

Preliminary EES Information Sheet for Existing Conditions

Historic Heritage

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a summary of the existing conditions identified for historic heritage within the Western Renewables Link area of interest (AOI). Identifying the existing historic heritage within the AOI is an important step towards understanding the potential impacts, interactions and considerations for the project.

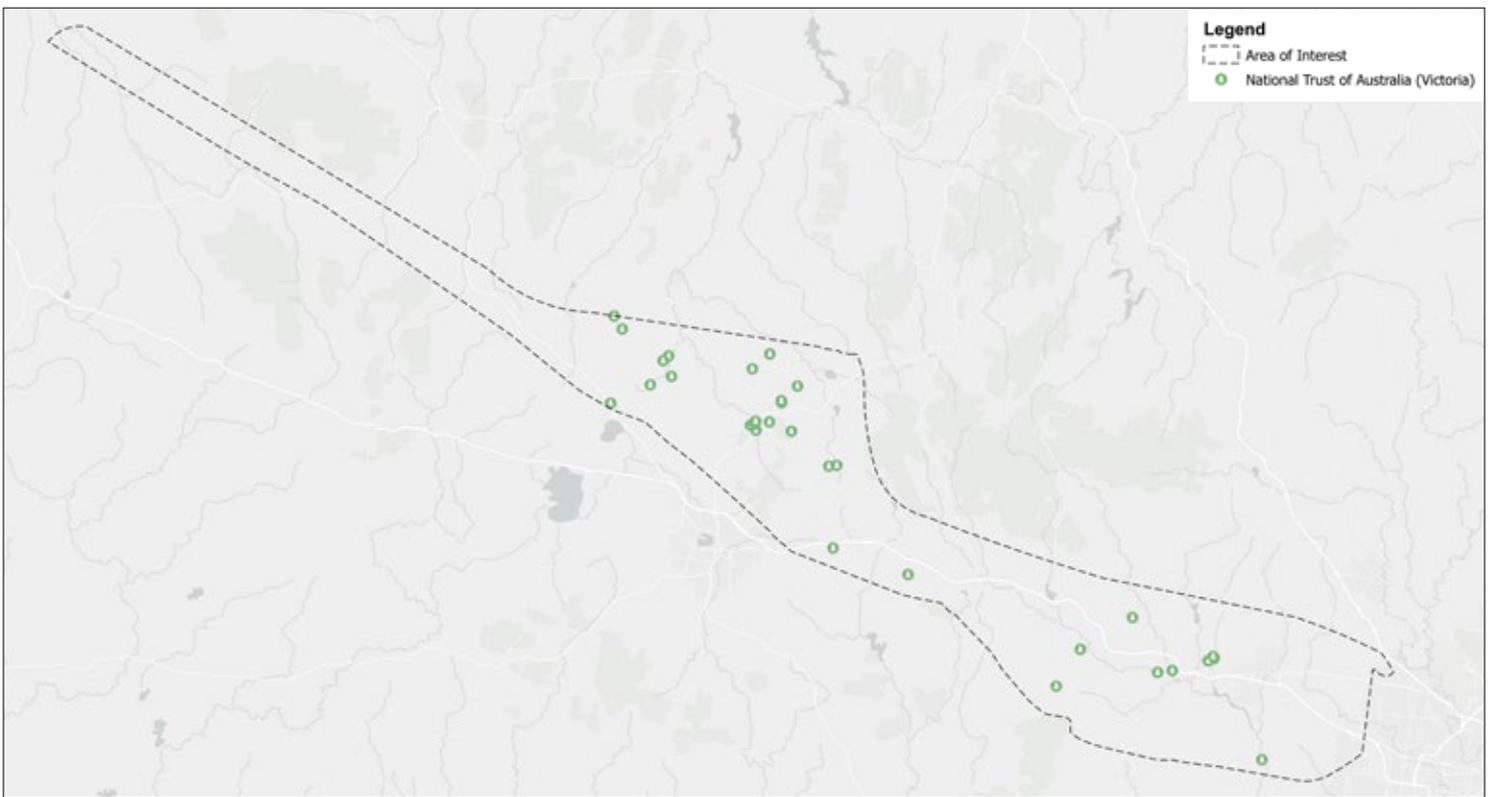


The existing conditions have been identified by qualified, independent technical specialists and include recognised and protected heritage and archaeological sites, and areas likely to have other historic places or sites not listed on statutory registers. Aboriginal cultural heritage is covered under a separate study. Heritage lists and registers, studies and reports were reviewed, and relevant legislation, policy and guidelines have been considered. Site visits will be undertaken within the project corridor in areas of known or potential heritage significance to understand the significance of the places. The findings will be updated and included in the historic heritage impact assessment for the Environment Effects Statement (EES).

Community and stakeholder feedback

The community provided important input about existing conditions including:

- A proposed nomination of the Central Victorian Goldfields to the UNESCO World Heritage List.
- Former gold mining areas.
- Former military camp and infrastructure.
- Historical homesteads and places not listed.



National Trust of Australia (Victoria) sites (Data source: Victorian Heritage Database, DELWP, 2019)

Recognised historic heritage places or archaeological sites

The *Heritage Act 2017* defines archaeological sites as a place which:

- Contains an artefact, deposit or feature which is 75 or more years old; and
- Provides information of past activity in the state; and
- Requires archaeological methods to reveal information about the settlement, development or use of the place; and
- Is not associated only with Aboriginal occupation of the place.

The *Heritage Act 2017* provides statutory protection for historic heritage through the Victorian Heritage Register and Victorian Heritage Inventory. Heritage Overlays are provided for under the Planning Scheme for each relevant municipality and contain controls that are applied to protect the heritage of the historic places.

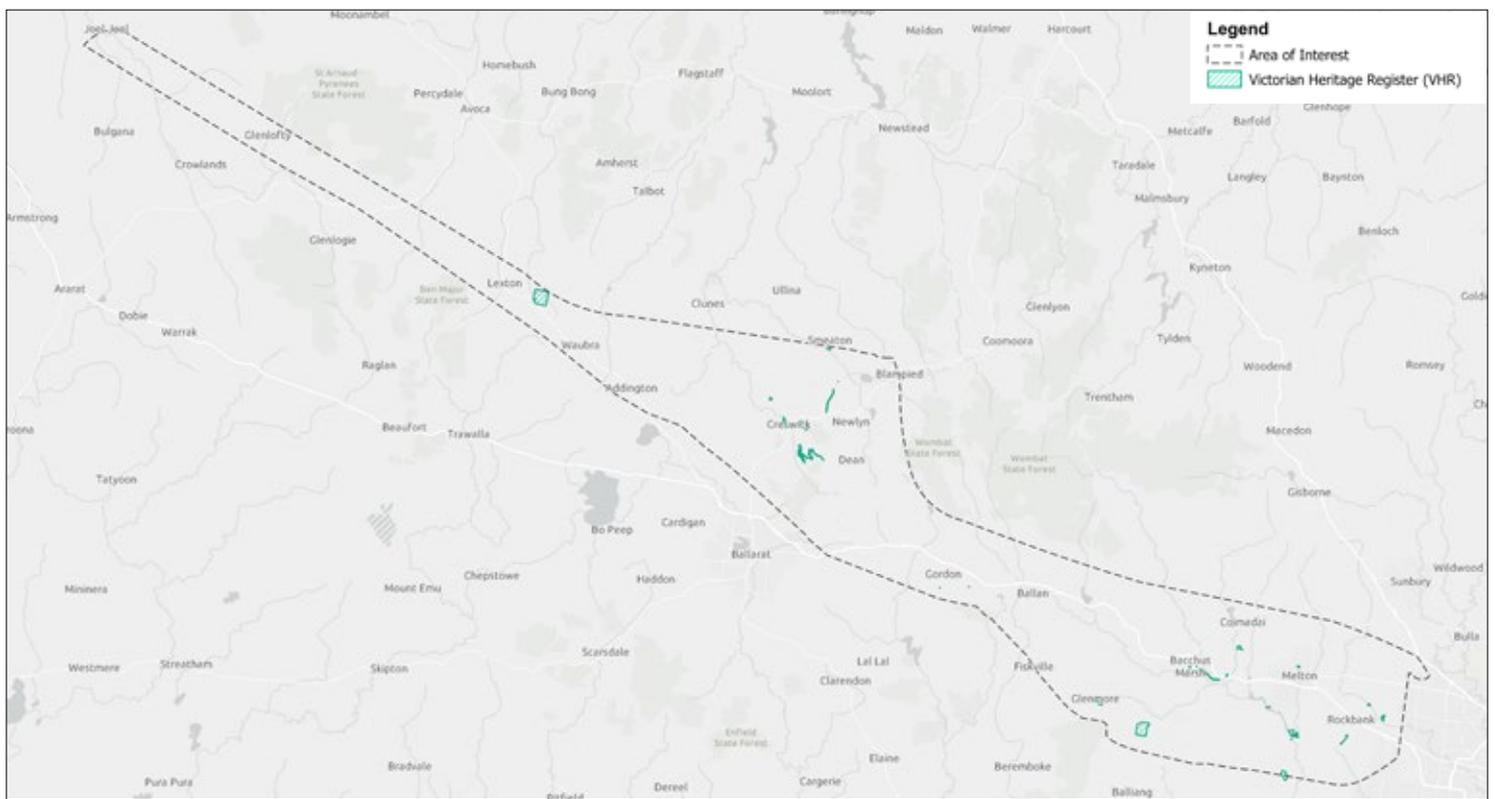
Non-statutory lists and registers do not provide statutory heritage protection but identify places that should be considered as part of the existing conditions. These places may be nominated to statutory registers during planning and delivery of the project.

