
TAGGERTY BUFFET CAR



Taggerty Buffet Car

Location

34-40 HAMMILL STREET DONALD, BULOKE SHIRE

Municipality

BULOKE SHIRE

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2318

VHR Registration

February 13, 2014

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 3, 2025

The Taggerty Buffet Car is located on Dja Dja Wurrung Country.

What is significant?

The air-conditioned, timber, composite buffet/sitting car named *Taggerty* which was used on the trains running between Melbourne and Bendigo from 1937 to 1981, and on other lines to 1987. It is currently located at the Donald Railway Heritage Park.

History Summary

The *Taggerty* Buffet Car was originally built for the Victorian Railways (VR) in 1910 at the Newport Railway Workshops as the timber first class sitting car 34 AE. Passenger carriages were given numbers not names unlike special carriages such as buffet cars. Car 34 AE (now The *Taggerty* Buffet Car) was destroyed by fire in 1912 and rebuilt in 1914. In 1937 it was converted to a composite Buffet/Sitting Car with three compartments of first class seating and a long buffet counter. 'Composite' refers to a carriage that has both passenger seating and dining facilities. The converted carriage was named *Taggerty*, after the Victorian river in 1939.

During its conversion to a buffet car in early 1937, the *Taggerty* Buffet Car had air-conditioning equipment installed and was only the third carriage on the VR with this technology. The installation of Stone's air-conditioning equipment into three carriages between 1935 and 1937 was used to test and improve air-conditioning installations for the new *Spirit of Progress* carriages, construction of which began later in 1937. The *Taggerty* Buffet Car was attached to the midday Bendigo - Melbourne and the evening Melbourne - Bendigo services. It operated on this line from 1937 to 1981, except for 1942 to 1949 when all buffet and dining cars including the *Taggerty* Buffet Car were removed from Victorian trains in order to save fuel during World War 2 and through postwar coal shortages. The inclusion of a buffet service on the Bendigo train permitted the elimination of refreshment stops reducing the trip time from over three to two and a half hours.

The *Taggerty* Buffet Car was never converted to standard gauge. The passenger section was designated first class also until 1981. From 1981 *Taggerty* was used on other lines besides Bendigo, and the first class seating for 18 passengers was changed to economy seating for 24 passengers. The *Taggerty* Buffet Car was withdrawn from service on 21 December 1987 and given to Steamrail Victoria Inc. who then sold it to the Donald Lions Club for display at the Donald Rail Heritage Centre in 2004.

Taggerty is the earliest surviving air-conditioned timber carriage in Victoria, and only the third carriage in the state to be air-conditioned. The remaining two intact air-conditioned dining carriages in Victoria are made of steel and are full dining cars not composite buffet/sitting cars like *Taggerty*.

Description Summary

The *Taggerty* Buffet Car is a timber clad composite buffet/sitting car on a steel underframe strengthened with paired truss rods and is approx. 23 metres long. The carriage is painted blue with gold (yellow) trim and lettering. It consists of a buffet area with a small kitchen in the present northern section of the train and three sitting compartments. The windows consist of fixed single panes of glass to stop passengers opening the windows when the air-conditioning was operating.

Stone's electro-mechanical air-conditioning system was installed in the carriages and the temperature and light indicators and switches are located in the electrical control panel. The pipes and some of the air-conditioning equipment is located in the clerestory roof at the compartment end, making the roof contour unusual and irregular, with a square shape at the widened equipment end, and exhaust louvres over the kitchen. The wheel mounted generator drum is missing.

The buffet area is currently painted cream and pale blue. The other surfaces are stainless steel. The floor of the buffet area is grey linoleum. The counter top with one curved end has a brown linoleum or 'Linotol' surface with stainless steel edging. The buffet counter currently has 10 backless stools at the counter which are more widely spaced than the original seats.

The intact food preparation and serving benches, kitchen, dish washing area, grill, hotplate, Windsor oven, cupboard doors and refrigerated cabinets are stainless steel. The small kitchen is separated from the publicly visible area by a low screen. The shelves inside the cupboards are unpainted timber. Under the buffet counter the exteriors of the cabinets are painted teal blue.

There are three sitting compartments, which were designated first class and seated 18 passengers for most of the working life of *Taggerty*. In 1981 the first class seats were replaced with economy seats which accommodate 24 passengers across the three compartments. This is the current configuration. The compartments have blue upholstered seats and orange varnished timber with brass and mesh hat racks above the seats. The sitting compartments and corridors have varnished timber panelling, original pink linoleum flooring and new white painted ceilings.

The current site of display is part of the traditional land of the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans.

How is it significant?

The *Taggerty* Buffet Car is of historical and scientific significance to the state of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion B Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

Criterion D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.

