
Cobungra River Bridge



B7056 Cobungra River Bridge



B7056 Cobungra River Bridge (Google Earth Image)

Location

Omeo Highway crossing of the Cobungra River,, ANGLERS REST VIC 3898 - Property No B7056

Municipality

EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H1854

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - April 23, 2007

The timber-beam Cobungra River Bridge is historically, technically, aesthetically and socially significant at the State level.

The bridge's date of origin is uncertain, and it is possible that some timber piles date from circa 1909 when this route to the Glen Wills tin mines was first constructed by the Public Works Department. However, the current timber structure (apart from a recent concrete abutment insertion) is of standard post-1930 CRB design and most probably dates from the period of World War 2 when this section of Omeo Highway was up-graded for possible military use. The Omeo Highway is itself of considerable historical significance as the first of Victoria's officially

gazetted State Highways (in 1925), and the bridge reflects the political importance of this road. The adjacent Blue Duck Inn setting dates back to an earlier era, when it was a resting place for travellers to the Glen Wills gold and tin mines.

The bridge is also of historical significance as a now very rare example of the symbiotic relationship between bridges and hotels (the genesis of many settlements) in pioneering times. As with most other early crossing places, this first bridge was relatively short-lived, replaced by a later-generation bridge built according to CRB advances in timber bridge design. The juxtaposition of a vernacular timber bridge with an adjacent travellers resting place, especially outside a township of any size, is now extremely rare in Victoria. The bridge is of technical significance as a representative and well-preserved example of one of the most important innovations in timber bridge design of the twentieth century. Developed by Victoria's Country Roads Board in 1930, this style of bridge was the first standard timber bridge designed specifically for the demands of motor transport. It revolutionised engineering thinking about the durability and viability of timber road bridges in Australia.

Replacement of the traditional transversely planked timber deck with a longitudinally planked deck supported on timber crossbeams represented a new standard bridge design that provided both longer life and easier maintenance. Medium size examples of this type of bridge are now scarce and becoming rare. Timber bridges of any type are now extremely rare on our State Highways or Main Roads; no other highway examples now remain. The sharply angled road approach at one end, peculiar in the era of fast motor traffic, is typical of the horse-drawn vehicle era and increasingly uncommon and significant. Its outlying 'fender piles' are also notable.

The acutely angled road approach at one end and the antique timber buildings of the adjacent Blue Duck Inn set amidst forest and mountains, contribute to give a 'horse era' look to this standard medium-size Country Roads Board timber motor bridge. The bridge also contributes aesthetically to an extremely beautiful and pristine mountain setting, one of the most picturesque cultural landscapes in the high country of Victoria's north-east. The swiftly-flowing mountain stream, acutely angled approach road, and historic timber hotel, set amidst forest and mountains, all combine to provide a splendid backdrop with rare 'old world' vernacular charm.

The bridge is also adjacent to the very popular Angler's Rest river-side camping ground. The traditional timber bridge is an integral part of the aesthetics of this historic site, beloved by devotees of remote places. The Cobungra River valley setting at Angler's Rest would lose much of the old-world Australian flavour that has attracted generations of fishermen and hikers, should it lose the ageing timber bridge which has long been a central feature.

Classified: 05/06/2000

Other Names Anglers Rest Bridge,

Hermes Number 67895

Property Number

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.

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