THE FORMER BENALLA MIGRANT CAMP CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

DECEMBER 2018

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Executive Summary

The Benalla Migrant Camp is a place that contributes to an understanding of Australia's long history of migration. Migration has been a cultural determinant within Australian society since the arrival of the first peoples. The abrupt cultural change that occurred with the arrival Europeans in the 18th century has been echoed by waves of migrations since then. The migration that occurred with the gold rushes of the 19th century and the settlement of migrants from Europe after the World War II brought about two of the most significance cultural changes since European settlement. It is important in terms of cultural heritage to identify and mark these events as they provide a place from which to reflect, and a place for a better understanding of the impacts of these times. Cultural attitudes can change but the physicality of the place does not, and this is important when we try to provide a pathway to a better understanding of where we have come from.

The Benalla Migrant Camp was housed in the former Benalla RAAF and the No 11 Elementary Flying School [EFTS], as part of the EATS – Empire Air Training Scheme. The EATS trained air crews for the British Bomber Command throughout the war [from 1939-1944]. The RAAF was committed to training 28,000 aircrew over three years including navigators, wireless operators, air gunners and pilots, equating to around 900 aircrew every four weeks and 36% of the total number of proposed aircrew. The Benalla Airbase by the end of the war included 120 structures – primarily P1 huts and runways. These buildings were adapted for migrants to live in, and it was at this place that many migrants received their first understandings of what life in Australia could mean to them.

Today, only a small representative group of these buildings have survived. Only one of the hangars [a Bellman], is still located at the airport and of the original 120 military structures (including the P1 huts), only nine P1 huts survive. The two toilet blocks date from the migrant occupation of the site. The runways are largely in the same locations but the wartime runways were field runways.

These rudimentary military structures were identified as an ideal place to house 60,000 migrants during the Benalla Migrant Camp's 18 years of operation (1949-1967). However, unlike other migrant centres, many of the residents lived there for many years. The camp housed non-British residents and many were displaced persons (often referred to as DPs) and had endured conditions in Europe that were generally difficult and often traumatic. The camp unlike most other migrant centres also became a home for families and their children. These events have created a complex suite of relationships and connections and these contribute to the cultural heritage significance of the place.

Of particular importance to an understanding of the place as a home for families is the presence of the buildings that housed the former Benalla Aerodrome School, State School 4651. The school was opened in November 1949 and it was based in what had been the instruction huts of the former RAAF training camp. A first there were no defined school grounds, no fence or playground, and this combined with the influx of non-English speaking pupils created a challenging environment for the teachers and managers of the site.

The establishment of the camp in Benalla had a significant impact on the local community and its economy. The increase in the local population saw businesses grow and the establishment of factories such Latoof and Callil.

Both Latoof and Callil were constructed opposite the camp for easy access to a resident labour force. Many in the local community engaged with the residents through work and community events. However, despite the numbers of migrants who passed through Benalla, there is today, a limited recognition of this place within the local community.

This lack of recognition is changing, and largely as the result of the development Benalla Migrant Camp Inc., formed in April 2013. Its objective is to create a permanent exhibition in memory of the 60,000 plus migrants that went through this centre. The interest that the first exhibition created within the former migrant community, and the wider community, created a platform for better recognition of the place. Through the dogged campaigning of an ever-increasing support group the place was recognised as being of state significance and is now included on the Victorian Heritage Register.

The former Migrant Camp has a part of one building (Building 11) and this small area is devoted to the telling the story of this particular group of people. The other former camp buildings are occupied by a number of community-based user groups. The condition of the buildings varies, with some in poor condition, and some in good condition. There is a significant amount of work required to restore the buildings, and to provide a place for the wider community to visit and appreciate what life, and in particular what life was like for non-British families and their children in migrant camps during the post-World War II period.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Conservation and Management Plan (CMP) for the heritage place known as the Former Benalla Migrant Camp has been prepared for the Benalla City Council. The CMP has been funded by Living Heritage Grants (Heritage Victoria). This report addresses matters that relate to the conservation of the cultural heritage values of the place. The report includes: a history; a physical analysis of all of the structures; a review of the cultural heritage significance of the place; Conservation Policies; a Conservation Schedule; a Maintenance Schedule and a set of plans and elevations for each building. It also includes a list of recommended works to assist the owners and lease holders to understand how to best manage this place for future generations.

