

Historical archaeological site card

Heritage Inventory number and name

BULLARTO SOUTH SAWMILL
H7723-1279

Date received

Tuesday, 25 June 2024

Date accepted

10/7/2024

Hermes Number

212337

1. Place details

Place name:

BULLARTO SOUTH SAWMILL

Heritage Inventory Number (if any):

Other or former names:

Municipal Council:

HEPBURN SHIRE

Address:

199-215 SOUTH BULLARTO ROAD, BULLARTO SOUTH

Geographical coordinates (GDA94 or WGS84)
expressed in degrees and decimals of a degree:

Mapsheet name and number (1:100,000 only): Daylesford South 7723-3

2. Cadastral location

County:

Talbot

Parish:

Bullarto

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Township: Bullarto South

Section: Several

Allotment: Several

Standard Parcel Identifier (SPI): Several

3. Details of site owner or land manager (where known)

First Name:

Surname:

Business or organisation name: DEECA

Position title:

Address:

Email address:

Telephone:

4. Details of site occupier (where known)

First Name:

Surname:

Business or organisation name:

Position title:

Address:

Email address:

Telephone:

5. Aboriginal cultural values

Site has known Aboriginal values NO

Site is recorded on the Victorian
Aboriginal Heritage Register NO

6. Current description of site

Please provide description:

The site is partially pasture and partially bushland and includes a sawdust heap dating from the operation of an 1870s sawmill

Date recorded:

Thursday, 20 June 2024

On Victorian Heritage Register

On Heritage Overlay

Associated sites:

Yes

7. Place history

Please provide a brief history of the place (at least 1 to 2 paragraphs):

A sawmill was constructed deep into the forest in 1871 and operated until 1892 cutting an enormous amount of timber. A tramway connected it to the Daylesford Malsbury Road and a tramway running south connected it to the Mount Wilson sawmills. Source: "Wombat Woodsmen" by Norman Houghton, Published 2015. ISBN 978-0-9583013-6-6.

8. Analysis of site (interpretation)

Include phases in the development of the site, functions and activities represented, as well as current place use:

This is the site of a former extensive sawmilling complex constructed in the 1870s and operating until 1892. Associated tramways ran from the Mill to the Daylesford Malmsbury Road and to Mount Wilson. A large sawdust pile dating from the 1870s remains, as well as some traces of the tram embankments, although large portions of these have been obliterated by cultivation. Historical evidence indicates the possibility of remains of a small building associated with the Mill, as well as a water race, although physical evidence of these have not been verified.

9. Statement of Significance

What is significant?

A large sawdust pile dating from the 1870s remains, as well as some traces of the tram embankments, Historical evidence indicates the possibility of remains of a small building associated with the Mill, as well as a water race.

How is it significant?

The site is of archaeological and local historical significance

Why is it significant?

The site is of likely historical significance to the area for its association with an extensive timber getting operation run by James H Wheeler over multiple sites that provided timber to Daylesford and Castlemaine for at least 30 years.

10. Suggested Protection : Victorian Heritage Register

11. Threat

Is the place under any threat? If so, what is the threat?

Leaseholder plans to remove the sawdust heap

12. References / Informants

Please list books or other sources that may provide historical information about this place.

"Wombat Woodsmen" by Norman Houghton, Published 2015. ISBN 978-0-9583013-6-6.

13. Attachments

- Spatial Extent files-1 AB.gpx

Historical archaeological site card

- Spatial Extent files-2 AB.gpx
- Spatial Extent files-3 AB.gpx
- Spatial Extent files-4 AB.gpx
- Site card supporting documents-1 AB.pdf
- Site card supporting documents-2 AB.pdf
- Application form AB.pdf
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14. Recording archaeologist's details

First Name:

Surname:

Business or organisation name:

Position title:

Business or company address:

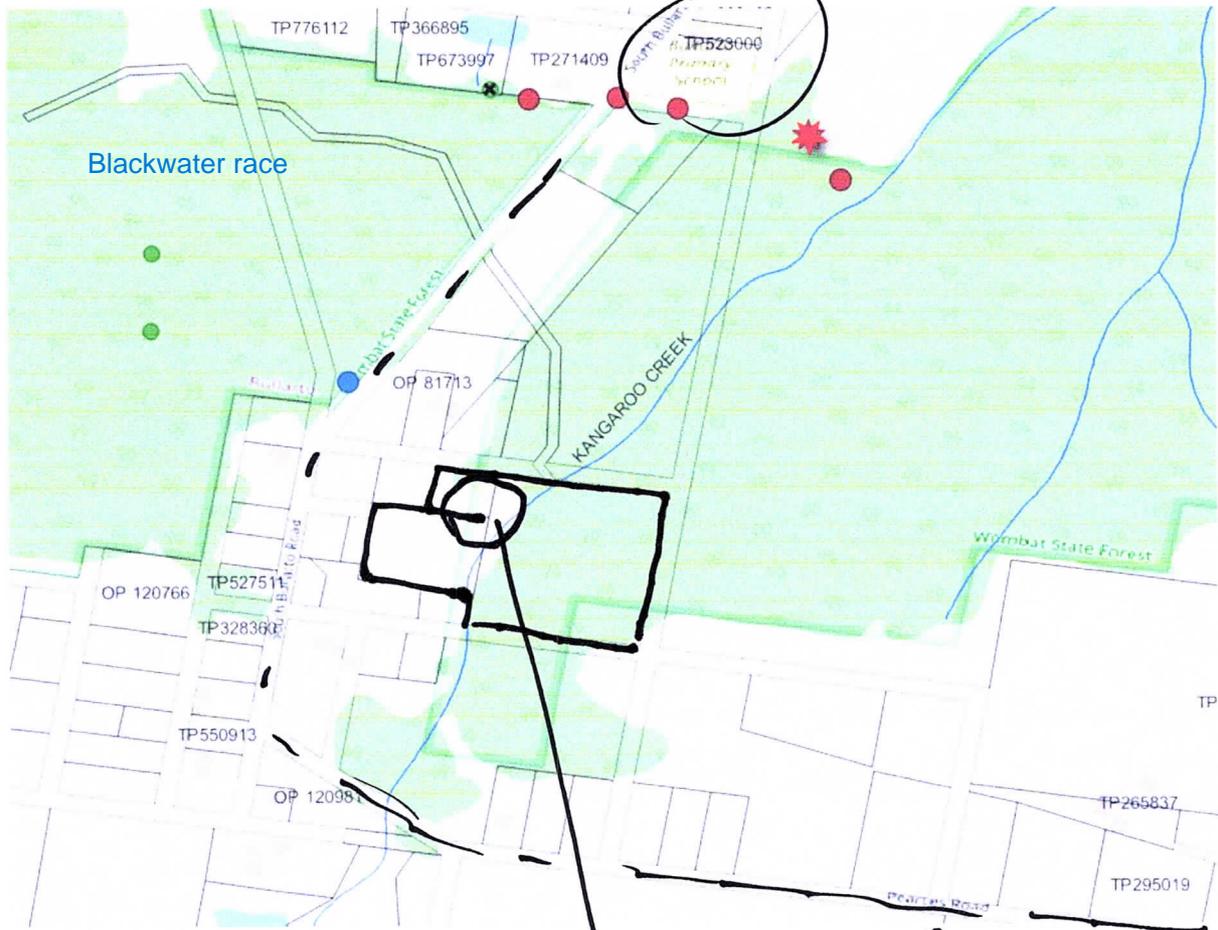
Email address:

Telephone:

15. Declaration

I state that the information I have given on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge.