Criterion F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

Why is it significant?

The *Taggerty* Buffet Car is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

The *Taggerty* Buffet Car is significant for its association with the development of faster rail travel just prior to the introduction of the *Spirit of Progress* in November, 1937. The provision of food on trains allowed the elimination of stops at railway refreshment rooms.

(Criterion A)

The *Taggerty* Buffet Car is the earliest surviving, largely intact composite buffet and sitting carriage in Victoria. It was introduced on Victorian rail services, mainly the Bendigo line from early 1937.

(Criterion B)

The *Taggerty* Buffet Car with its largely intact interiors is significant for its capacity to evoke the age of rail passenger travel and tourism in Victoria for much of the twentieth century.

(Criterion D)

The *Taggerty* Buffet Car is significant as one of the earliest examples of an air-conditioned railway carriage and the earliest surviving air-conditioned timber carriage in Victoria. Air-conditioning was an important and popular innovation in train travel and its presence encouraged more people to catch trains.

The *Taggerty* Buffet Car's use as a test vehicle for the later air-conditioning systems for the later *Spirit of Progress* Buffet Cars is an example of the practical way that VR engineers designed, installed and tested new systems.

(Criterion F)

***Taggerty* Buffet Car is also significant for the following reasons, but not at the State level:**

Taggerty Buffet Car is significant to Bendigo and surrounds on account of its association with the trains which travelled between Bendigo and Melbourne from 1937 to 1981.

(Criterion F)

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 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 object are revealed which relate to the significance of the object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible.

General Conditions: 3.

Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions

General Conditions: 4.

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.

Specific Exemptions:

1. All works to the non original bogies are exempt providing there are no impacts or potential impacts on the carriage.
2. Removal of modern fittings attached since 1987 is exempt providing that there are no impacts or potential impacts on the carriage fabric. This work should be documented.

Theme

3. Connecting Victorians by transport and communications 5. Building Victoria's industries and workforce 6. Building towns cities and the garden state

Construction dates 1914, 1937,

Heritage Act Categories Registered object,

Other Names BUFFET CAR,

Hermes Number 24285

Property Number

History

HISTORY

History of Dining on Victorian Railways (VR)

While dining is only a small part of Victoria's rail heritage, it has been an important part of passengers' experiences and reflects changes in rail technology and passenger expectations.

In the early days of rail travel in Victoria, steam engines had to stop regularly to take on coal and water, and passengers ate at railway refreshment rooms during these stops. The VR under the direction of Chief Commissioner Harold Clapp was speeding up services and trying to attract more passengers in an attempt to compete with private motor cars, buses and trucks. VR introduced 'standard,' larger and faster A2 steam passenger and goods engines during the 1910s. This resulted in the passenger services operating to faster schedules. Gradually, the lines were rebuilt to enable 70 mph running which improved journey times and there was less need to stop to take water or change engines on longer journeys. Dining and buffet cars gradually replaced stops at refreshment rooms thereby decreasing the duration of train journeys. Faster travel times were important in improving country services in the 20th century.

However, full carriage dining cars added considerable weight (average 60 tons) to a train which increased fuel consumption and costs without adding significant income, always an important consideration for the marginally profitable VR. Composite buffet cars such as *Taggerty* provided a dining service but were also able to accommodate some passengers thus reducing the costs of having a dining service. In addition the sale of alcohol was profitable. The composite format dining/passenger format used on *Taggerty* continues to be used in Victorian country trains today, where country trains have a snack bar at one end of a passenger carriage.

VR put considerable effort into promoting rail tourism and the presence of fashionable and luxurious buffet cars such as *Taggerty* was intended to make train travel more attractive for travellers and tourists.

There were four main phases of dining and buffet car construction from c. 1898 to 1955. *Taggerty* was constructed during the third phase. This time frame covers dining on trains for the whole of the Victorian broad gauge period before the introduction of standard gauge in 1961-2. Seventeen dining and buffet cars were constructed or modified for service in Victoria during this period, and three of these survive in close to their original formats. The tradition of naming VR Parlor (sic), saloon, dining and buffet cars after Victorian rivers and mountains began in 1898 and also continued until 1955. Some river names were re-used and are indicated below by (I) and (II).

1. 1898 to c.1911 - Food and sleeping - Four carriages

The first carriage with food facilities was introduced by VR c.1898 and was a composite sleeping/snack carriage called *Mildura*. *Mildura* and *Mitta Mitta*(I) introduced in 1910 were sleeping cars where a small buffet replaced a two berth compartment, and served snacks. Both have been destroyed. *Avon* and *Kiewa* (I) had sleeping berths and dining facilities and were introduced c.1908-1911. *Avon* has been destroyed and *Kiewa* (I) was converted to another format then destroyed in 1924.

