

Heritage Council Determination

Determination date	1 October 2026
Place/Object name	Queens Bridge
Location	Queens Bridge Street, Melbourne and Southbank, Melbourne City Wurundjeri Country
VHR number	H1448
Category	Registered Place
Relevant legislative provision/s	Amendment to the Victorian Heritage Register, pursuant to section 62 of the <i>Heritage Act 2017</i>

Determination of the Heritage Council

The Heritage Council of Victoria determined on **1 October 2026**, in accordance with Part 3 and Part 5 of the *Heritage Act 2017* that the above place is to be amended in the Victorian Heritage Register ('Heritage Register').

The Heritage Council determined to make the following amendments to the Heritage Register:

- including additional land in the Heritage Register being all of the place shown hatched on Diagram 1448 in accordance with section 49(1)(d)(i) and (ii) of the *Heritage Act 2017*.
 - determining categories of works or activities which may be carried out in relation to the place for which a permit is not required in accordance with section 49(3)(a) of the *Heritage Act 2017*.
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Executive Director's Recommendation ('the Recommendation')

The cultural heritage significance of the Queens Bridge was recognised when it was included in the Register of Government Buildings in 1982. Its State-level cultural heritage significance was confirmed in 1998 when it was transferred to the Heritage Register.

On **13 July 2026** the Executive Director made a recommendation to the Heritage Council ('the Recommendation') that the existing registration for the Place should be amended.

The Recommendation was advertised publicly for a period of 60 days, beginning on **17 July 2026**.

Section 44 submissions

During the 60-day advertisement period no submissions were received pursuant to section 44 of the Heritage Act.

The Place

Description

Extracted from the Executive Director's Recommendation:

Queens Bridge is a road bridge that crosses the Birrarung (Yarra River) at Queens Bridge Street, south of the intersection of Flinders and Market streets, linking the Melbourne Central Business District with Southbank. It is situated between the King Street Bridge to the west and the Sandridge Railway Line Bridge to the east. It is currently used as a vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle bridge with a tramway to the centre.

Characterised by a distinctive flat arch construction, Queens Bridge is a five-span bridge constructed of continuous wrought iron plate girders supported on four piers with stone abutments to each end. Each pier contains eight columns with Doric capitals, formed from cast iron cylinders filled with concrete, which support the rivetted iron longitudinal plate girders. These rows of columns are set parallel to the riverbank and are linked by arched cast iron brackets with circular decoration and topped by continuous wrought iron double box girders. The parapet adopts a classical decorative scheme unified by a continuous cornice line supported on floriated brackets with anthemion motifs set above side columns. Above the cornice line, a continuous balustrade is broken up by inverted foliated consoles, with decorative cast iron handrails to each end. The carriageway has been redecked with asphalt surface, and there are bluestone kerbs to the intersecting streets. Later infrastructure has been installed to the carriageway, including light poles, tram lines and overhead electrical tram wires, traffic bollards and bicycle rails.

Abutments to the north and south banks are constructed of rough-hewn and dressed bluestone and Stawell freestone. A bluestone staircase extends west of the northern abutment, leading to a large timber decked landing. To the south abutment, a former river access point is blocked by a fixed metal fence panel (later) with a decorative cast iron fan to the bridge balustrade end. A curved bluestone wall (possibly c1930s) meets the northeastern abutment with bluestone embankment below. Later bluestone clad balustrades (c1980-90s) mark the river edges in other locations, meeting the bridge abutments.

There is later bluestone paving to the Southbank footpaths and northwestern end of the bridge, and later brick paving to the Banana Alley/northeastern end of the bridge. Later landscape features to the northeastern (Banana Alley) end include bluestone planter boxes and street furniture.

Basalt remnants remain partially submerged east of the south abutment and are understood to be remnant of the earlier Falls Bridge.

Reasons for the amendment application

Additional land

The Executive Director recommended that the Heritage Council amend the Place having formed the view that:

- The State-level cultural heritage significance of the place would be substantially less if the additional land or any part of the additional land which is or has been used in conjunction with the place were developed [s.40(3A)(c)(i)].
- The additional land surrounds the place and is important to the protection or conservation of the place; or contributes to the understanding of the place [s.40(3A)(c)(ii)].

The Executive Director noted that:

- The current extent does not align with the full extent of the bridge abutments where the bridge intersects with the north and south banks.
- The land proposed for inclusion both is currently and has been used in conjunction with the place since 1889 which is almost 140 years.

