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## RAILWAY BRIDGES



Three Railway Bridges



Three Railway Bridges



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### Location

SOUTH GIPPSLAND HIGHWAY, KOONWARRA, SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE

### Municipality

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE

### Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO51

### Heritage Listing

South Gippsland Shire

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 23, 2022

#### What is significant?

The three timber railway bridges and associated cuttings constructed in 1892 by Andrew O'Keefe as part of the South Eastern Railway over the Black Spur Creek and Tarwin River at Koonwarra. This group of three timber trestle railway bridges on the former South Eastern Railway, situated in close proximity to the southeast of Koonwarra township, comprises:

- Black Spur Creek Bridge. The westernmost of the three bridges is an eleven span bridge over Black Spur Creek. It has standard fifteen-foot spans, which give a transverse timber deck length of 58.5 metres.
- Tarwin River West Branch 1 Bridge. The middle bridge spans the west branch of the Tarwin River and comprises 25 spans of standard twenty-foot design giving a total (curving) transverse timber deck length of 152 metres.
- Tarwin River West Branch 2 Bridge. The easternmost bridge spans the west branch of the Tarwin River and comprises 24 spans of standard twenty-foot design with a total (curving) transverse timber deck length of 146 metres.

The construction of all three bridges is typical hardwood trestles formed of paired hardwood tree posts braced diagonally and carrying multiple beams below the rail deck. The maximum height of the bridges varies between 7.5-8 metres.

The two largest bridges are visible from the South Gippsland Highway. The situation of the bridges over the Tarwin River floodplain and the associated large cutting created between the intervening hill creates a picturesque and dramatic cultural landscape.

#### **How is it significant?**

The three timber railway bridges and associated cuttings on the former South Eastern Railway at Koonwarra are of local historical, aesthetic and technological significance to South Gippsland Shire.

#### **Why is it significant?**

Historically, they are highly significant as an important element of the South Eastern Railway which was responsible for the economic and social integration of the Shire and the region with the rest of the State. (AHC criteria - A.4 and D.2)

Aesthetically, the bridges are one of the most powerful expressions of how early European settlement altered the natural and cultural landscape as well as a highly visible illustration of the engineering feats that were required to construct the line. In this context, the importance of the bridges is enhanced by the large cuttings adjacent to, and between them. (AHC criterion - E.1)

Technologically, the two larger bridges are important as rare and substantially intact examples that were built to the maximum engineering standards of the Victorian Railways of the time. (AHC criterion - F.1)

Heritage Study/Consultant	South Gippsland - South Gippsland Heritage Study, David Helms with Trevor Westmore, 2004;
Construction dates	1892, 1892, 1892,
Architect/Designer	Victorian Railways,
Other Names	Koonwarra Bridges,
Hermes Number	30655
Property Number	

## **Physical Description 1**

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*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/>*