

<b>Building:</b>	MacRobertson Bridge	<b>Significance:</b>	B
<b>Address:</b>	Grange Road, Yarra River, Richmond	<b>Melway Map Ref:</b>	2H G12
<b>Building Type:</b>	Road Bridge	<b>Construction Date:</b>	1934
<b>Architect:</b>	Unknown	<b>Builder:</b>	Unknown



<b>Intactness:</b>		<b>Condition:</b>	
G[x] F[ ] P[ ]		G[ ] F[x] P[ ]	
<b>Existing Heritage Listings:</b>		<b>Recommended Heritage Listings:</b>	
Victorian Heritage Register	[ ]	Victorian Heritage Register	[ ]
Register of the National Estate	[ ]	Register of the National Estate	[x]
National Trust	[ ]	Heritage Overlay Controls	[x]

## History

MacRobertson Bridge was constructed in 1934. It was presented by prominent confectionery manufacturer and philanthropist Sir MacPherson Robertson to celebrate the centenary of the Victoria. Robertson was born in Ballarat, the son of two Scots, David and Margaret Robertson. He joined the Victorian Confectionery Company in 1857 and later went to the firm Black and Spence. From here he launched, in 1880, MacRobertson's Confectionery Company, which became the largest firm of its type in the southern hemisphere. Subsidiary companies soon evolved, including the Fitzroy Box Works and, to distribute medicated sweets, the Delta Manufacturing Co. Robertson became involved in other companies including the Dandy Starch, Oil products, the Federal Milk Co. and the Federal Timber Co.

Robertson achieved additional fame as a benefactor. He helped fund Sir Douglas Mawson's Antarctic expeditions and, in 1934, bestowed gifts such as the MacRobertson Girls' High School in Albert Road, South Melbourne, and the MacRobertson Bridge. He aided the 'Big Boulevard' Scheme, gave money for the State Herbarium in the Botanical Gardens and provided for an illuminated fountain as a National Soldiers' Memorial. Robertson became a Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society in 1931 and in June 1932, became a Knight Bachelor. He was cited in the Australian Biographical Dictionary as 'probably the most remarkable man in the history of industrial enterprise in the Commonwealth.'<sup>1</sup>

The bridge was extended in 1969 by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works as part of the works associated with the construction of the South-Eastern Freeway.<sup>2</sup> The northern section of the bridge underwent further expansion in 1997, to accommodate works for the Citylink project.<sup>3</sup> Graeme Butler. *Northcote Urban Conservation Study*. 1982.

## Description

The MacRobertson Bridge is a double-span bridge over the Yarra River constructed of riveted steel segmental arches, connecting Richmond and South Yarra. The two piers upon which the diagonal steel members are supported are of concrete construction, each having two semi-circular arched openings. The South-Eastern Freeway runs below the northern-most span of the bridge.

At street level, pairs of rendered pillars and low rendered walls mark the Richmond and South Yarra approaches. Four more pillars are located along the length of the bridge, two on each side. The pillars are square in plan, tapering as they rise, with stepped Art Deco plinths. Each pillar supports a pair of decorative cast iron and glass lanterns. The vertical metal balustrading between the pillars is relieved with simple geometric decoration. The four lane deck is asphalted.

## Comparative Examples

Church Street Bridge, Yarra River, Richmond.

## Significance

The MacRobertson Bridge is of local historical significance. The bridge, constructed in 1934 to commemorate Victoria's centenary, is associated with prominent confectioner and benefactor Sir MacPherson Robertson.

## Original Source

Graeme Butler, *Northcote Urban Conservation Study*, 1982.

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- 1 'Who's Who in Australia (Sydney 1935) p 925 C A Grant, '500 Victorians' (Melbourne 1934, p13) 'Australian Biographical Dictionary', p.301. Cited in Graeme Butler, *Northcote Urban Conservation Study*, 1982. Vol 1, pp. 182-184.
  - 2 Plaque on bridge.
  - 3 Information from the City of Yarra.