

Heritage Council Determination

Determination date	2 April 2026
Place/Object name	Benalla Playground Rocket
Location	Bridge Street West, Benalla, Benalla Rural City, Yorta Yorta Country
VHR number	H2472
Category	Registered Place
Relevant legislative provision/s	Inclusion in the Heritage Register, pursuant to section 49(1)(a) of the <i>Heritage Act 2017</i>

Determination of the Heritage Council

The Heritage Council of Victoria determined on **2 April 2026**, in accordance with section 49(1)(a) of the *Heritage Act 2017*, that the above place is to be included in the Heritage Register in the category of Registered Place.

The Heritage Council also determined to:

- Include categories of works or activities which may be carried out in relation to the place for which a permit is not required (specific permit exemptions), that would not harm the cultural heritage significance of the place, pursuant to section 49(3)(a) of the *Heritage Act 2017*.
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Executive Director's Recommendation ('the Recommendation')

The Executive Director made and accepted a nomination to include the Benalla Playground Rocket, located at Bridge Street West, Benalla, Benalla Rural City, Yorta Yorta Country ('the Place') in the Heritage Register. On **12 January 2026** the Executive Director made the Recommendation to the Heritage Council that the Place be included in the Heritage Register. The Recommendation was advertised publicly for a period of 60 days, beginning on **16 January 2026**.

Section 44 submissions

During the 60-day public advertisement period no submissions were received pursuant to section 44 of the *Heritage Act 2017* ('the Act').

The Place

Description

Extracted verbatim from page 3 the Recommendation:

The Benalla Playground Rocket is a rocket-shaped playground climbing structure made of welded, galvanised steel tubes. It is located in the children's playground area in the southwest of Benalla Botanical Gardens. The structure has four levels and is approximately eight metres high. The main components of the structure are a central pole, four external stabilising legs or fins, and four interior platforms with ladders between them. The platforms are encased in a rocket shaped cage, and a steel slide provides an exit to the ground from the second platform. There is a 'captain's wheel' unit with lever on the fourth level. An anemometer sits atop a narrow pole projecting from the rocket tip.

The below Statement of Cultural Heritage Significance is extracted verbatim from page 31 of the Recommendation:

What is significant?

The Benalla Playground Rocket, an eight-metre high rocket-shaped piece of playground equipment of welded galvanised pipe construction made to a popular design and erected by Benalla resident Norman Thomas Sheean in 1966.

How is it significant?

The Benalla Playground Rocket is of historical significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

Criterion B

Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

Why is it significant?

The Benalla Playground Rocket is a rare surviving example of a 'playground rocket', a tall distinctive rocket-shaped climbing structure for children. These were popular and widespread in Australia and internationally in the 1960s and 1970s. The Rocket demonstrates the influence of 'space age' design on popular culture in Victoria, particularly in relation to the material culture of childhood. It evokes the spirit of the 'space race' and encourages children's exploration and adventure through play. Playground rockets have become an icon of Australian childhood and are discussed with affection and nostalgia in online forums. Due to evolving safety standards and changing attitudes toward playground design, the majority have been removed or substantially altered. The Benalla Playground Rocket is thought to be one of the last four in Victoria and is the most intact. [Criterion B]

Heritage Council's findings

State-level cultural heritage significance

The Heritage Council's findings accord with the Executive Director's Recommendation. The Heritage Council suggested minor wording amendments to the Statement of Significance that were accepted by the Executive Director at Heritage Council meeting HC292. The Heritage Council asked questions of clarification regarding the 'history' section of his report, and was satisfied with the information provided.

The Heritage Council determines that the Place is of cultural heritage significance to the State of Victoria, and meets the following criteria for assessment in the Heritage Council's *Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines (Attachment 1)* at State-level:

- **Criterion B** – Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

Extent of Registration

The Extent of Registration is provided as **Attachment 2** and includes all of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2472 encompassing part of Crown Allotment 15 Section 7A Township of Benalla within a 5 metre radius of the centre of the rocket's main structural pole.

Permit exemptions

The Heritage Council determined specific permit exemptions for works or activities which would not harm the cultural heritage significance of the Benalla Playground Rocket (**Attachment 3**).

Conclusion

The Heritage Council of Victoria determined on **2 April 2026**, in accordance with section 49(1)(a) of the *Heritage Act 2017*, that the Benalla Playground Rocket is to be included in the Heritage Register in the category of Registered Place.



