

Heritage Council Regulatory Committee

Long Tunnel Extended Gold Mine Reserve (H2464)

Stringers Creek, Walhalla, Baw Baw Shire, Gunaikurnai Country

‘On the papers’ consideration

Members – Ms Margaret Baird, Dr Steven Cooke, Dr Helen Doyle

Determination of the Heritage Council

To include in the Victorian Heritage Register - After considering the Executive Director’s recommendation and all submissions received, the Heritage Council of Victoria has determined in accordance with section 49(1)(a) of the *Heritage Act 2017*, that the above place is to be included in the Victorian Heritage Register in the categories of Registered Place and Registered Archaeological 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*.

Ms Margaret Baird (Chair)

Dr Steven Cooke

Dr Helen Doyle

Decision date – 29 October 2025

Executive Director's Recommendation ('the Recommendation')

01. The Executive Director, Heritage Victoria ('Executive Director') made and accepted a nomination to include the Long Tunnel Extended Gold Mine Reserve ('the Place') in the Victorian Heritage Register ('Heritage Register').
02. On 19 May 2025 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 23 May 2025.

Section 44 submissions

03. During the 60-day public advertisement period, one submission in support of the Executive Director's Recommendation was received pursuant to section 44 of the *Heritage Act 2017* ('the Act').
04. The submission was received from Parks Victoria, the land manager of the Place. Parks Victoria did not object to its inclusion in the Heritage Register nor the proposed extent of registration for the Place, and supported proposed specific permit exemptions. The submission did not request that a hearing be held.

Appointment of Regulatory Committee

05. The Heritage Council considered the Recommendation at its 7 August 2025 meeting. It was noted at this time that the Recommendation contained copy and paste errors, including an assessment of State-level cultural heritage significance relating to a different place.
06. The Heritage Council found it was unable to make a determination in relation to the Recommendation, based on the information before it. The Heritage Council accordingly resolved to conduct a hearing in relation to the Recommendation pursuant to section 46A(1) of the Act ('the Review').
07. Pursuant to section 13(1) of the Act a Regulatory Committee of the Heritage Council ('the Committee') was duly constituted to consider and determine the Review. The Committee comprised Ms Margaret Baird (Chair), Dr Steven Cooke and Dr Helen Doyle.
08. The Chair invited members of the Committee to consider whether written declarations or otherwise were required to be made in relation to any matters that may potentially give rise to an actual or apprehended conflict of interest. All members were satisfied that there were no relevant conflicts of interest present, and no declarations were made.

Further information requested and circulated

09. On 22 August 2025 a corrected version of the Recommendation ('the corrected Recommendation') was requested from the Executive Director.
10. The corrected Recommendation was provided by the Executive Director on 11 September 2025.
11. On 16 September 2025 the corrected Recommendation was circulated to interested parties. Interested parties were asked to respond to the information by 7 October 2025. No responses from interested parties were received.

Hearing held 'on the papers'

12. The Committee resolved to progress the matter 'on the papers', without holding a verbal hearing, noting that no objecting submissions were received in response to the Recommendation or the corrected Recommendation.

The Place

Description

13. The below description of the Place is extracted verbatim from pages 3 and 4 of the corrected Recommendation, for information only (in-text references have been removed):

The Long Tunnel Extended Gold Mine Reserve is located on the traditional land of the Gunaikurnai people.

The Long Tunnel Extended Gold Mine Reserve at Walhalla is an area of approximately 8 ha located at 165 Main Road, Walhalla. It contains substantial physical remains of the Long Tunnel Extended Company gold mine, which operated from 1871 to 1911. The Long Tunnel Extended Gold Mine Reserve is now the location of a successful and popular tourist enterprise where visitors are guided to explore the accessible underground workings.

The Long Tunnel Extended Gold Mine Reserve is located on the western hillslope above Stringers Creek. It consists of an open surface area and extensive underground workings. The underground workings of the Long Tunnel Extended Company gold mine extend to a depth of c.930m below ground – now partially infilled through shaft collapse. The most intact parts of the Long Tunnel Extended Gold Mine Reserve are the accessible underground tunnels and machinery chamber.

Surface area

The main features preserved in the open surface area of the Long Tunnel Extended Gold Mine Reserve that relate directly to the original operation of the mine include a large heap of mullock and a tramline formation upgraded to form part of the Alpine Walking Track. The top of the mullock heap forms a level platform for buildings, carparking and machinery relics. There are also nine small ore trucks and steel tram rails at the top of the mullock heap which may derive from the mine, but their provenance has not been confirmed.

Subsurface area

The underground part of the mine consists of well-preserved tunnels and a substantial machinery chamber. These represent the primary accessible underground features of the mine. All the lower workings, however, are flooded with some areas partially collapsed and are no longer accessible.

