

# City of Greater Bendigo: Marong Heritage Study Mining Sites

## WILSON'S HILL MINES AND CYANIDE WORKS

### Other Names

**Location** Wilson Hill Bushland Reserve, Parcel No. P132418, State Forest/Recreation Reserve, south west of the corner of Wilsons Reef Road and the Bendigo- St Arnaud Road, Wilson's Hill Reefs, Marong



**Map Reference** Leichardt 1:25,000 - BV418.296

Victorian Heritage Register No

National Estate Register No

Planning Scheme No

**Description** All the features on this site are contained on a triangular parcel of land bounded by Wilsons Reef Road to the north and the Bendigo-St. Arnaud Road on the south east. The ground generally slopes downwards towards the south west. On the slopes at the northern end of the site there is a scatter of shallow workings with small heaps of disturbed mullock. On the flatter ground towards the south west corner there is a dam and raceway (the Wilson Hill Channel) and several features which all appear to relate to 1930s cyaniding operations. These include: a small mound containing at least four circular concrete cyanide vats; eight concrete pads for a water tank; and a large, partly quarried dump near the Bendigo-St.Arnaud road. Close to the northern boundary of the reserve there is a scatter of brick and stone rubble which may indicate a house or battery site.

The mullock heaps are very weathered and many have also been damaged by trail bikes.

**History** Period of activity: 1867-1884; 1895-1906; 1912-1913; 1931. During the first phase there were many parties/companies in operation: Simpson/Norwich (1867-1872), Wilson (1867-1884), McLay (1867), Duke of Edinburgh (1867), Try Again Company (1867), Gray and Company (1867), Anderson and Company (1867), McKenzie and Gray (1867), McDowell and party (1867), Moore and Company (1868), Inverness Company (1868-1873), Bullock Creek Company (1870-1872), Pride of Marong (1871-1872), Laird of Lorne (1871), Kent Tribute Company (1871-1875), Wilson's Extended Tribute Company (1871-1873), Sailor Prince Company (1871), Homeward Bound Company (1871), Nonpareil Company (1871), Banana Company (1871), Prince Charlie Company (1871) and Star of the East (1872-1873).  
Line of reef: Wilson's, Duke of Edinburgh, Simpson's, Prince Charlie  
Maximum recorded annual production: unknown  
Total production: unknown  
Deepest working level: 460 feet  
Deepest shaft: 610 feet (below water level)

**Thematic Context** Mining

**Comparative Examples** The reef workings in this area were to the settlements of Wilsons reef and Marong what the Nil Desperandum and Frederick the Great were to Raywood and Sebastian respectively. There are five other cyanide works sites within the study area. These are: Gold

Dumps (Moon Reef), Devonshire Sand, Frederick the Great, Old Tom Reef and Shamrock. All are from the 1930's period of mining on Bendigo and therefore relate to the second phase of cyaniding in Victoria. There are no sites in the study area which belong to the first phase of cyaniding, prior to 1914.

**Statement of Significance** The site is associated with the discovery of gold in the Marong area in 1867 and also with the small-scale re-treatment of tailings by the cyanide process, representing the last phase of mining on Wilson's Hill (criterion A). The site is representative of the smaller cyaniding sites in the study area (criterion D) and has the potential for education and interpretation about this and earlier phases of mining in the area as part of Wilson's Hill Bushland Reserve (criterion C).

**Level of Significance** Regional

**Recommendation** The site should be protected by inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the City of Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme, by registration with the Victorian Heritage Council, and in accordance with the general principles of the conservation policy for mining sites. In particular, further historical and archaeological work should be undertaken in an effort to distinguish the various lines of reef and the approximate location of the various parties/companies which worked in the area and their machinery sites.

The site should be protected under the heritage overlay of the Great Bendigo Planning Scheme, by registration with the Victorian Heritage Council, and in accordance with the general principles of the conservation policy for mining sites.

**Heritage Boundaries** The approximately triangular site is bounded on the south-east by the Bendigo-St Arnaud Road, on the north by Wilson Reef Road and on the west by private property boundaries and is identical with the area occupied by the Wilson Hill Bushland Reserve.

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**Notes**

**Assessed by** David Bannear in February 1992 and reviewed by Peter Milner in June 1998

**Chronology**