Professor Philip Goad
Chair, Heritage Council of Victoria

Attachment 1

Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines

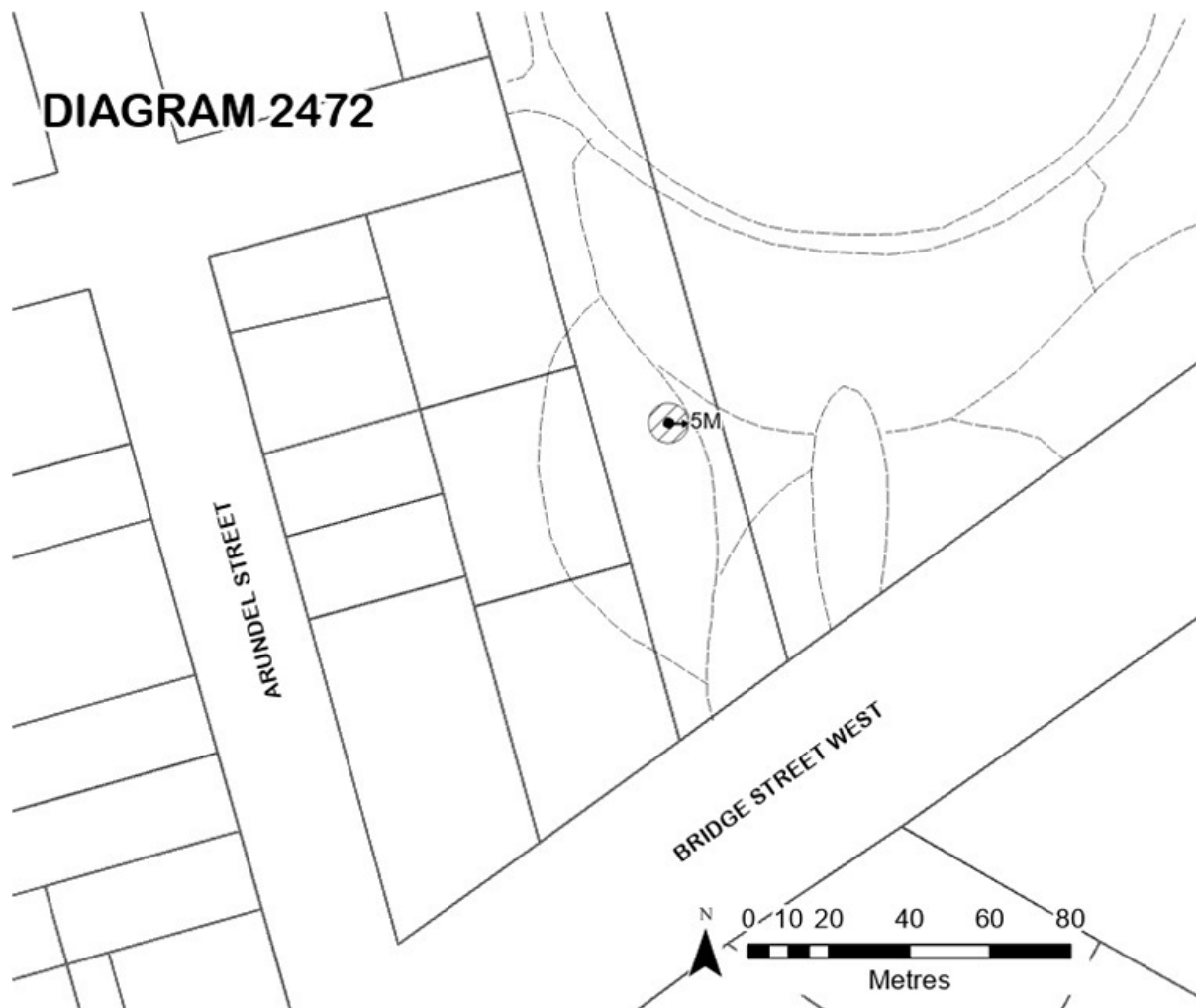
Criterion A	Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.
Criterion B	Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.
Criterion C	Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.
Criterion D	Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.
Criterion E	Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.
Criterion F	Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.
Criterion G	Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.
Criterion H	Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

These were adopted by the Heritage Council at its meeting on 1 December 2022, and replace the previous criteria adopted by the Heritage Council on 6 December 2012.