South Bullarto Rd Primary School



Pearce's Road
Saw dust pile



→ to Bullarto

Kangaroo Creek

Kangaroo Creek

S Bullarto Rd

S Bullarto Rd

S Bullarto Rd

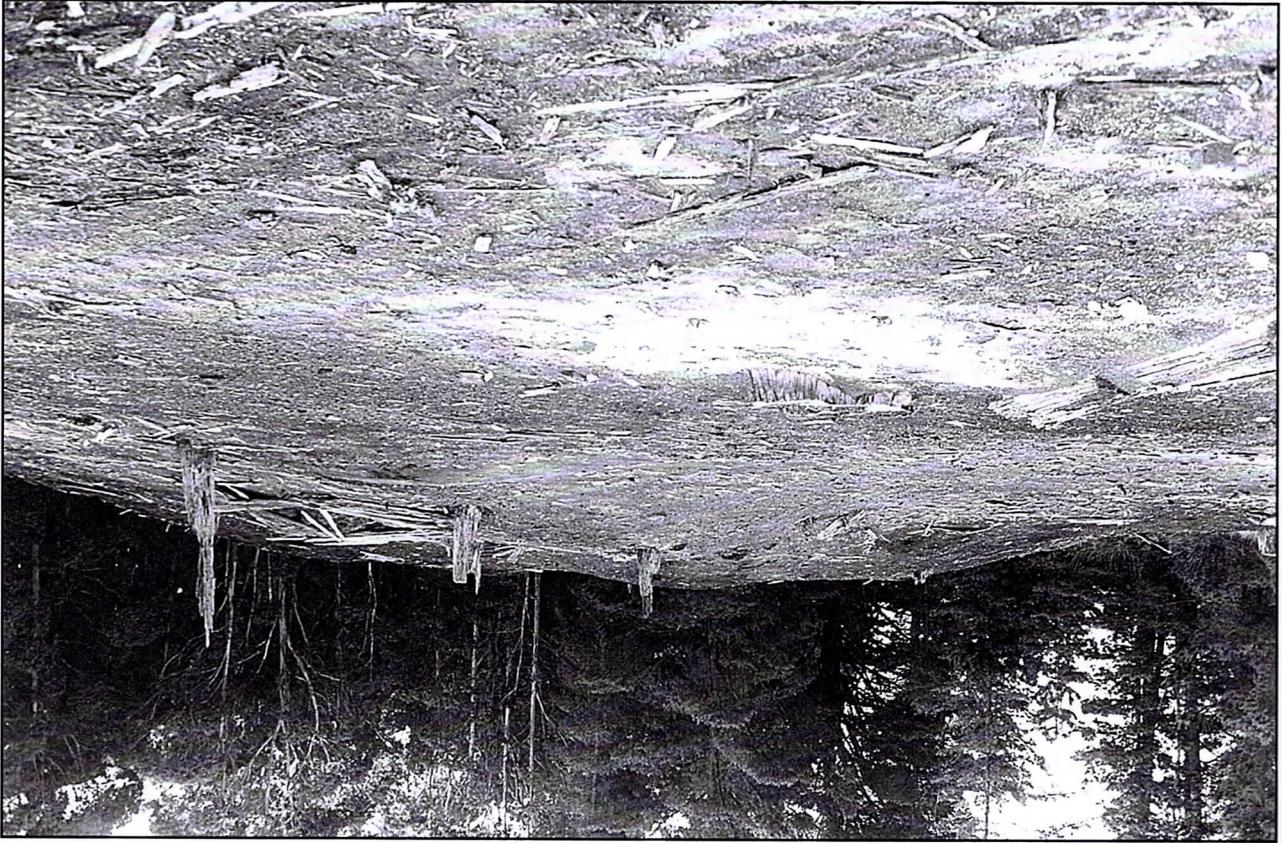
S Bullarto Rd

→ to Blakeville

199-215
South Bullarto Rd

→ Saw dust heap
HI: H7723-0002

Surviving sawdust heap at Wheeler's Bullarto mill. This heap has spread out from its original tall, shape. It was formed like a mine tailing dump using an elevated trestle tramway. Author Image



Towards the end of 1860 Wheeler had cut out the area so in September of that year he shifted operations six kilometres south to Musk Creek. The new site was in the centre of an extensive belt of timber that could easily be worked by animal teams and gravity. Prior to the shift Wheeler sold various items of equipment, including the rails and trucks from the Coomoora tram, and started afresh at Musk Creek.¹⁰

The mill was placed close to the head of the creek on a level spot (the future site of the Musk railway station) and appears to have been a platform mill as a crane was installed in the log yard to lift logs onto the breaking down bench.¹¹ The mill was of large capacity and more than forty men were employed to run it. Wheeler continued to supply the Castlemaine market, plus Daylesford, and each week his contractors carted over 115 cubic metres of timber to these places.¹² Bushfires menaced or damaged the mill on a few occasions but it managed to avoid destruction until the timber was cut out in 1871.¹³

Wheeler then moved operations to the east and positioned two mills on Kangaroo Creek. One was sited five kilometres down the creek and was known as the 'lower' or 'little' mill.¹⁴ This surface plant was installed on the top of the high ground overlooking the wide flats of the creek. Logs were jinkered in from the west and north-west and from along the creek valley to the south for a kilometre or so.

The other mill was built at the head of the creek at Bullarto South, 1.5 km south of the future site of the Bullarto Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands on the grounds that if they were denied this timber their mills would have to close. Wheeler and the two aggrieved sawmillers journeyed to Melbourne to obtain recognition of their opposing claims and both parties were taken aback when the Assistant Commissioner informed them that they had better settle the dispute themselves or he would do it for them. He further added that the regulation on the 260 ha only applied to the Murray and Upper Yarra areas. Wheeler came to a satisfactory accommodation with his neighbours after this enlightening.

It was at this mill that Wheeler had his first dispute with his sawmilling neighbours.¹⁶ At one time a new forestry regulation was gazetted that empowered the Board of Land and Works to confer the exclusive right of cutting on State Forest allotments up to 260 ha in extent. Wheeler immediately claimed 260 ha of timbered land at the head of the Werribee, Wombat and Kangaroo Creeks and sought to exclude from the area two other sawmillers who had their log extraction tramlines heading in that direction. The two potentially dispossessed sawmillers, the Telegraph Sawmill Co. and La Gerche & Dodd, immediately protested to the Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands on the grounds that if they were denied this timber their mills would have to close. Wheeler and the two aggrieved sawmillers journeyed to Melbourne to obtain recognition of their opposing claims and both parties were taken aback when the Assistant Commissioner informed them that they had better settle the dispute themselves or he would do it for them. He further added that the regulation on the 260 ha only applied to the Murray and Upper Yarra areas. Wheeler came to a satisfactory accommodation with his neighbours after this enlightening.

This mill was powered by a 30 kW¹⁵ engine and cut an enormous amount of timber over the next twenty or so years, as the size of the surviving sawdust heap bears witness. The mill was erected on completely flat ground and would have had the saws mounted on an elevated staging or low platform. The sawdust was trucked up an elevated tramway and deposited onto a tall heap in the same way as a mine disposes of tailings.

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