2. 1908 to 1927 - Purpose built Dining Cars - Five carriages

Wimmera(I), *Goulburn*, *Campaspe*, *Avoca* and *Hopkins* were constructed as dining cars. *Wimmera*(I), *Goulburn* and *Campaspe* were constructed of timber in 1908. All three survive but were converted to other formats. *Avoca* and *Hopkins* were steel carriages constructed in 1927. *Hopkins* was not air-conditioned and was sold to the Commonwealth railways in 1950 and destroyed in 1968. *Avoca* which was air-conditioned and is also the first steel-bodied carriage in Australia still survives at the Seymour Rail Heritage Centre. It is still in a dining car format with its original kitchen and panelling. The original table legs and chairs from *Avoca* are now in the *Murray* dining car. Replicas of the tables and chairs have been put into the *Avoca* dining car.

3. 1937 to 1955 - Buffet cars converted from AE Carriages - three carriages

The first buffet carriages were *Taggerty*, *Moyne* and *Kiewa*(II) which were all converted from AE passenger configuration. All three carriages were also air-conditioned. The conversion of *Taggerty* - also known as *Buffet Car No. 1* - was completed first in March 1937 as a composite seating and long buffet configuration, and it went into service on the Bendigo line. The Newport workshops were also working on *Spirit of Progress* dining

carriages. The Great Depression, World War II and post war shortages halted the conversion of *Kiewa*(II) known as *Buffet Car No. 6* and *Moyne* known as *Buffet Car No. 7* which were not completed until 1955.

4. 1937 to 1939 - *Spirit of Progress* dining and buffet cars - five carriages

Murray (Dining Car No. 2), *Wimmera*(II) (*Buffet Car No. 2*), *Mitta Mitta*(II) (*Buffet Car No. 3*), *Moorabool* (*Buffet Car No. 4*) and *Tanjil* (*Buffet Car No. 5*) were constructed for the *Spirit of Progress* which was launched in November 1937. The *Spirit of Progress* was the premier train running from Melbourne to the NSW border and later through to Sydney when standard gauge was introduced in 1962. *Moorabool* still exists but all interior fittings have been removed. *Murray* still survives at the Seymour Rail Heritage Centre. It is still in a dining car format and contains the furniture from *Avoca*.

From the mid 1950s the *Daylight Express* was introduced and this operated with one of the buffet cars, *Wimmera* (II), *Mitta Mitta*(II) or *Moorabool* while the *Spirit of Progress* operated with *Murray* Dining Car. *Taggerty* continued on the Bendigo line while *Tanjil* operated on the *Gippslander*. *Avoca* and *Hopkins* were the back up dining cars for the *Murray* on the *Spirit of Progress* and the *Overlander* up to 1962.

In 1962 standard gauge rail was introduced and dining and buffet cars were built or re-built to suit the new gauge and to comply with national requirements. From 1962 *Murray* was infrequently used on the *Spirit of Progress* and the *Daylight Express*; the buffet cars were used instead. After 1962 buffet cars were given numbers instead of names. *Wimmera*(II), *Mitta Mitta*(II) and *Tanjil* were converted to standard gauge after 1962 and numbered VRS1, VRS2 and VRS3 respectively. All three still exist but most of their dining fittings have been removed.

Full carriage dining cars added considerable weight (average 60 tons) to a train which increased fuel consumption and costs without adding significant income, always an important consideration for the marginally profitable VR. Composite buffet cars such as *Taggerty* provided a dining service but were also able to accommodate some passengers thus reducing the costs of having a dining service. In addition the sale of alcohol was profitable. As a passenger carriage, 34 AE (now *Taggerty*) carried 48 passengers in eight compartments. After its conversion to *Taggerty*, it still had three passenger compartments and could carry 18 seated first class passengers, and after 1981, 24 economy passengers. The composite dining/passenger format of which *Taggerty* is an early example, continues to be used in Victorian country trains today, where country trains have a snack bar at one end of an economy class passenger seating carriage. The increasing use of composite carriages with buffet or snack facilities plus seating, instead of formal full dining cars, illustrates the trend towards less formal dining in wider society.

History of Object

The *Taggerty* Buffet Car was originally built for the Victorian Railways (VR) between 1906 and 1910 at the Newport Railway Workshops as one of a group of wooden AVE series sitting cars. These carriages had eight compartments of first class seating. 'V' stood for vestibule which was the pleated canvas used at carriage joins. The passenger carriage that later became the *Taggerty* Buffet Car was designated 34 AVE and was reclassified as 34 AE soon after construction. Passenger carriages were given numbers not names unlike special carriages such as buffet cars. The AVE cars were designed during Thomas Tait's term as chief commissioner (1903-10). Tait had been the transportation manager of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and the new cars reflected CPR practice. The cars were originally lit by Pintsch gas but this was later replaced with electric lighting.

