

## YARRA BANK (SPEAKERS CORNER)



1 yarra bank speakers corner  
batman avenue melbourne  
view of speakers rings



YARRA BANK LOOKING  
TOWARDS SPEAKERS  
CORNER SOHE 2008



YARRA BANK (SPEAKERS  
CORNER) SOHE 2008

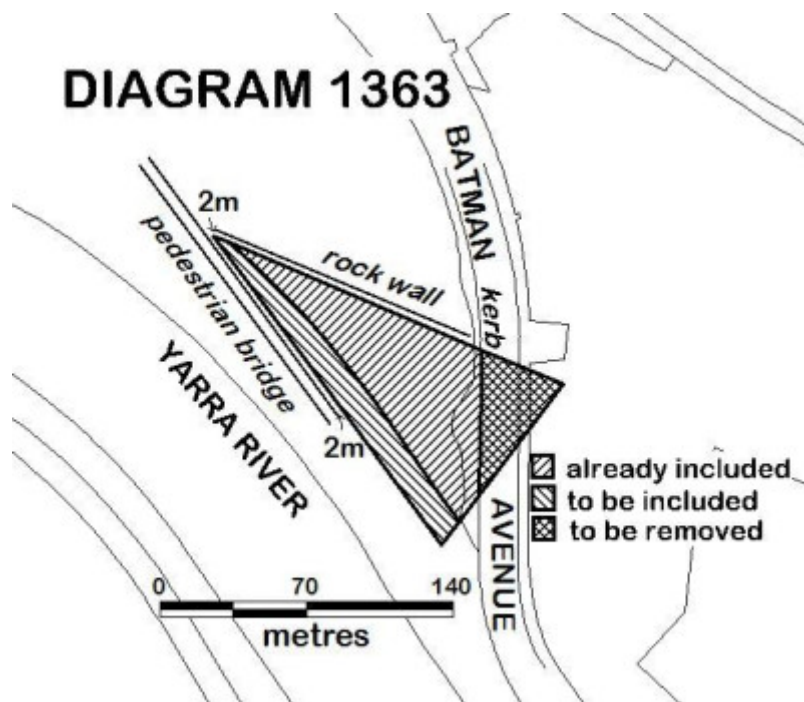


diagram 1363.JPG

### Location

BATMAN AVENUE MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

### Municipality

MELBOURNE CITY

### Level of significance

Registered

## **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H1363

## **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO394

## **VHR Registration**

October 23, 1997

## **Amendment to Registration**

June 11, 2015

## **Heritage Listing**

Victorian Heritage Register

---

## **Statement of Significance**

Last updated on - February 14, 2000

What is significant?

Yarra Bank, also known as Speakers' Corner, is a wedge of parkland on Batman Avenue which has been used since at least the late 1880s as a public meeting place. Dr William Maloney, medical practitioner, parliamentarian and champion of social democratic reform, campaigned successfully in 1889 to have a place set aside for the purpose of "holding public meetings and discussing questions - religious, educational and others". Alfred Deakin as Police Minister agreed and was responsible for suggesting Flinders Park off Batman Avenue as the site. Yarra Bank has since then been associated with the ideal of free speech, usually radical in nature, following the example of Speakers' Corner in London's Hyde Park. Often it has been the site of conflict with proponents of both sides of issues such as conscription, women's suffrage, socialism and industrial matters clashing, sometimes violently. In 1890 a (peaceful) meeting in the park in support of a maritime strike was the catalyst for a notorious remark by Colonel Tom Price to the men of the Victorian Mounted Rifles that if they were called upon to aid the police they should "fire low and lay them out". Anti-conscription and women's suffrage activists Vida Goldstein and Adela Pankhurst were active during the First World War and one notorious meeting was broken up in 1916 when soldiers physically attacked the female speakers despite the presence of a large contingent of police. For many years Yarra Bank was the destination of the annual May Day marches. In the 1950s it was an important focal point of Cold War tensions. From about 1970 Yarra Bank declined in popularity with the rise in mass communication and the decline of radical political parties. Today, nine stone edged speakers mounds set in a grove of 36 mature elms stand as a silent reminder of a public space once filled with passionate oratory and conflict.

How is it significant?

Yarra Bank (Speakers' Corner) is of historic and social significance to the State of Victoria.

Why is it significant?

Yarra Bank (Speakers' Corner) is historically and socially important for its long associations with the rights of assembly and free speech. The regular Sunday afternoon ritual with hundreds of Melburnians gathering to listen,

applaud or jeer was as much a notable part of the city's life as the occasional large meeting on a particular issue. Yarra Bank (Speakers' Corner) is a vitally significant place in the history of radical political thought in Victoria. Up until its decline, virtually all crucial social and political issues have been debated there, sometimes with violent outcomes. Its remaining trees and mounds are important landmark elements in the social and historical significance of the place.

Yarra Bank (Speakers' Corner) is also historically important for its associations with prominent socialist politician and champion of free speech Dr William Maloney (1854-1940) who campaigned for its reservation.

