

**HERITAGE ACT 2017  
EXCLUSION DETERMINATION  
Under Section 36C**

**PLACE NAME:** MELTON RAILWAY STATION

**LOCATION:** 2-98 STAUGHTON STREET, MELTON SOUTH

**The Melton Railway Station has been excluded from the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) for five years. It has no reasonable prospect of inclusion as it does not meet the test for State-level cultural heritage significance.**

**ASSESSMENT AGAINST THRESHOLD CRITERIA:**

For a place to be included in the VHR, there must be evidence that it passes at least one of the State-level tests in the Heritage Council of Victoria's [The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Threshold Guidelines](#) (the Guidelines). It is my view that the place does not meet the Step 2 threshold tests in the Criteria and Threshold Guidelines at a State-level.

**Criterion A – Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history**

The application asserts that Melton Railway Station is not of State-level heritage significance under criterion A.

Melton Railway Station presents as a typical late nineteenth-century Victorian railway stations that might have handled a wide range of inwards and outwards commodities typical of many stations across the network.

At a local level, the railway station played a key role in the establishment of Melton South as an agricultural centre for the receiving and processing of locally grown grain, hay, and chaff. The station also helped drive population growth in the region from the latter decades of the twentieth century, with the former separate townships of Melton South and Melton now forming the City of Melton.

Although the grain, chaff and hay industry once supported several mills in the area immediately north of Melton Railway Station along Brooklyn Road, almost all evidence of these agricultural activities has long been removed (including a series of railway sidings) and the land redeveloped for other purposes. A notable exception is a former grain storage ('Behlen') shed located close to the station on the northern side of the rail corridor. Little, if any, built references to once prominent local firms – such as Butler & Trethowan, Barrie Bros, Dixon Bros, Schutt & Barrie – now remain.

At Melton Railway Station itself, there is little if any evidence in the fabric of the station buildings that the place handled large quantities of hay or chaff for which the area was known. The completion of the direct railway line from Melbourne to Ballarat via Melton in 1889, rather than the more circuitous route via Geelong, also played a role in the development of the district between Sunshine and Ballarat.

However, the impact of the Melbourne-Ballarat line on the development and wider cultural history of Melton South is perhaps better illustrated by *the Railway Viaduct Over Melton Reservoir* (1886, VHR H2327), a large rail bridge that traverses the Werribee River to the west of *Melton Railway Station*.

Despite the importance of the place to the historical development of the City of Melton, I am of the view that the historical significance of *Melton Railway Station* resides at the local rather than State level.

### **Criterion B – Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria’s cultural history**

The application asserts that Melton Railway Station is not of State-level heritage significance under criterion B.

There are many railway stations currently included in the VHR, many of which better illustrate the development of Victoria’s rail network. While the survival of additional features such as the vans goods shed and signal bay at Melton Railway Station is of interest, it is important to note that most station buildings included in the VHR form part of more substantial railway complexes. These complexes are often characterised by additional features including engine sheds, goods sheds, pedestrian overpasses, signal boxes, signalling equipment, locomotive turntables, and water towers.

Timber station complexes of comparable age currently in the VHR include: *Pirron Yallock Railway Station* (1894, VHR H1667); *Pyramid Hill Railway Station* (1888, VHR H1696); *Wycheproof Railway Station* (1887, VHR H1601); and *Queenscliff Railway Station* (1881, VHR H1586).

While the van goods shed is an increasingly rare feature on the Victorian rail network, the survival of this structure alone does not support the case for State-level significance given the presence of this structure at several complexes across the network. Likewise, other features of interest such as the signal bay are not rare or endangered elements.

I am of the view that as an example of a timber, late-Victorian era railway station building, *Melton Railway Station* is not uncommon, rare, or endangered and that criterion B is not satisfied at the State level.

### **Criterion C – Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria’s cultural history**

The application asserts that Melton Railway Station is not of State-level heritage significance under criterion C.

There is limited potential that the station would yield further information from archaeological or other exploratory investigations that would further contribute to an understanding of Victoria’s cultural history.

I am of the view that criterion C is not likely to be satisfied at the State level.

### **Criterion D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects**

The application asserts that Melton Railway Station is not of State-level heritage significance under criterion D.

The Melton Railway Station is one of many stations that were constructed during the rapid expansion of the Victorian rail network in the last decades of the nineteenth century during and after the so-called 'Octopus Act' era. It exhibits many of the principal characteristics associated with this period of railway construction, being of economical timber construction with minimal decoration, and provides facilities for both passenger and (formerly) freight handling.

There are several timber stations from the same era in the VHR that exhibit these same principal characteristics, in many cases with greater integrity or aesthetic interest. Notably, such stations usually form part of larger complexes than that remaining at Melton South, covering a range of additional structures performing a variety of functions.

