

LAL LAL IRON MINE AND SMELTING WORKS



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2008



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1 lal lal iron smelting works lal
lal furnace

Location

IRON MINE ROAD LAL LAL, MOORABOOL SHIRE

Municipality

MOORABOOL SHIRE

Level of significance

Registered

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1759

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO46

VHR Registration

November 26, 1998

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Register

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 17, 2025

What is significant?

Victoria's only attempt at mining and smelting iron ore took place at Lal Lal in the latter stages of the nineteenth century. In the mid 1870s, the Lal Lal Iron Company installed mining machinery, erected a large blast furnace and constructed a tramway to convey ore from the mine. For a brief time in the early 1880s, the Lal Lal Company had over 100 men engaged in mining and smelting the iron ore, gathering limestone (flux) and firewood, and manufacturing charcoal. The company also operated a foundry at Ballarat. The Lal Lal Iron Works had ceased operations by the end of the 1880s.

The Lal Lal Iron Mine and Smelting Works is of historical, archaeological and scientific importance to the State of Victoria. The site is already listed on the Register of the National Estate.

The Lal Lal Iron Mine and Smelting Works is historically and scientifically important as the site of the State's only attempt to smelt iron ore with a blast furnace. The significance of the site is enhanced by the substantial remnants of the blast furnace being the only one of its type surviving in the southern hemisphere.

The Lal Lal Iron Mine and Smelting Works is scientifically important for its illustration of local adaptation of imported iron smelting technology. The design of the furnace, construction materials, and smelting technique used at the site harking back to 18th century European iron smelting technology. The site is archaeologically important for its potential to yield artefacts and evidence which will be able to provide significant information about the technological history of mining.

How is it significant?

Why is it significant?

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:

EXEMPTIONS FROM PERMITS:

No permits are required for the following classes of works provided they are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Conservation Plan For Historic Mining Sites prepared by David Bannear in 1996.

- * Mineral Exploration
- * Fire suppression duties
- * Timber production
- * Weed and vermin control
- * Public safety
- * Rehabilitation

Construction dates 1870,
Heritage Act Categories Registered place, Registered archaeological place,
Hermes Number 5514
Property Number

History

Extract from Argus 15 April 1884

THE LAL LAL IRON WORKS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ARGUS.

Sir - I have from time to time noticed articles in your valuable columns on various local industries but have not observed one on an iron mine which I think, if brought to a successful issue, would be of great benefit to a colony so noted for its foundries and iron working establishments of various sorts.

The mine is situated some four miles due east of the Lal Lal railway station on the western bank of the Moorabool. A visitor to the town inquiring for the mine would be directed to their tramway, starting from a dock at the railway running out to the mine; this has lately been constructed at great cost by the company. After ascending a range of hills the extensive works are seen, also a grand view of the surrounding country; the first thing met with being the quarries from which is obtained the ironstone. There are two separate deposits on the company's lease the extent of ore in each being 14a 9r 10p south and 11a 4r 10p north with an average

thickness of 6ft. The stone when raised is taken along small tramways to bins or receptacles at the works which always present a very busy appearance, some of the men being engaged breaking up ironstone and limestone (which is brought from Leigh-road by rail, thence along the tramway), others at work with the coke charcoal and wood-these being the in- gredients used to extract the purer metal.

Trucks so constructed that they hold about the requisite quantity of each are used to wheel the materials from the bins along a platform to the mouth of a very large furnace. which is always kept filled. Descending a little further, the engine- house is next viewed. The machinery used is imported and very powerful, from which is obtained the blast used to keep the furnace up to the required temperature. Two large boilers drive the machinery. The bottom of the furnace and the place where the iron is run off into moulds every 12 hours is now reached. Here are also erected two smaller furnaces used for melting when making castings etc. A visitor will always find the men employed at the different parts of the works willing to explain and give any information. There are over 100 men and boys employed, and the works having to be continued day and night three shifts are worked; and in connexion with the mine there is a general store, the place having every appearance of a small thriving township

After the iron has cooled it is taken to the dock at the railway, where there is some 500 tons of iron ore stacked of the various qualities.

At present the company have not a market for the iron. This compels the company to utilise the iron themselves; they have therefore a very extensive foundry in Ballarat, from which castings of all sorts and descriptions are turned out, the iron being pronounced by competent judges the very best obtainable for that purpose; fire-bars are also made in large quantities at the works. The company have now started the manufacture of iron pipes, the sample turned out having successfully withstood all the tests applied.

The assumed quantity of ore to be quarried is 742,300 tons, which, if reckoned at 50 per cent (the School of Mines gave 60 to 75), would give 371,150 tons of iron, say at £5, would mean the circulation of £1,855,750

-I am, &c ,
SUBSCRIBER
Lal Lal, April 14

Extent of Registration

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including the Heritage Register Number 1759 in the category described as a Heritage place, Archaeological place:

Lal Lal Iron Mine and Smelting Works, Iron Mine Road, Lal Lal, Moorabool Shire Council.

EXTENT:

1. All of the Crown land including above ground features (blast furnace, flue, machinery foundations, and tramway bed), mine workings, and all archaeological relics and deposits in a 200 metre radius with Australian Grid Co-ordinates E418 N254 (position of blast furnace) on 1:100,000 map sheet number 7722 Lal Lal.

Dated 5 November 1998.

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[Victoria Government Gazette G 47 26 November 1998 p.2888]

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/>