The Executive Director expressed the view that:

- If any of the additional land proposed for inclusion in the registration were developed, depending upon the nature of the proposal, there is potential for the development to impact upon the Place and substantially reduce its State-level cultural heritage significance.
- The proposed inclusion of land associated with the place will provide clarity on the approvals process for works within the place.

Heritage Council's findings

The Heritage Council finds that the existing registration of the Queens Bridge should be amended in the Heritage Register.

The findings of the Heritage Council generally accord with the Executive Director's recommendations.

While the Heritage Council's decision in relation to the Place is confined to the extent of registration and the categories of works or activities that may be undertaken without a permit under Part 5 of the Heritage Act, the Heritage Council records its views in relation to the Statement of Country in the Executive Director's Recommendation.

The Heritage Council notes the information included in the 'History' section that records that the location of the Place was important to Wurundjeri and Bunurong people, who 'used it as a crossing point...and place to meet the other three members of the Kulin Nation to settle disputes, trade and hold ceremonies'. The Heritage Council notes that the Statement of Country is an appropriate location to record that the demolition of the falls, and subsequent construction of the Place is an example of fragmentation and colonisation of the Birrarung, which destroyed Traditional Owners' fishing and hunting grounds, clean water resources, traditional sites, and natural river crossings.

Extent of Registration

The extent of registration is provided as **Attachment 1** and includes all of the place shown hatched on Diagram 1448 encompassing all of Crown Allotment 2020 Parish of Melbourne South, Crown Allotment 2015 Parish of Melbourne North, and parts of Crown Allotment 2168 City of South Melbourne, Parish of Melbourne South, Crown Allotment 2071 Parish of Melbourne South, Crown Allotment 2051 Parish of Melbourne North, Crown Allotment 31 Section 2 City of Melbourne Parish of Melbourne North and part of the road reserve for Queens Bridge Street to the extent of 5 metres from the edge of the bridge and abutments.

Permit exemptions

The Heritage Council determined specific permit exemptions that would not harm the cultural heritage significance of the place. The permit exemptions are provided as **Attachment 2** to this determination.

Conclusion

The Heritage Council determined, pursuant to Part 3 and Part 5 of the *Heritage Act 2017*, that the registration for the Queens Bridge is amended in the Heritage Register.

