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## RUSSELL `BIG MILL' (NUMBER 1)



Russells Big Mill Number 1



Tramway Bridge

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### Location

Ash Landing Road TONIMBUK, Cardinia Shire

### Municipality

CARDINIA SHIRE

### Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO11

### Heritage Listing

Cardinia Shire

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

The mill was arguably the largest in the area and operated for the longest time. It was installed by the Russell family, who were instrumental in opening up this part of the region for sawmilling purposes. It was located at the terminus of a steel line tramway worked by a steam locomotive, which illustrated an unusual level of sophistication for sawmilling in this region and Victoria generally. The mill remains are substantial, however apart from the dug out are not exceptional. The mill is typical of an arrangement and technology that was employed in the Ash forests of Victoria prior to 1940.

Russell's 'Big Mill' (number 1) is of importance to the Cardinia Shire because it provides good evidence of the development of sawmilling in the district and the occurrence of natural disasters (fire).

This place is also significant for its comparative age and the potential to interpret the site historically using documentary evidence via photographs, Forestry files, and oral evidence from the family. There is also the importance of the Russell family in sawmilling within the Shire; and its rarity as a type among other surviving timber tramways and bush mill sites.

### *Regional Significance*

Heritage Study/Consultant	Cardinia - Cardinia Shire Heritage Study 1996, Graeme Butler & Associates, 1996;
Construction dates	1926,
Other Names	Ash Landing Road, Tonimbuk,
Hermes Number	30104
Property Number	

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## **Physical Description 1**

The mill is located beside Ash Landing Road. It is reasonably open forest, the remaining relics of the sawmill being easily accessible within metres of the road.

### **Remains**

No above ground structures remain intact. However, collections of metal fastenings and bricks indicate the site of huts and machinery. The sawdust pit, in common with most sawmill sites, is well defined, although the example at this site is particularly deep and has a number of the support structures which formerly carried mill machinery still in place.

Surrounding the sawdust hole, the timber work with metal fastenings still in situ can be found marking the site of other pieces of mill machinery. The sawdust heap is substantial and stretches some distance south of the mill along the course of the creek.

Sixty metres to the north of the mill can be found the notable mill dug-out. This was installed around 1940 and, although missing its roof, is still very well defined. The entrance way features dry stone walling.

Approximately 700 metres, north of the mill, can be found the impressive remains of a pig-sty bridge. Most of the support structures are intact. A fallen tree has broken the longitudinal beams. For the most part, the road between the mill and this point follows the route of the tramway, but there is a deviation around the gully at this particular point which has left the bridge remains intact.

## **Historical Australian Themes**

### Historical Themes

4.1 Timber (includes splitting, milling, charcoal burning, wattle bark stripping)

11.0 Evidence of: Life style, housing and landscape choice of notable figures residing in the district

12.1 Evidence of: Bushfires

## **Physical Description 2**

Associations - Russell, Bill

*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/>*