1.1 The Former Benalla Migrant Camp

The former Benalla Migrant Camp is located within the environs of the Benalla Airport and this facility can be found at the eastern edge of Benalla in north-eastern Victoria. The airport (and this includes the registered area of the former Benalla Migrant Camp) is owned as freehold land by the Benalla Rural City.

The Benalla Migrant Camp was established in September 1949 in Benalla, at the airport, at what was then a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) base. This base housed the Elementary Flying Training School (1941-1944) and the buildings associated with this use were adapted for the Benalla Migrant Camp. The camp operated as a temporary holding centre from September 1949. At the time of opening there was a large surge in numbers of new arrivals to Australia due to the increased availability of ships for transporting migrants from Europe in late 1948. When the facility closed in December 1967, an estimated 60,000 migrants had been housed at this camp. In comparison the Bonegilla Migrant Camp housed about 320,000 immigrants between 1947 and 1971.

The Migrant Camp at Benalla provided housing as well as a kindergarten, school, hall, hospital, shops and a gymnasium. The migrants who lived there were primarily unsupported mothers. Many of the residents worked at the centre itself, in administration, the kitchen or hospital, or as cleaners, while others found domestic work in Benalla or worked at the nearby Latoof and Callil clothing factories. Many of these migrants stayed longer at the Benalla Migrant Camp than those who came to other camps/centres. A few migrants may have formed close bonds with the local Benalla community but as part of the contemporary recording of the residents' histories there has been little evidence to support a more universal acceptance.

The cultural heritage significance of this *place*[12] has only relatively recently become officially recognised by its inclusion on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). Its statutory recognition was largely driven by those who had lived there, and their families. It is clear from the submissions for the recognition of this *place*, that it has a high

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1 The displaced persons refer to the 1.6 million war refugees who were held in camps in Germany, Austria and France awaiting repatriation.

2 *Place* - when this word is found in italics within this document it is referring to the whole of the registered area. It is a term that is found in the *Burra Charter* (2013) and it has the following specific definition:

Place means a geographically defined area. It may include elements, objects, spaces and views. Place may have tangible and intangible dimensions.

significance, for those adults who lived there, for their children as part of their childhood memories and/or because their childhood was informed by their parents' experiences.

The land that has been registered on the VHR includes: the nine P1-type huts, two toilet blocks, concrete gate posts at the intersection of BARC Avenue with Samaria Road, a below ground cistern, BARC Avenue itself, together with kerb and channel and several unused electricity reticulation poles, the peppercorn trees and the concrete surface drainage channels that are found beside most of the huts and the remnant evidence associated with the tennis court.

The cultural heritage significance of the former Benalla Migrant Camp is widely recognised, and the values have been identified in the following statutory heritage listings:

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR H2358)

Benalla Rural City, Heritage Overlay (HO77)

Further discussion on the heritage listings is included in Section 4.0 Cultural Heritage Significance.

For information on non-statutory classifications refer to Appendix G.

1.2 Methodology

The preparation of this Conservation Management Plan (CMP) observes the recommendations of the document - *Conservation Management Plans: Managing Heritage Places* (2010) as prepared by the Heritage Council of Victoria. The principles and processes as set out in the *Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter, for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013* were followed during the preparation of this document as it establishes the standard practice for the assessment and management of cultural values.