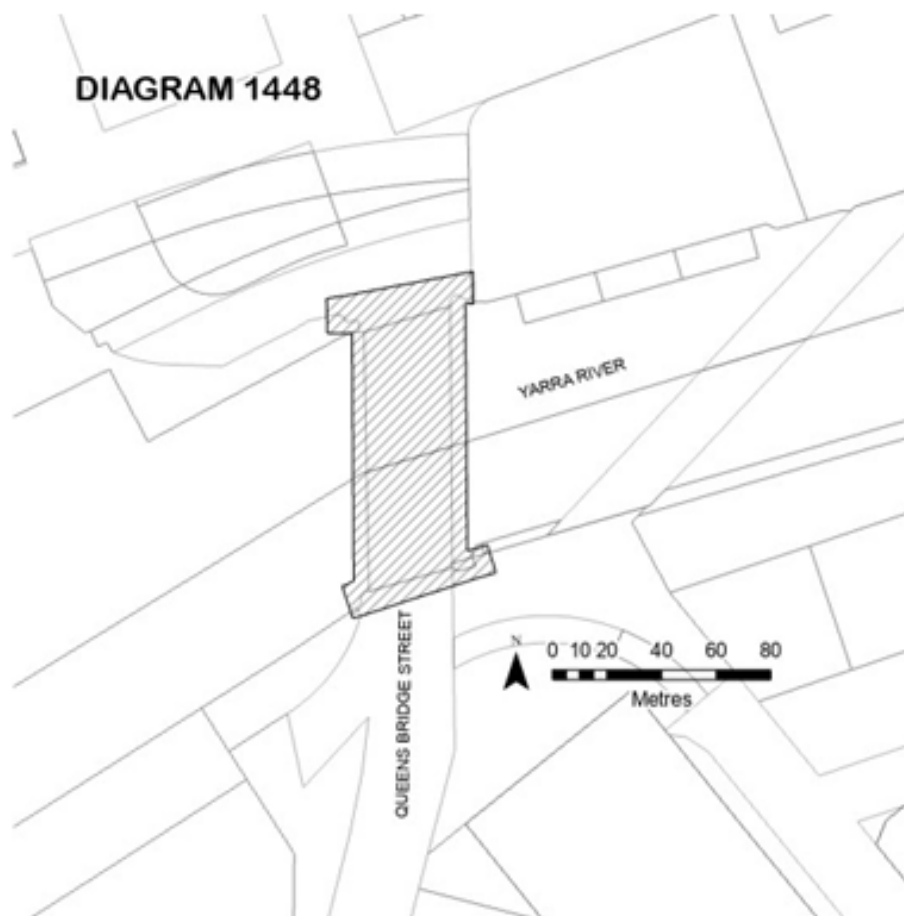


Professor Philip Goad
Chair, Heritage Council of Victoria

Attachment 1

Extent of Registration

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Attachment 2

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 policy

A Conservation Management Plan has been prepared to manage the place in a manner which respects its cultural heritage significance: Conservation Studio, Conservation Management Plan: Queens Bridge, June 2026. The Conservation Management Plan (or any subsequent revisions) should be used to guide the management of the place.

Permit exemptions

General permit 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 Act.

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 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 Queens Bridge. 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.

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.
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*)

Exempt works and activities

Public Realm

1. Alteration or modification of the later (c1980-90s) bluestone walls to the east and west of the southern and northern bridge abutments, providing works do not increase the height of the walls or introduce features which will conceal or reduce the visibility of the bridge from the public realm.
2. Removal or replacement of metal fencing to river edge adjacent to the southwestern and northeastern bridge abutments.
3. Removal of the electrical cabinet at the southwestern end of the bridge.
4. Removal or replacement of timber decking and substructure adjacent to the northwestern bridge abutment.
5. Resurfacing of the ground-plane around the southern and northern entrances to the bridge in new materials, providing bridge abutments are not damaged or concealed.
6. Removal or alterations to the bluestone planters to the north of the bridge.
7. Removal of existing plantings and planting of new vegetation within bluestone planters to the north of the bridge.

Temporary Events

8. Installation of temporary events, decorations and structures associated with the City of Melbourne's municipal Christmas celebrations for up to 60 calendar days (within one calendar year) inclusive of bump in and bump out, with no further structures erected in the same location for a period of 7 calendar days for hard stand surfaces.
9. Installation of temporary events and structures for one annual arts festival event of up to up to 45 calendar days (within one calendar year) inclusive of bump in and bump out, with no further structures erected in the same location for a period of 7 calendar days for hard stand surfaces.
10. The following temporary event infrastructure can be installed for both temporary events listed above:
 - a) The installation of temporary structures, such as marquees, tents, market stalls, display cases and furniture, gazebos, and shipping containers.
 - b) The installation of temporary freestanding services associated with events, including generators and associated service cabling.
 - c) The installation of temporary freestanding audio-visual and broadcasting equipment, including temporary staging, flooring, rigging, screens, speakers, lighting and associated infrastructure.

- d) The erection of temporary freestanding scaffolding towers, projectors and infrastructure associated with lightshows and projections onto, or into airspace within the extent of registration of registered places and objects.
- e) The installation of temporary freestanding artworks.
- f) The installation of freestanding temporary recreation and entertainment facilities, equipment and structures, such as jumping castles, amusement rides, and sporting equipment.
- g) The installation of temporary decorations, such as decorative lights, bunting, tinsel, cut floral arrangements, freestanding garden beds and the like.
- h) The installation of equipment and infrastructure associated with firework, laser and drone displays.
- i) The parking, installation and operation of temporary micro-tenancies, such as food trucks and coffee carts.
- j) The installation of temporary furniture, including tables, desks, chairs, umbrellas and the like.
- k) Installation of temporary portable toilets.
- l) Installation of temporary operational, promotional, directional and wayfinding signage. Installation of temporary surveillance systems.
- m) The erection of freestanding fencing structures associated with temporary events.

The following exemption conditions apply to Temporary Events:

- n) Works and activities must be entirely reversible, and not involve damage to, or removal or disturbance of, early or original fabric.
- o) Temporary structures and associated elements exempted must be freestanding and not involve new penetrations into or fixings to early or original fabric.
- p) Cabling and associated service conduits must not be affixed to early or original fabric.
- q) Plant and equipment access must use existing paths and access routes where possible. Existing paths and access routes must not be damaged, widened or extended.
- r) Fragile surfaces such timber flooring and ground-surface masonry (excluding concrete or asphalt), must be protected from temporary structures and associated installation activities (for example the use of sleepers, boards, track matting or other ground protection). Vehicles must not use access routes through floorboarded, decked or tiled locations.
- s) All works and activities must comply with the engineering and loading requirements of the place.
- t) Any area(s) impacted by works and activities must be fully remediated to its previous condition within 28 calendar days of removal of temporary structures.