
Old Hume Highway Bridge



B6956 Old Hume Hwy Bridge

Location

Over Goulburn River, South/West of Seymour,, SEYMOUR VIC 3660 - Property No B6956

Municipality

MITCHELL SHIRE

Level of significance

State

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0092

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 27, 2005

The Old Hume Highway Bridge at Seymour, dating from 1892, is historically, scientifically, socially and aesthetically significant at the State level. The bridge was originally built as an all-timber bridge by the contracting firm of Farquharson, which had just constructed Chinamans bridge near Nagambie and which would later construct several big lift-span and timber-truss bridges over the Murray River. The Seymour Bridge is one of a unique group of four large timber river bridges from the early 1890s, of varying types, situated on the Goulburn River between Seymour and Murchison.

The site of this bridge was for more than a century, between 1853 and 1966, one of Victoria's most important river crossings. Originally serving 'the Sydney Road', this site came to be regarded as a key river crossing on 'the

Beechworth Road' in the period between 1862 and 1892, when the two earliest bridges were constructed. By World War 1, this historic old main-road route that the CRB would initially dub the North Eastern Highway, was sadly run down. Commonwealth highway funding enabled the route (including this bridge) to be totally reconstructed for interstate motor traffic by the CRB after 1926, as 'the Hume Highway'. Its position between the major Seymour transport junction and Puckapunyal army base gave the reconstructed motor bridge of 1933 a special significance during World War2 and the Cold War era.

The Old Hume Highway Bridge has nine spans, with a maximum span length of 12 metres. When opened as an all-timber bridge in 1892 it was regarded as a superior and extravagantly-expensive structure, and its original solid grey box substructure remains as a rare surviving example of superior nineteenth-century timber road-bridge construction. Its current superstructure consists of 24-inch rolled steel joists supporting timber crossbeams, which in turn support a longitudinally-timbered deck 105 metres long. In its current (modified) timber and steel form, it is the most authentic surviving example of a large timber and steel-joist highway bridge of the new motor-vehicle pattern introduced by the country Roads Board during the Great Depression era of the early 1930s.

Aesthetically, the bridge's isolated setting in the midst of spreading shady river red gums on the fast-flowing and broad Goulburn River, is exceptionally attractive. Its deck provides a first-rate viewing platform for public appreciation of the impressive stream and its riverland environs. In social terms, an unusual combination of historic site and river-bridge structure and pleasant and readily-accessible river-bank picnic, walking and fishing spot, makes this a heritage place of great value both in State and local terms. It is readily accessible from Melbourne, and is close to several other impressive colonial timber river-bridge relics including Chinamans and Kirwans Bridges.

Classified: 10/11/1998

Hermes Number 68981

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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