Children at the Kindergarten c1950s

Image 23 Jespersen Benalla Migrant Camp Exhibition©

Site plan: the yellow outlined area is the registered area as included in the VHR

1.3 Other reports & studies

In preparing this CMP, reference has been made to a body of previous work and studies including:

Trevor Budge & Associates, 'City of Benalla Conservation Study', 1992

Context Pty Ltd, 'Victoria's Post 1940s Migration Heritage Study', 2011

P Goad & J Willis, 'Invention from War: a circumstantial modernism for Australian architecture, *The Journal of Architecture*, http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjar20,

D Kemp, 'Heritage Assessment: the former Benalla Migrant Accommodation Centre', Report to the Council of Rural City of Benalla 2014

P Miller, 'A Little Marvel in Timber and Tin - the Military P1 Hut of the Second World War', Paper delivered at the 14th National Engineering Heritage Conference 2007

B Pennay, *Benalla Migrant Camp: A Difficult Heritage*, 2016

2.0 HISTORY

The following is a summary history of the Benalla region. This is followed by a more detailed account of the history of the Benalla Migrant Camp.

2.1 Pre-contact

Prior to the European settlement of Victoria, the region now recognised as Benalla, was populated by the Bangerang to the north of the Broken River and the Taungurong people to the south of the river. The lives of these Indigenous people were irrevocably changed when, in 1824, this area was first sighted by Europeans during an expedition of Hamilton Hume and William Hovell. The district was initially named Swampy and it was noted as a potential agricultural settlement. Major Thomas Mitchell followed in 1834 and his reports of the region encouraged other Overlanders to set out along his path. The Taungurong people resisted these incursions on their land, and on the banks of the Broken River in 1838, a group of Indigenous warriors from the Taungurong and Wavaeroo peoples attacked a party of overlanders. Governor Gipps in response to this, ordered the building of Border Police Posts at strategic river crossing places to make the route to Port Phillip safe. The area occupied by the former Benalla Migrant Camp is considered to lie within the area that was once occupied by the Bangerang peoples. The cultural heritage management of the Benalla City area lies within the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation (YYNAC) registered area.

2.2 European Settlement

In response to the establishment of a police presence and to the increasing numbers of settlers, new river crossing towns, including Benalla (first called Broken River), became established. The Broken River crossing place became a camp-site on the Bear-brass (Melbourne) to Sydney Road. In 1849 the New South Wales Colonial Government announced that a site for a township at Benalla had been fixed in the District of Port Phillip. [3] The site for a town was surveyed by Thomas Wedge.

In 1849 the government released allotments for sale. This encouraged the development of a new town on the north bank of the river at Bridge Street. This part of the township was similar in character to the original settlement but without the administrative activities. The Bridge Street development soon outstripped the administrative area with the construction of a bridge. The town grew in response to the needs of the gold miners and continued to increase in size with the settlement of ex-miners after the decline of the Ovens goldfields from the late 1860s. Benalla gradually became more established in response to the demands for increased goods and services and in 1869 the Shire of Benalla was declared.

2.3 Construction of the railway line between Melbourne and Wodonga

The construction of a railway line between Melbourne and Wodonga in 1873 provided easy access to metropolitan markets and this had a marked impact on the development of many of the small rural towns along the line. Benalla was one such town and there was an increasing prosperity and development within the township. Improvements

[3] J Basset, *City of Benalla Conservation Study*, Vol 2: Benalla 1836 – 1992, An Environmental History, 1992, p 7.

such as the gravelling of the streets, the construction of footpaths and the establishment of a drainage system were undertaken. By 1887 a coal gas works was established and this further assisted growth and a greater sense of settlement.

2.4 Depressions

Benalla like many other rural areas suffered a decline in development during the 1890s Depression and drought. It was not until 1900-1914 that prosperity started to return. Agriculture benefited from the establishment of a number of industries. This includes the construction of Creameries, Butter factories and irrigation from the Broken River system. Benalla began to develop along Bridge Street but again growth slowed during the 1930s depression.

