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# NIGRETТА FALLS RESERVE



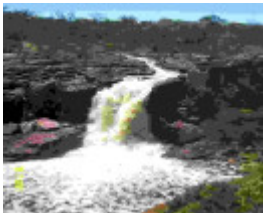
23207 Nigretta Falls 0188



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23207 Nigretta Falls 0191

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## Location

Nigretta Falls Road WANNON, Southern Grampians Shire

## Municipality

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

## Level of significance

Stage 2 study complete

## Heritage Listing

Southern Grampians Shire

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 30, 2005

What is significant?

The Nigretta Falls Reserve is about 12.5kms north-west of Hamilton at the site of the former Nigretta Homestead overlooking the Wannon river. The total area now reserved is about 8 hectares and comprises some regenerated

bushland, exotic trees and recreational facilities. The Nigretta run was typical for its sequence of ownership and the connections of its owners. The cottage, possibly built as early as 1848, was sited picturesquely. It fell into ruin by the 1930s is now gone. The older exotics survive from the original garden. The Wannon and Nigretta (or Upper Wannon) Falls have been the consistent subject of significant art including works by some of Australia's most celebrated colonial artists, such as Nicholas Chevalier, Eugen von Guerard, Louis Buvelot, S. T. Gill and Thomas Clark. From the earliest times, tourists would stay at nearby Redruth and visit both falls. The Nigretta Falls Reserve was gazetted in 1912. It has been managed jointly with the Wannon Falls Reserve under a committee of management. The Reserve has been developed over the years, with changes reflecting different values and fashions. A grove of Golden ash trees continues the Picturesque tradition. In the later twentieth century, there has been an emphasis on native plantings. Most recently, the facilities have been modernised with a contemporary concern for environmental values. The Reserve is substantially intact and in good condition.

How is it significant?

The Nigretta Falls Reserve is of historical, social and aesthetic significance to the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The Nigretta Falls Reserve is of historical significance as the site of the former Nigretta Homestead and as an early beauty spot and tourist destination established in the Western District. It is of social significance as a recreation reserve. It is of aesthetic significance for its long association with Picturesque sensibility, the dominant aesthetic in colonial Victoria, which continued well into the twentieth century. It is the subject of much significant art. The Nigretta Falls Reserve is of significance as a comparative pair with the nearby Wannon Falls Reserve.

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Heritage Study/Consultant | Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002; |
| Construction dates        | 1912,  |
| Heritage Act Categories   | Registered place,  |
| Other Names               | UPPER WANNON FALLS,  |
| Hermes Number             | 23207  |
| Property Number           |  |

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## Physical Conditions

The reserve remains relatively intact to its 1960s stage of development and includes new facilities. The original homestead site has significant archaeological potential.

## Physical Description 1

The Nigretta Falls Reserve is located on the north side of the Wannon-Nigretta Falls Road off the Glenelg Highway, about 12.5kms north-west of Hamilton at the site of the former Nigretta Homestead and overlooking the Wannon river. The site of the original Nigretta squatting run homestead is located facing the Fisherman's bend, slightly upstream from the Nigretta falls. Although there is no physical fabric remaining on the surface, it is expected that the site will have rich archaeological potential. In the 1930s it was said that visitors on their way to the falls passed the ruins of an old stone house (probably that built by Thomas Murphy between 1848 and 1860). The lower walls were dressed sandstone and the upper walls were iron stone mortared together. At this time, the door and window frames were intact and part of a chimney stood. The site was also known for the Iris which flowered prolifically in Spring.

The total area reserved is about 10 acres or 3.75 hectares. The falls are generally in two main cascades emptying into a large pool. The flow is very variable according to the seasons. Access to the falls is provided in

the form of paths and viewing platforms. Bush land is regenerating around the watercourse. The older exotics survive from the original homestead garden and include Pear trees (*Pyrus communis*) and a Radiata Pine (*Pinus radiata*). The newer exotics planted as part of the beautification of the reserve includes a grove of Golden Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and a row of Plane trees (*Platanus x acerfolia*). The planting of trees in a grove harks back to the Picturesque landscaping tradition of the eighteenth century. The amenities include picnic and barbecue facilities and a new toilet block. There is a circular drive through the reserve.

## Historical Australian Themes

Theme 3: Developing local, regional and national economies

3.23 Catering for tourists

Theme 8: Developing Australia's cultural life

8.1.1 Playing and watching organised sports

8.1.3 Developing public parks and gardens

8.1.4 Enjoying the natural environment

8.3 Going on holiday

8.5.4 Pursuing common leisure interests

8.10 Pursuing excellence in the arts and sciences

8.10.2 Creating visual arts

## Usage/Former Usage

Continuing as a recreation reserve

## Integrity

relatively intact

## Physical Description 2

Henry Baynton, first leaseholder

William Affleck, second leaseholder

Trevor Winter, third leaseholder

Thomas Murphy, fourth leaseholder, builder of Nigretta Homestead

Angus Kennedy, fifth leaseholder

Don. Cameron, sixth leaseholder

Alexander Cameron, seventh and final leaseholder until 1866, when forfeited.

Captain Charles James Tyers (1806-70), a sketcher, surveyor and public servant who became Commissioner of Crown Lands for Portland Bay District in 1842

Eugene von Guerard (1812-1901), Austrian born artist and landscape painter

Nicholas Chevalier (1828-1902), Russian born, artist and landscape painter

Louis Buvelot (1814-88), Swiss born artist landscape painter

Thomas Clark (1814-83), English born artist and landscape painter.

Thomas Francis O'Neill, founding secretary of the Committee of Management

*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/>*