The underground part of the Long Tunnel Extended Company gold mine includes the main adit or tunnel, which extends on a slight incline almost 280 metres from the portal north-west to the machinery chamber. The tunnel is about 2 metres wide and 1.6 to 2.0 metres high. It is mostly self-supporting but there are heavy timbers installed in places to stabilise the formation. Steel tram rails extend all the way along the floor of the tunnel and out to the top of the mullock heap. There is also large diameter PVC piping along the floor for drainage, and a suspended conduit cradle for electric cable and lighting. About halfway along the tunnel there are two branching adits, one to the north and one to the south, originally dug to explore the reef. These are well-preserved, stable and accessible as part of the mine tour. There are also some examples of historical graffiti carved on the walls of the main adit.

The main adit terminates at the original machinery chamber. This area measures roughly 40 metres in length and 15 metres in width, with a ceiling about 4 metres high. The chamber originally contained up to five steam boilers, a winding engine, air compressor and pumping equipment. It also provided access to the Main Shaft, which descended more than 930 metres in depth. This shaft is now partially filled in and is no longer accessible. The western end of the chamber near the main shaft is also filled with collapsed rock from the roof and is not accessible. There is a brick-lined vertical flue, completed in 1879, that rises 152 metres to the surface, along with an inclined ventilation passage to the surface, completed in 1901. The inclined ventilation passage is intact and provides an emergency exit from the chamber. The chamber was reused briefly for exploratory mine work in the 1980s and remains part of the mine today.

Features in the chamber include a reconstructed brick boiler foundation and various machinery relics. Parts of the roof are stabilised with rock bolts and steel mesh, along

with stacked timber sets or cribs and heavy timber pillars and crossbeams. A substantial amount of original fabric was removed when the mine closed in 1911.

Relocated and reconstructed historical sheds/machinery

Much of the physical fabric on the surface area of the Long Tunnel Extended Gold Mine Reserve represents either reconstructed or relocated buildings or objects. This material is useful for tourism purposes but for the most part is not directly associated with the Long Tunnel Extended Company gold mine and has limited cultural significance.

Reconstructed structures not original to the place include: -

- *Several timber sheds, one of which serves as an office and small museum space operated by the Long Tunnel Extended Gold Mine Committee of Management.*

Relocated objects not original to the place include:

- *a portable steam engine that was probably relocated in 1977 from the Harbinger mine site on Dry Creek, located east of Jericho in the Jordan River valley;*
- *a 10-head stamp battery made at the Langlands foundry in Melbourne, also relocated from Dry Creek;*
- *a stationary steam engine; - a 5-head stamp battery;*
- *a Cornish boiler; and*
- *two piles of stamp heads; and various other machinery relics.*

Committee's findings

State-level cultural heritage significance

- 14.** The Committee finds that the Place is of State-level cultural heritage significance and is to be included in the Heritage Register.
- 15.** The Committee's findings accord with the Executive Director's corrected Recommendation.
- 16.** The Committee agrees that the Place is of historical significance to the State of Victoria for its association with the Victorian gold rush, noting the Place is understood to be Victoria's fifth richest gold mine in the State's colonial history.
- 17.** The Committee notes that the retained features at the Place, including the large mullock heap, tramway formation, long access adit, exploratory adits, machinery chamber and inclined ventilation shaft remain well-preserved. The Committee agrees that these features demonstrate the process of underground mining which occurred at the Place over a 40-year period. The Committee further agrees that these features render the Place significant as a notable and fine example of a nineteenth-century quartz reef gold mine.
- 18.** The Committee finds that the Place is one of a very small number of historical quartz reef gold mines in Victoria that retain underground workings that remain publicly accessible, allowing the historical process of reef mining to be broadly appreciated.
- 19.** The Committee notes that the Place's large, well-preserved underground machinery chamber is uncommon. The Committee further notes that the arrangement of machinery at the Place is also uncommon, originally including five boilers, pumps, an air compressor and winding equipment, and that this demonstrates a response to the Place's mountain setting and lack of level space outside the mine.
- 20.** The Committee agrees that the Place is archaeologically significant for the well-preserved and accessible remains of a quartz reef gold mining operation, including substantial below-ground workings. The Committee finds the Place has a high potential to yield significant new information about the historical mining industry with the use of archaeological and historical analysis.

- 21.** The Committee notes the phrase in the Description excerpted above ‘successful and popular tourism enterprise’. The Committee records its suggestion that it may be prudent to remove the words ‘successful’ and ‘popular’, as no evidence supporting that description was included in the Recommendation.
- 22.** The Committee determines that the Place meets the following Criteria for Assessment in the Heritage Council’s *Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines*: (**Attachment 1**) at State-level:
- **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.