The AVE cars formed part of a larger order of E series cars including sleepers, dining and baggage cars and two parlour cars, several of which were designed for use on the *Adelaide Express*, renamed the *Overlander* in 1926 and running between Melbourne and Adelaide. The three dining cars built as a part of the order in 1908 were named *Goulburn*, *Campaspe* and *Wimmera*(I) after Victorian rivers - none of these survive in their original formats.

First Class 34 AE sitting car (now *Taggerty*) was destroyed by fire in 1912 and rebuilt in 1914. It was converted to a composite buffet/sitting car with three compartments of first class seating and a long buffet counter. It was named *Taggerty*, also after a Victorian river in 1939. During conversion, the present northern section (five of the original eight compartments) was converted to the buffet and kitchen, and the present southern section retained three of the 1910 sitting compartments. The 1910 sash windows were replaced with fixed single panes of glass when the carriage was air conditioned.

Stone's electro-mechanical air-conditioning equipment was used. The installation of air-conditioning into these three carriages was used to test and improve air-conditioning installations for the new *Spirit of Progress*

carriages, construction of which began later in 1937.

Contemporary photographs of the interiors of *Taggerty* illustrate how it was used. When first fitted out in 1937 the interior was painted in the fashionable colours of ivory and pastel green with glamorous soft lighting, all intended to promote a feeling of luxury. Country services arrived in Bendigo in the late morning and after travelling all morning, people would move to the Melbourne train and have lunch and afternoon tea on the train. The evening train from Melbourne served tea and dinner.

Until the 1960s the six major regional lines in Victoria ran to and from Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Seymour/Albury, Gippsland and South Gippsland to Melbourne. The train line to Bendigo had originally opened between 1859 with the last leg (Castlemaine to Bendigo) opening in approximately 1863. In 1937 Bendigo was an important agricultural, manufacturing and industrial centre. The last gold mine closed in the late 1940s but a number of industries and feeder train lines were located there necessitating a good train service. The Bendigo line was one of the busiest as it had the most country lines (Deniliquin, Balranald, Cohuna, Swan Hill and Robinvale) feeding into it. This is likely to be why a buffet car was installed on this line first.

Trains ran six days per week between Melbourne and Bendigo from the early 1920s. The *Taggerty* Buffet Car was attached to the midday Bendigo - Melbourne and the evening Melbourne - Bendigo services. It ran from 1937 to 1981 except for 1942 to 1949 when all buffet and dining cars including *Taggerty* were removed from Victorian trains in order to save fuel during World War 2. The inclusion of a buffet service on the Bendigo train permitted the elimination of refreshment stops reducing the trip time from over 3 to 2 ½ hours.

Taggerty was not converted to standard gauge and remained in use on the trains running between Bendigo and Melbourne until 1981. *Taggerty* was a first class carriage from 1937 to 1981. In 1981 *Taggerty* began to be used on other lines besides the Bendigo line and the first class seating for 18 passengers was changed to economy seating for 24 passengers.

The *Taggerty* Buffet Car was withdrawn from service on 21 December 1987 and the original 4-wheel bogies and other components were removed. [A bogie is a structure underneath a train to which axles are attached through bearings. Wheels are attached to the axles. Most train carriages have two bogies, one on each end as *Taggerty* has currently]. After 1987 *Taggerty* was stored at the VR Spotswood workshops then given to Steamrail Victoria Inc. Steamrail placed the carriage onto a different type of 4-wheel bogie and sold it to the Donald Lions Club for display at the Donald Rail Heritage Centre in 2004.

Plaque Citation

This composite buffet and sitting car named *Taggerty* was built at the Newport Railway Workshops and used on the trains running between Melbourne and Bendigo from 1937 to 1981. It is the earliest surviving air-conditioned timber carriage in Victoria.

Assessment Against Criteria

Criterion
February 2014

The *Taggerty* Buffet Car is of historical and scientific significance to the state of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion A Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history. Criterion B Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history. Criterion D Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects. Criterion F Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

Extent of Registration

Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including Heritage Register Number H2318 in the category described as Heritage Object.

Taggerty Buffet Car

34-40 Hammill Street

Donald

Buloke Shire

All of the object known as the *Taggerty* Buffet Car used on the trains running between Melbourne and Bendigo which is currently held at the Donald Railway Heritage Park, Donald, Victoria.

Dated 13 February 2014

TIM SMITH

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No G7 13 February 2014 p.252]

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/>