Attachment 2

Extent of Registration

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2472 encompassing part of Crown Allotment 15 Section 7A Township of Benalla within a 5 metre radius of the centre of the rocket's main structural pole.



Attachment 3

Categories of works or activities which may be undertaken without a permit (Permit Exemptions)

Introduction

A [heritage permit](#) is required for all works and activities undertaken in relation to VHR places and objects. Certain works and activities are [exempt from a heritage permit](#), if the proposed works will not harm the cultural heritage significance of the heritage place or object.

Permit Exemptions

General exemptions

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the VHR. General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the **Heritage Act 2017**.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must notify the Executive Director before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the **Planning and Environment Act 1987** and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions. Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

Specific Permit Exemptions

The works and activities listed below under the heading 'Exempt works and activities' are not considered to cause harm to the cultural heritage significance of the Benalla Playground Rocket. These are subject to the following guidelines and conditions:

Guidelines for specific permit exemptions

1. Where there is an inconsistency between permit exemptions specific to the registered place or object ('specific exemptions') established in accordance with either section 49(3) or section 92(3) of the Act and general exemptions established in accordance with section 92(1) of the Act specific exemptions will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.
2. In specific exemptions, words have the same meaning as in the Act, unless otherwise indicated. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and the Act, the Act will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.
3. Nothing in specific exemptions obviates the responsibility of a proponent to obtain the consent of the owner of the registered place or object, or if the registered place or object is situated on Crown Land the land manager as defined in the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, prior to undertaking works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions.
4. If a Cultural Heritage Management Plan in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* is required for works covered by specific exemptions, specific exemptions will apply only if the Cultural Heritage Management Plan has been approved prior to works or activities commencing. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and a Cultural

Heritage Management Plan for the relevant works and activities, Heritage Victoria must be contacted for advice on the appropriate approval pathway.

5. Specific exemptions do not constitute approvals, authorisations or exemptions under any other legislation, Local Government, State Government or Commonwealth Government requirements, including but not limited to the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth). Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to obtain relevant planning, building or environmental approvals from the responsible authority where applicable.
 6. Care should be taken when working with heritage buildings and objects, as historic fabric may contain dangerous and poisonous materials (for example lead paint and asbestos). Appropriate personal protective equipment should be worn at all times. If you are unsure, seek advice from a qualified heritage architect, heritage consultant or local Council heritage advisor
 7. The presence of unsafe materials (for example asbestos, lead paint etc) at a registered place or object does not automatically exempt remedial works or activities in accordance with this category. Approvals under Part 5 of the Act must be obtained to undertake works or activities that are not expressly exempted by the below specific exemptions.
 8. All works should be informed by a Conservation Management Plan prepared for the place or object. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.
2. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the registered place are revealed relating to its cultural heritage significance, including but not limited to historical archaeological remains, such as features, deposits or artefacts, then works must cease and Heritage Victoria notified as soon as possible.
 3. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any Aboriginal cultural heritage is discovered or exposed at any time, all works must cease and the Secretary (as defined in the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*) must be contacted immediately to ascertain requirements under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.
 4. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any munitions or other potentially explosive artefacts are discovered, Victoria Police is to be immediately alerted and the site is to be immediately cleared of all personnel.
 5. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any suspected human remains are found the works or activities must cease. The remains must be left in place and protected from harm or damage. Victoria Police and the State Coroner's Office must be notified immediately. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that the remains are Aboriginal, the State Emergency Control Centre must be immediately notified on 1300 888 544, and, as required under s.17(3)(b) of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, all details about the location and nature of the human remains must be provided to the Aboriginal Heritage Council (as defined in the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*).

General conditions for specific permit exemptions

1. All works or activities permitted under specific exemptions must be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents harm to the registered place or object. Harm includes moving, removing or damaging any part of the registered place or object that contributes to its cultural heritage significance.

Exempt works and activities

1. Like for like repair, maintenance and painting of the rocket structure, in a manner that does not damage its fabric.
2. Like for like repair, maintenance and replacement of the surface around the base of the rocket structure.
3. The removal of graffiti in a manner that does not harm the fabric of the rocket structure.
4. The Benalla Playground Rocket is registered as a heritage place and is located within the registered Benalla Botanical Gardens and Art Gallery (VHR H2260). Works or activities approved under a permit application or exemption obtained for the Benalla Playground Rocket are exempt from the need for a permit or permit exemption under the registration of the Benalla Botanical Gardens and Art Gallery (VHR H2260).