Timber station complexes of comparable age currently in the VHR include: *Pirron Yallock Railway Station* (1894, VHR H1667); *Pyramid Hill Railway Station* (1888, VHR H1696); *Wycheproof Railway Station* (1887, VHR H1601); *Minyip Railway Station* (1889, VHR H1083); and *Queenscliff Railway Station* (1881, VHR H1586). All of these station buildings, with the exception of Minyip Railway Station, are part of recognised complexes that include additional features such as goods sheds, water towers, toilets, lamp rooms, locomotive turntables, and goods cranes.

Melton Railway Station does not represent a notable example of this type (that is a fine, influential or pivotal example) when compared to these examples and recent changes, such as the modern extension to the passenger building, have also had an impact on the integrity of the place.

I am of the view that Melton Railway Station does not meet the tests in Reference Tool D to Criterion D of the Criteria and Threshold Guidelines to be considered a notable example at the State-level. I am of the view that any architectural interest associated with Melton Railway Station resides at the local level (as demonstrated by the application of the Heritage Overlay), and that criterion D is not likely to be satisfied at the State level.

### **Criterion E – Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics**

The application asserts that Melton Railway Station is not of State-level heritage significance under criterion E.

Melton Railway Station is a typical example of a late-Victorian era timber station, with a level of restrained decoration to be expected for a public building from this period. This is evident in the survival of decorative elements such as the iron verandah brackets, timber valancing to the verandah ends, and brickwork to the chimney.

However, none of these aesthetic characteristics can be considered outstanding.

Comparable examples of timber railway stations in the VHR, such as *Minyip Railway Station* (1889, VHR H1083) and *Pyramid Hill Railway Station* (1888, VHR H1696), display a much

richer level of classical detailing including cast iron, wrought iron, and timber decorative elements.

While the aesthetic characteristics of the timber railway station building may be valued at a local level, it does not appear that evidence of these aesthetic values exist within the disciplines of architecture, art or design, or that Melton Railway Station has received wide public acknowledgement for its aesthetic qualities in print, digital media, painting, sculpture, songs, poetry, literature or other media.

I am of the view that Melton Railway Station does not demonstrate aesthetic characteristics that are either outstanding or beyond the ordinary, and that criterion E is not likely to be satisfied at the State level.

**Criterion F – Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period**

The application asserts that Melton Railway Station is not of State-level heritage significance under criterion F.

The repurposing of the building originally constructed at Leeor in 1889 (close to Serviceton on the South Australian border) for the station at Melton South is of some technical interest, but the relocation of structures was not uncommon during this period and the scale of the undertaking at this location is modest.

I am of the view that Melton Railway Station does not demonstrate a creative or technical achievement beyond the ordinary for the period it was constructed, and that criterion F is not likely to be satisfied at the State level.

**Criterion G – Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons**

The application asserts that Melton Railway Station is not of State-level heritage significance under criterion G.

Like most railway stations, Melton Railway Station is mostly likely valued in the present day to the Melton community and to local commuters. However, the story of Melton Railway Station while important at a community level, is not part of a story that contributes to Victoria's identity. There is no evidence to suggest that the social value of Melton Railway Station resonates beyond Melton across the broader Victorian community.

I am of the view that any social significance may reside at the local level, and that criterion G is not likely to be satisfied at the State level.

**Criterion H – Special association with the life or works of a person, or group or persons, of importance in Victoria's history**

The application asserts that Melton Railway Station is not of State-level heritage significance under criterion H.

Research has not uncovered evidence of a direct association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history at Melton Railway Station. The place fails to express the influence of earlier Railway Commissioners, such as the high

engineering and architectural standards notably associated with Richard Speight, or a notable railway architect, engineer, or designer from the period.

I am of the view that criterion H is not likely to be satisfied at the State level.

**CONCLUSION:**

I am of the view that while Melton Railway Station is recognised to be of heritage significance at a local level (as demonstrated by its inclusion in the Heritage Overlay of the Melton Planning Scheme) it has no reasonable prospect of being included in the VHR as it does not meet any of the Step 2 tests in the Guidelines for potential inclusion in the VHR.

If a review of the decision is not requested the place will be excluded from the VHR. The Executive Director cannot accept a new nomination of the place for a period of five years under section 28(1A) of the Act unless new information of significance is received.

If you have any queries about the process to review an exclusion determination, please contact the Heritage Council on 03 8508 1656 or email [heritage.council@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:heritage.council@delwp.vic.gov.au).

**DATE OF DECISION:**

30 May 2024

**SIGNED:**



**Steven Avery**  
Executive Director,  
Heritage Victoria