2.5 World War II

At the outbreak of the Second World War the British government realised it did not have adequate resources to maintain the Royal Air Force (RAF) in the impending air war in Europe. While British factories could rapidly increase their aircraft production, there was no guaranteed supply of trained aircrew. Pre-war plans had identified a need for 50,000 aircrew annually, but Britain could only supply 22,000.

The British Government sought to establish an Empire Air Training Scheme [EATS] with training centres in Australia, Canada, New Zealand. The United Kingdom was considered an unsuitable location for air training, due to the possibility of enemy attack, the strain caused by wartime traffic at airfields and the unpredictable climate. It was proposed that instead that Australia, New Zealand and Canada would develop facilities to train British and each other's aircrews.

In Australia the proposal was accepted by the War Cabinet and a contingent was sent to a conference in Ottawa, in Canada, to discuss the proposal. After several weeks of negotiations, an agreement was signed on 17 December 1939 which would last for three years. The scheme was known in Australia as the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS).

2.6 EATS – Empire Air Training Scheme

The EATS trained air crews for the British Bomber Command throughout the war [from 1939-1945]. The RAAF was committed to training 28,000 aircrew over three years including navigators, wireless operators, air gunners and pilots, equating to around 900 aircrew every four weeks and 36% of the total number of proposed aircrew. A total of 28 EATS centres were established in eastern Australia by the end of 1941. The first basic flying course started on 29 April 1940, when training began simultaneously in all participating countries. The first Australian contingent embarked for Canada on 14 November 1940.

Under the scheme 50,000 aircrew were trained annually with each country conducting its own elementary training. However, advanced training was conducted in Canada because of its closeness to the British aircraft factories and the war zone. From November 1940, some training was also conducted in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

The EATS agreement was renewed for an additional two years in March 1943, although by then it was evident that the RAF already had a large surplus of aircrew. Throughout 1944 Australia's contribution to the scheme was wound back, at Britain's instigation, and the scheme effectively ended in October 1944, although it was not formally suspended until 31 March 1945. By this time, over 37,000 Australian airmen had been trained as part of the scheme.

The scheme cost Australia about £100,000,000 for its commitments. In addition to the Empire Air Training Scheme, wartime demands had led to training for home requirements. The RAAF built air training and ground training schools, airfields and specialised schools that served the country well in wartime as well as during the post-war period.

2.7 Benalla RAAF

In 1928 Victor Little gave the use of one of his paddocks to the Port Melbourne Flying Club for a flying ground. This airfield became the site of the Benalla RAAF and the No 11 Elementary Flying School [EFTS]. Benalla was the main airfield circuit area and there were three additional satellite landing fields. These were constructed to reduce congestion and were located at Winton, Goorambat and Devenish.

Each intake consisted of about 60 trainees, with many of these men never having seen an aircraft. The course ran for 8 weeks with the majority of students going solo after 10–15 hours of dual instruction. Their final air-time was approximately a total of 60 hours of flying time. After achieving this they went on to complete their Service Flying Training Schools [SFTS]. The pilots were taught in Tiger Moths [80 were in final use at Benalla] and these were housed and serviced in 8 Bellman hangars.

The Benalla Airbase by the end of the war included 120 structures and runways. Of these buildings, only one of the hangars [a Bellman], is still located at the airport and of the original 120 structures (including the P1 huts), only nine P1 huts survive. The runways are largely in the same locations but the wartime runways were field runways.

2.8 Post World War II

By the end of World War II (WWII) a number of political solutions were being sought to ensure Australia's security and economic prosperity. The air attacks by the Japanese from the north during WWII, had shown how vulnerable the country was, and how sparsely Australia was populated. Post-war Australia was experiencing a period of sustained economic growth and expansion, and labour was in short supply. In addition, the birth-rate had been in steady decline for four decades, and this was exacerbating labour shortages. Immigration was seen to be at least a partial solution to these two issues. As a response the Australian Labor Party (ALP) Government established the Department of Immigration. Arthur Calwell was the first Minister and the Government developed its policies for a post-war migration program.