Extent of Registration

- 23.** The Extent of Registration is provided as **Attachment 2** and includes all of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2464 encompassing all of crown allotment 112B township of Walhalla.

Permit exemptions

- 24.** The Committee determined specific permit exemptions for works or activities which would not harm the cultural heritage significance of the Place (**Attachment 3**).

Conclusion

After considering the Executive Director’s recommendation and all submissions received, the Heritage Council has determined, in accordance with section 49(1)(a) of the *Heritage Act 2017*, that the Long Tunnel Extended Gold Mine Reserve is to be included in the Victorian Heritage Register in the categories of Registered Place and Registered Archaeological Place.

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.

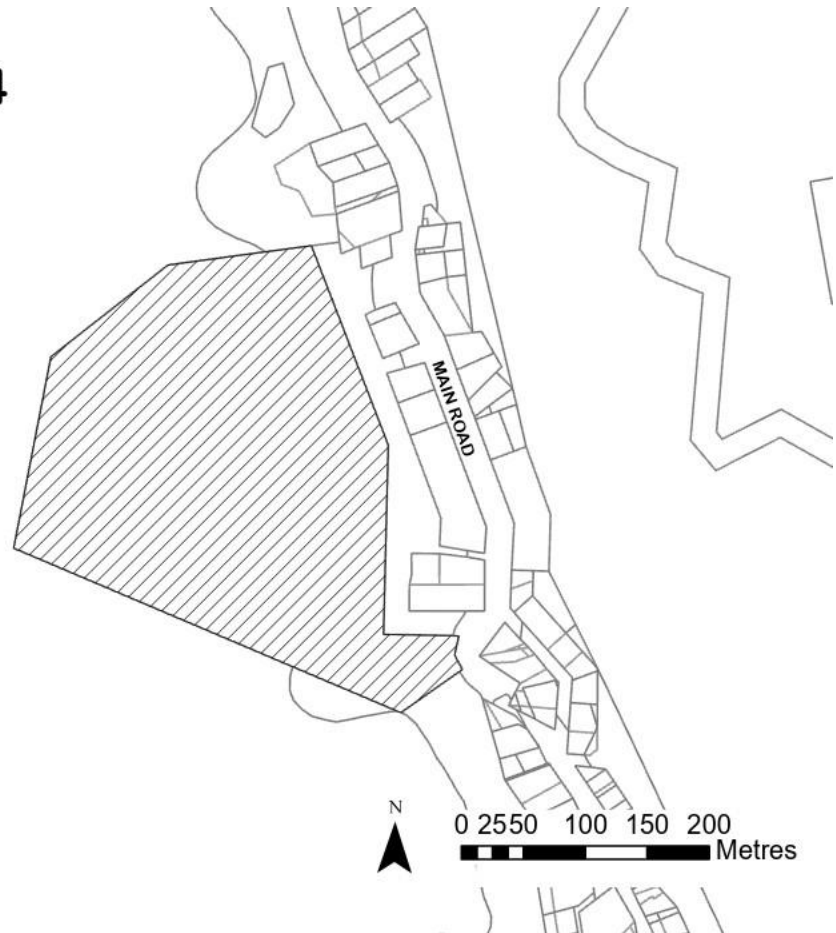
These were adopted by the Heritage Council at its meeting on 1 December 2022, and replace the previous criteria adopted by the Heritage Council on 6 December 2012.

Attachment 2

Extent of Registration

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2464 encompassing all of crown allotment 112B township of Walhalla.

DIAGRAM 2464



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 Policy

It is recommended that a Conservation Management Plan is utilised to manage the place in a manner which respects its cultural heritage significance.

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 do not 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 exemptions

The works and activities below are not considered to cause harm to the cultural heritage significance of the Long Tunnel Extended Gold Mine Reserve subject to the following guidelines and conditions:

Guidelines

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.

Conditions

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 Secretary (as defined in the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*).

Exempt works and activities

1. Removal or internal modification of all above-ground buildings used for museum and tourism purposes, including one large corrugated iron building and one small timber building close to the entrance of the Long Tunnel Extended Mine adit.

2. Installation, replacement or removal of above ground safety, interpretive, wayfinding and directional signage.
3. Replacement or removal of below ground safety, interpretive or wayfinding signage.
4. Removal of the following reconstructed/relocated items which are not original to the place:
 - a. The portable steam engine probably relocated in 1977 from the Harbinger mine site on Dry Creek, located east of Jericho in the Jordan River valley.
 - b. The 10-head stamp battery made at the Langlands foundry in Melbourne, also relocated from Dry Creek.
 - c. The 5-head stamp battery, relocated from another mine.
 - d. The stationary steam engine at the top of the mullock heap.
 - e. Two boilers at the foot of the mullock heap.
 - f. Two piles of stamp heads, one at the top of the mullock heap and one at the foot of the mullock heap.