1940s to collect data on precipitation for possible future hydroelectric works, and SEC employee Joe Holsten covered the roof and later the walls with corrugated iron, renewed the chimney and added a skillion for storing firewood and horse feed. In the 1940s the Rover section of the Boy Scout Association took over responsibility for maintenance, and it became an important refuge and destination for walkers and skiers.

**The draft statement of significance and the above history were produced as part of an Online Data Upgrade Project 2003. Sources used were as follows:**

Graeme Butler & Associates, 'Victorian Alpine Huts Heritage Survey', 1996.  
Harry Stephenson, *Cattlemen & Huts of the High Plains*, Melbourne 1980.  
Fiona Magnussen, *Victoria's Alpine Heritage*, Henty [NSW] 2003.  
Klaus Hueneke, *Huts in the Victorian Alps*, Palmerston [ACT] 2003.

## **Extent of Registration**

Amendment of Register of Government Buildings

Bright Shire

Wallace's Hut, Bogong High Plains.

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G39 12 October 1988 p3087]

Transferred to the Victorian Heritage Register 23 May 1998 (2 years after the proclamation of the Heritage Act 1995 pursuant to the transitional provisions of the Act)

*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/>*