

A photograph showing a dirt road or path that curves through a rural setting. On either side of the road are wooden fences, likely for livestock. The background is filled with lush green trees under a clear blue sky. The scene is bright and sunny.

DIAGRAM 2212

Map of the study area showing the Murray River, tracks, and sampling locations. A yellow circle labeled L1 contains a black diamond with a white 'P' and three points labeled B1, B2, and B3. A scale bar indicates 0, 200, and 400 metres.

barmah muster yards plan

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2212

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO35

VHR Registration

June 11, 2009

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

The Barmah Muster Yards site has been used continuously from the 1880s as an essential component of cattle grazing activity by local farmers in River Red Gum forests along the Murray River.

The large timber post-and-rail yards are designed for management of cattle grazed in the surrounding River Red Gum forests. The yards feature a race where stock were identified by owners under the herdsman's supervision, pens named for different localities or the properties of the larger owners for holding of cattle to be removed from the forest, and a 'branding back' pen for cattle to be returned to the forest. The yards have been replaced, remodelled and repaired extensively over the years. Adjacent to the yards is a small complex of buildings which includes a herdsman's hut, built by long-term herdsman Tom Galloway in the early 1950s, a musterers' quarters building brought from a World War II era internment camp c1980, and a kitchen lean-to structure built since the 1980s to serve the expanding annual muster event. To the south are an earth dam and pump-house, and remnants of earlier fences. The large paddock further to the south, known as Goose Swamp, was used to hold the mustered cattle before drafting in the yards.

Most of the pastoral runs adjoining the Barmah Forest were selected in the decade following the 'free selection' Act of 1869. The selectors developed a mixed cropping and grazing system. The Land Acts had provided for commons and there were by now many around the state. In 1877 selectors from the Barmah, Nariolita and Picola shires petitioned for a common on an area which included parts of the Barmah and Yielima State Forests and adjoining Timber Reserves. Much of this land was flooded during winter and spring but it provided good grazing in the summer months when feed was short on the farms. The Barmah Common as gazetted in 1878 occupied 17,000 acres including the lower half of Kinnear's Island. As the first managers of the Common, the Echuca Shire council built the first yards. Management was transferred to a committee of local farmers in 1882. The committee employed a herdsman and arranged quarterly musters.

From the early 1890s Conservator of Forests George Perrin campaigned for greater Forest Department control of land use in State Forests. As a result the Barmah Common was abolished in 1895. Similarly the grazing lease over the adjacent Yielima State Forest, which had been operated by a syndicate as a common since 1885, was not renewed. The combined areas were subsequently made available for a similar regime of grazing but under Forest Department control, an arrangement described by some at the time as a 'State Common'. A committee of local farmers appointed a herdsman and maintained yards and fences, and the Forester organised two musters a year.

From 1911 the Department employed its own herdsmen. During musters up to the 1940s cattle were drafted in succession at Mannions Yards, the Cherry Tree Yards and finally at the Barmah Yards. The grazing areas in the

Yielima and Yalca Shires were closed off in 1950 and the Mannions yards fell into disuse. By the mid 1950s the Cherry Tree yards were also abandoned as motor vehicles gave the musterers more mobility, and all of the cattle were drafted at the Barmah Yards.

From the 1960s there was a gradual reduction in the number of cattle grazed and in the number of owners using the common, partly because surrounding farms were being amalgamated, and as a result eligibility for grazing was extended to farmers over a wider area. The Barmah Cattlemen's association was formed in 1984 to look after grazing after the Department of Conservation and Lands divested itself of this responsibility. Mustering work was now undertaken on a voluntary basis by local farmers, a number of whom were descendants of the original users of the Commons, and by other volunteers. The muster gradually developed into a wider social event in the district, with increasing numbers of participants and their families and friends camping at the yards over several days each year.

How is it significant?

The Barmah Muster Yards are of historical and social significance to the State of Victoria

Why is it significant?

The Barmah Muster Yards site is of historical significance as a rare instance of a physical site with a direct relationship to the operation of a Commons, a form of land use once extensive in Victoria and a vital component of rural life from the Selection Acts through to the early twentieth century. Although the fabric of the yards and related buildings do not date from the Commons era, the location, layout and function of the site have remained substantially the same since the Common was in operation.

The Barmah Muster Yards site is of historical significance as a site under continual use from the early 1880s which was the focus of over one hundred and twenty years of cattle grazing activity first on the Barmah Common and subsequently in the Barmah and Yielima State Forests.

The Barmah Muster Yards site is of historical significance as a site relating to a regime of mixed land uses practised since the 1870s on State Forest lands in the River Red Gum forest of the Murray River.

The Barmah Muster Yards are of historical significance for their capacity to demonstrate important aspects of the administration and management of grazing as practiced in the River Red Gum forests of the Murray River. This practice is demonstrated by features of the yards site such as the holding paddock, holding yard, race, herdsman's station, pens allotted to specific localities and landholders, sending back yards and herdsman's hut.