## 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 place or object.
2. Should it become apparent during further inspection or the carrying out of alterations that original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such alteration shall cease and the Executive Director shall be notified as soon as possible.
3. If there is a conservation policy and plan approved by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it.
4. Nothing in this declaration prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions.
5. Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to seek relevant planning or building permits from the responsible authority where applicable.

## Exemption:

\* Management of trees in accordance with Australian Standard, Pruning of amenity trees AS 4373  
In accordance with s92(3) of the *Heritage Act 2017*, permit exemption issued by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria on 4 January 2023 (P37331):

- Installation of temporary events and structures associated with the City of Melbourne's 'Moomba Festival' for up to 35 calendar days (within one calendar year) inclusive of bump in and bump out, with no further structures erected in the same location for a period of 7 calendar days for hard stand surfaces, or 14 days for turf surfaces.
- Installation of temporary events and structures associated with one annual arts festival event of up to up to 45 calendar days (within one calendar year) inclusive of bump in and bump out, with no further structures erected in the same location for a period of 7 calendar days for hard stand surfaces, or 14 days for turf surfaces.
- The following temporary event infrastructure can be installed for both events listed above:
  - The installation of temporary structures, such as marquees, tents, market stalls, display cases and furniture, gazebos, and shipping containers.
  - The installation of temporary freestanding services associated with events, including generators and associated service cabling.
  - The installation of temporary freestanding audio-visual and broadcasting equipment, including temporary staging, flooring, rigging, screens, speakers, lighting and associated infrastructure.
  - The erection of temporary freestanding scaffolding towers, projectors and infrastructure associated with lightshows and projections onto, or into airspace within the extent of registration of registered places and objects.
  - The installation of temporary freestanding artworks.
  - The installation of freestanding temporary recreation and entertainment facilities, equipment and structures, such as jumping castles, amusement rides, and sporting equipment.
  - The installation of temporary decorations, such as decorative lights, bunting, tinsel, cut floral arrangements, freestanding garden beds and the like.
  - The installation of equipment and infrastructure associated with firework, laser and drone displays.
  - The parking, installation and operation of temporary micro-tenancies, such as food trucks and coffee carts.
  - The installation of temporary furniture, including tables, desks, chairs, umbrellas and the like.
  - Installation of temporary portable toilets.
  - Installation of temporary operational, promotional, directional and wayfinding signage.
  - Installation of temporary surveillance systems.
  - The erection of freestanding fencing structures associated with temporary events.
- The following exemption conditions apply to both events:
  - Works and activities must be entirely reversible, and not involve damage to, or removal or disturbance of, early or original fabric, including landscape features such as historical planting schemes, paths and ground-surface masonry, built structures (including interiors and exterior elements), or historical archaeological remains.
  - Temporary structures and associated elements exempted must be freestanding and not involve new penetrations into or affixings to early or original fabric.
  - There must be no subfloor/subsurface/excavation works or activities.
  - Cabling and associated service conduits must not be affixed to early or original fabric.
  - Outdoor temporary structures must not be positioned within a structural root zone, or within two metres of garden beds.
  - Works or activities within tree protection zones must be in accordance with a Tree Protection Management Plan prepared by a qualified arborist.
  - Outdoor temporary structures are exempt within tree protection zones only if works and activities are undertaken in accordance with a Tree Protection Management Plan prepared by a qualified arborist.
  - In tree protection zones the method of affixing temporary outdoor structures to the ground must be in accordance with advice provided by a Tree Protection Management Plan prepared by a qualified

arborist.

- Any works or activities involving the attachment of temporary decorations, artworks or lights to trees must be guided by a Tree Protection Management Plan prepared by a qualified arborist.
  - Plant and equipment access must use existing paths and access routes where possible. Existing paths and access routes must not be damaged, widened or extended.
  - Tree canopy and fragile surfaces such as turf, soft landscaping, timber flooring and ground surface masonry (excluding concrete or asphalt), must be protected from temporary structures and associated installation activities (for example the use of sleepers, boards, track matting or other ground protection). Vehicles must not use access routes through floorboarded, decked or tiled locations.
  - All works and activities must comply with the internal and external engineering and loading requirements of the place.
  - Any area(s) impacted by works and activities must be fully remediated to its previous condition within 28 calendar days of removal of temporary structures.
- General Exemptions related to temporary events and structures apply in addition to this specific exemption.

Construction dates            1880,  
Heritage Act Categories    Registered place,  
Hermes Number                5231  
Property Number

---

## Extent of Registration

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the **Heritage Act 1995**, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by modifying Heritage Register Number H1363 in the category described as Heritage Place.

Yarra Bank (Speakers Corner)  
Batman Avenue  
Melbourne  
Melbourne City

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 1363 (less the portion shown cross-hatched) encompassing all of Crown Allotment 2037 and parts of Crown Allotments 2038 and 2039, City of Melbourne Parish of Melbourne North and part of the road reserve for Batman Avenue.

Dated 11 June 2015  
TIM SMITH  
Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* G23 11 June 2015 p.1306]

*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/>*