

# ROCKLANDS RESERVOIR



23255 Rocklands Reservoir  
dam wall 2082



23255 Rocklands Reservoir  
dam wall 2083



23255 Rocklands Reservoir  
dam wall 2084



23255 Rocklands Reservoir  
Lodge 2091



23255 Rocklands Reservoir  
plaque 2087



23255 Rocklands Reservoir  
plaque 2088



23255 Rocklands Reservoir  
plaque 2089



23255 Rocklands Reservoir  
RAAF plaque 2090



23255 Rocklands Reservoir  
right plaque 2086



23255 Rocklands Reservoir  
worker's cottage 2092



23255 Rocklands Reservoir  
gateway 2093



23255 Rocklands Reservoir  
left plaque 2085

## Location

Rocklands Road BALMORAL, 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 - August 1, 2003

What is significant?

The Rocklands Reservoir and associated channels were constructed by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission between 1941 and 1953. Proposals and attempts had been made to dam the Glenelg River from the earliest times. The Reservoir represents the culmination of lobbying from locals in the late nineteenth century, including the influential squatters: Samuel Carter of Glenisla who built a large irrigation scheme on his own run; Alexander Turnbull of Rocklands; and Charles Officer at Mount Talbot who was MLA for Dundas. The lobbying resumed after the First World War and the opening up of country to Soldier Settlement when finally the Minister for Water Supply visited the proposed site in November 1940. World War Two interrupted construction and the construction camp site became an Air Force recruit training depot. The Reservoir was constructed in two stages, the first being the construction of a diversion weir incorporated in the main weir. The second stage involved the construction of the main weir of 16 371 feet (5 037m) of which 600 feet (185m) formed the spillway and overflow section. The Reservoir opened in 1953 and is the largest water supply in the Wimmera-Mallee water supply system, having a capacity of 348,000 megalitres and is potentially one of the largest in the state. The dam has a large, centrally located concrete spillway, with concrete abutments and rock fill embankments at each end. The outlet is from a tunnel at the north abutment leading to a concrete lined channel. The Reservoir soon assumed its ancillary but important recreational functions: water-skiing, fishing, boating and swimming as well as passive recreation. These are reflected in the landscaping around the dam wall. The water level reached an all-time low because of successive droughts from the late 1990s and for many years has failed to provide the water it once promised.

How is it significant?

The Rocklands Reservoir is of significance to the State of Victoria and the Shire of Southern Grampians for scientific, social and historical.

Why is it significant?

Rocklands Reservoir is of scientific significance for its method of construction and for its control of the natural water supply, being the fifth largest dam in Victoria and the largest in the Wimmera-Mallee. It is of social significance for facilitating community development and its recreational value. It is of historical significance for its association with key figures in irrigation and water supply and for its possibly unsuccessful conclusion to the long term problem of stock and domestic water supply in the Wimmera-Mallee.

|                           |                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Heritage Study/Consultant | Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002; |
| Construction dates        | 1940,                                                                                                    |
| Hermes Number             | 23255                                                                                                    |
| Property Number           |                                                                                                          |

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## Physical Conditions

The reservoir is severely under capacity, although the weir, embankment, spillway and other constructions survive in excellent condition

## Physical Description 1

The main embankment is 320 metres in length, of which 20 metres is the spillway and overflow section. The maximum height of the spillway is 28 metres above bedrock. The water level of the reservoir is 216 metres above sea level and the river is banked up for almost 100 kilometers. About 10% of the resources of the Glenelg River are supplied yearly to the Wimmera and Mallee water systems and this is usually drawn off in the winter and spring when regional streams usually carry surplus water. During summer flushes are released from the reservoir to replenish pools in the Glenelg river which are affected by the loss of natural river run. The catchment of the reservoir is from 1 458 square kilometers of Crown Lands and the capacity is 348,000 megalitres. The storage was completed in 1953 Rocklands Reservoir is the fifth largest in the state.

## Historical Australian Themes

3. Developing local, regional and national economies

3.11 Altering the Environment

3.1.11 Regulating waterways

3.11.5 Establishing water supplies

Theme 4: Building settlements, towns and cities

4.2 Supplying urban services (power, transport, fire prevention, roads, water, light and sewerage)

Theme 7 Governing

7.7 Defending Australia

7.7.3 Going to war

Theme 8 Developing Australia's Cultural Life

8.1 Organising recreation

8.1.4 Enjoying the natural environment

8.3 Going on holiday

## Usage/Former Usage

Water reservoir

## Integrity

Excellent degree of integrity

*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/>*