The Barmah Muster Yards site is of social significance as a focus for over one hundred and twenty years of continuous participation by farming families from the surrounding district in annual activities relating to grazing of Commons and State Forest.

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. 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 place or object are revealed which relate to the significance of the place or object, then the exemption covering such works shall cease and Heritage Victoria shall be notified as soon as possible. Note: All archaeological places have the potential to contain significant sub-surface artefacts and other remains. In most cases it will be necessary to obtain approval from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria before the undertaking any works that have a significant sub-surface component. General Conditions: 3. If there is a conservation policy and plan endorsed by the Executive Director, all works shall be in accordance with it. Note: The existence of a Conservation Management Plan or a Heritage Action Plan endorsed by the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria provides guidance for the management of the heritage values associated with the site. It may not be necessary to obtain a heritage permit for certain works specified in the management plan. General Conditions: 4. Nothing in this determination prevents the Executive Director from amending or rescinding all or any of the permit exemptions. General Conditions: 5. 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.

Regular Site Maintenance : The following site maintenance works are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995: a) regular site maintenance provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) the maintenance of an item to retain its conditions or operation without the removal of or damage to the existing fabric or the introduction of new materials; c) repairs, conservation and maintenance to plaques, memorials, roads and paths, fences and gates and drainage and irrigation. Note: Any new materials used for repair must not obscure existing fabric or limit access to existing fabric for future maintenance. Repair must maximise protection and retention of fabric and include the conservation of existing details or elements.

Fire Suppression Duties : The following fire suppression duties are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) Fire suppression and fire fighting duties provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) Fire suppression activities such as fuel reduction burns, and fire control line construction, provided all significant historical and archaeological features are appropriately recognised and protected; Note: Fire management authorities should be aware of the location, extent and significance of historical and archaeological places when developing fire suppression and fire fighting strategies. The importance of places listed in the Heritage Register must be considered when strategies for fire suppression and management are being developed.

Weed and Vermin Control : The following weed and vermin control activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) Weed and vermin control activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground features or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; Note: Particular care must be taken with weed and vermin control works where such activities may have a detrimental affect on the significant fabric of a place. Such works may include the removal of ivy, moss or lichen from an historic structure or feature, or the removal of burrows from a site that has archaeological values.

Public Safety and Security : The following public safety and security activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) public safety and security activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground structures or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) the erection of temporary security fencing, scaffolding, hoardings or surveillance systems to prevent unauthorised access or secure public safety which will not adversely affect significant fabric of the place including archaeological features; c) development including emergency stabilisation necessary to secure safety where a site feature has been irreparably damaged or destabilised and represents a safety risk to its users or the public. Note: Urgent or emergency site works are to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified specialist such as a structural engineer, or other heritage professional.

Signage and Site Interpretation : The following Signage and Site Interpretation activities are permit exempt under section 66 of the Heritage Act 1995, a) signage and site interpretation activities provided the works do not involve the removal or destruction of any significant above-ground structures or sub-surface archaeological artefacts or deposits; b) the

erection of non-illuminated signage for the purpose of ensuring public safety or to assist in the interpretation of the heritage significance of the place or object and which will not adversely affect significant fabric including landscape or archaeological features of the place or obstruct significant views of and from heritage values or items; c) signage and site interpretation products must be located and be of a suitable size so as not to obscure or damage significant fabric of the place; d) signage and site interpretation products must be able to be later removed without causing damage to the significant fabric of the place; Note: The development of signage and site interpretation products must be consistent in the use of format, text, logos, themes and other display materials. Note: Where possible, the signage and interpretation material should be consistent with other schemes developed on similar or associated sites. It may be necessary to consult with land managers and other stakeholders concerning existing schemes and strategies for signage and site interpretation. Minor Works : Note: Any Minor Works that in the opinion of the Executive Director will not adversely affect the heritage significance of the place may be exempt from the permit requirements of the Heritage Act. A person proposing to undertake minor works may submit a proposal to the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is satisfied that the proposed works will not adversely affect the heritage values of the site, the applicant may be exempted from the requirement to obtain a heritage permit. If an applicant is uncertain whether a heritage permit is required, it is recommended that the permits co-ordinator be contacted.

Construction dates	1880,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	54887
Property Number	

Plaque Citation

These muster yards were a vital component of the seasonal cattle grazing practices of local farmers in the river redgum forests starting with the Barmah Common in the early 1880s and from 1895 under State Forests administration.

Extent of Registration

To the extent of all of the land within a radius of 150 metres of the point with Longitude 144.96726 degrees East and Latitude 35.96115 degrees South, shown as L1 on Diagram 2212 held by the Executive Director

To the extent of the buildings and features on the following list, as marked on Diagram 2212 held by the Executive Director

F1 - Mustering yards

B1 - Herdsman's Hut

B2 - Musterers quarters

B3 - Kitchen

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/>