Statutory lists and registers	Western section of AOI	Eastern section of AOI	Non-statutory lists and registers*	Western section of AOI	Eastern section of AOI
Victorian Heritage Register	14	28	National Trust of Australia (Victoria)	20	13
Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI)	99	52	Register of the National Estate	27	34
Heritage Overlays	300	364	D-List VHI Places (heritage places that do not meet the definition and requirements for inclusion in the VHI but are still noteworthy)	0	37
Commonwealth Heritage List	0	0			
National Heritage List	0	0			



Humbug Hill Hydraulic Gold Sluicing Site

* Some of these sites are also listed on statutory lists and registers. Information sourced directly from the stated list or register.



Victorian Heritage Register sites (Data source: HERITAGE_REGISTER, DELWP, 2021)

Western section of AOI – Bulgana to North Ballarat

From 1837, large tracts of land in the area was used for mainly sheep grazing. When gold was discovered from the 1850s, a large amount of wealth was generated in a short amount of time in the area.

Gold was discovered in Clunes in 1850 and near Ballarat in 1851. Gold was first discovered on the Glenlogie/Amphitheatre area in 1853, with alluvial workings being set up along the banks of the Avoca River. During 1858-1859, approximately 6,000 people lived at the Amphitheatre diggings, with a permanent settlement developing at the junction of the Avoca River and Glenlogie Creek during this time.

While diggings were established around Lexton, no gold mines were established there. Throughout the gold rushes, Lexton remained the administrative centre of the region and relied on agriculture and grazing. Several churches were built in Lexton from 1857.

Gold was discovered in Creswick in 1852, however prospectors generally preferred Ballarat, where gold could be found at shallower depths. When the reserves in Ballarat were exhausted, alluvial miners started to populate the Creswick region in 1854, peaking at 25,000 to 30,000 people by 1855. Alluvial mining occurred in the Creswick gullies and creeks. In the area north of Creswick, in the vicinity of Allendale, a number of significant former deep lead gold mining sites and evidence of gold mining activity exist today.

The area south of Creswick, in the vicinities of the Glen Park Forest and the Creswick Regional Park, is a forested landscape, densely populated with former alluvial gold mining sites. In contrast to the identification and registration of much of the gold mining activity north of Creswick, most sites in these forests are largely unmapped and only a few of the activity sites

and water races are included on the Victorian Heritage Inventory or heritage overlays. The landscape of the forests, including landforms, waterway forms and patterns and vegetation, is principally the outcome of mining activity.

This area is scattered with listed historical heritage places and archaeological sites, and includes historical homesteads and precincts, churches, residences, mills, and other historical places. Archaeological sites include remnant structures, former gold mines and diggings. The largest number of listed historical heritage places are in the vicinity of Creswick.

A consortium of 13 councils in Central Victoria, led by the Cities of Ballarat and Greater Bendigo, is currently progressing a nomination of the Central Victorian Goldfields for the UNESCO World Heritage List. It is understood that there are sites in the mining landscape north of Creswick, currently listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory and heritage overlays in the Hepburn planning scheme, that are under consideration for inclusion in the UNESCO nomination.

There are likely to be a number of sites that are not listed on statutory registers such as gold mining sites (particularly around Creswick), former railway stations, homestead complexes and smaller farmstead and houses in the landscape. Snizort and Sutton Park homesteads in the area are not recorded in any statutory registers but are identified as having connections to the long term non-indigenous occupation of the region.

Eastern section of the AOI – Ballarat to North Sydenham

Early non-Aboriginal settlement within the Melton area began in the late 1830s. The first settlers were pastoralists, establishing large sheep runs across the plains between the Maribyrnong and Werribee Rivers. From 1837 squatting runs were established, largely

defined by natural features such as rivers, creeks and hills. Sheep were generally overseen by shepherds. From 1847, leases of 14 years and pre-emptive rights over the purchase of land became available, leading to the investment in more permanent structures such as homesteads and shearing sheds on farms. Due to labour shortages associated with the gold rush, shepherds were used less. From the mid 1800s and particularly from 1860s, dry stone walls, were built to manage stock and clear paddocks of rock. Dry stone walls remain a feature of the landscape in this area.

Gold was first discovered near Gordon in 1858. To the east, gold was worked along the Lerderderg River and its tributaries, from Blackwood in 1851 in the north down to Bacchus Marsh in the south by 1858. No gold mining is noted to have taken place near Melton. The closest gold mining area to Melton comprises several hectares of gold workings on the east bank of Djerriwarrh Creek.

This area is scattered with listed historical heritage places and archaeological sites, and includes historical homesteads and precincts, inns or hotels, residences, churches, listed drystone walls, gold mining sites, and other sites. The largest number of listed historical heritage places are situated in townships, particularly Bacchus Marsh and Melton.

Drystone walls are not generally mapped across the various local government areas within the AOI, except in the Shire of Melton where many have been included in the Melton Heritage Overlay. Approximately 70km of drystone walls located to the east of Melton have been recognised.

Considerations for the project

A range of considerations have been identified for further investigation and management which will be addressed in the historic heritage impact assessment including:

- Potential for construction works to impact upon historic heritage places.
- Potential for the visual impacts of the infrastructure to affect heritage values of the landscape.
- Potential of unlisted heritage and archaeological sites being present.
- Required heritage approvals and consent applications.
- Proposed nomination of the Central Victorian Goldfields to the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Next steps

- Engage with landholders to undertake investigations on individual properties or nearby where heritage places have been identified or the area is of known or potential significance.
- Further investigate heritage places and archaeological sites in the corridor, including those not listed on statutory register.
- Undertake an assessment of the potential impacts of the project through site investigations and historical research.
- A detailed land use history and landscape assessment for the sites and area under consideration for inclusion in the proposed UNESCO nomination.
- Prepare a historic heritage impact assessment based on the project corridor, including proposed mitigation measures to manage any potential impacts. The impact assessment will inform the proposed route and be published as part of the EES. The EES will be an important source of information about potential project impacts for the community, landholders, decision-makers and as part of the approvals process.



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