2.9 Migration

Australia has a very long history of migration. The settlement in Australia of migrants from Europe after the Second World War is one such pattern of re-settlement. This period has had a major impact on the nation's economy, society and culture. Post-war migration is considered to be an important factor in shaping the nation during the 20th century. It completely changed the composition and size of the Australian population and is responsible for the second largest demographic change in the nation's history. The largest change in Australia's history being the gold rush migration of 1851-1860.

The basis of Australia's immigration policy prior to, and after Federation, was one of exclusion. Legislation enacted in Victoria in 1857 and in New South Wales in 1861 was specifically aimed at restricting Chinese immigration; and the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act, or 'White Australia Policy' was considered the main plank of the Australian Labour Party (ALP). During the period 1901-1940 most immigrants were from Britain, although there were a small number from Southern Europe, particularly Greeks and Italians. At the 1947 Census it was found that 744,000 people, or slightly less than 10 per cent of the population were born overseas.[4]

Migration was thought by many to be an action that would see Australia develop its resources and through a population expansion protect the country from invasion:

> *There was a time just four years ago when Australia faced its gravest peril. Armies recruited from the teeming millions of Japan threatened to overrun our cities and broad hinterland. They were so many. We were so few. Today we are at peace. But, while all of us must work to perpetuate that peace, let us not forget that armed conflict remains a grim possibility ...*
>
> *The days of our isolation are over ... The call to all Australians is to realise that, without adequate numbers, this wide brown land may not be held in another clash of arms, and to give their maximum assistance to every effort to expand its economy and assimilate more and more people who will come from overseas to link their fate with our destiny*.[5]

The Government's objective was an increase in population of 2 per cent per annum, this was considered to be the maximum effective absorption capacity of an expanding country, with 1 per cent to be a natural population growth and 1 per cent [70,000 persons] through immigration.

The figures were ambitious, but Calwell felt that the Government had the infrastructure to deal with a large number of government-sponsored immigrants. This infrastructure consisted of many empty military camps and these were seen as being ideal for the quartering of a large and essentially transient population, and there were personnel

4 Jock Collins, *Migrant Hands in a Distant Land: Australia's post-war Immigration*, 1991

5 Minister for Immigration Arthur Calwell's speech to the House of Representatives in November 1946, quoted In Australia and Immigration 1788-1988, Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, p.27

trained to run them.[6] By 1951 there were three reception centres and twenty holding centres in operation [including the Benalla Holding Centre] and many of these were former army camps.[7] Former military camps that became migrant centres included: Bonegilla and Benalla in Victoria, Bathurst in New South Wales, Northam in Western Australia and Woodside in South Australia.

Initially, Calwell was committed to maintaining a 'white' Australia. However, it soon became apparent that this would not be possible if the Government's target figure was to be reached. In 1946 the Government had introduced the Assisted Passage Scheme to provide free passage for British ex-servicemen and their dependants, as well as for other select British migrants. The Scheme was extended to the Netherlands later that year. The first party of post-war British immigrants arrived in January 1947 and these were building tradesmen bound for Canberra. However only 6,500 British migrants were available in 1947 and Calwell tried, unsuccessfully, to attract migrants from other parts of Western Europe and Scandinavia by extending the assisted passage scheme to Norway, France, Belgium and Denmark.[8] He then turned in frustration to the 1.6 million war refugees, or displaced persons, who were held in camps in Germany, Austria and France awaiting repatriation.[9] In July 1947 Australia entered into an agreement with the Preparatory Commission for the International Refugee Organisation [later IRO] to settle an annual quota of 12,000 displaced persons in Australia, with provisions to increase this number.[10]

Calwell tried to be selective but had little choice. He rejected republican Spaniards in France but accepted refugees from the Baltic countries of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. The 'Balts' were blue eyed and blond and were considered to *less likely to offend* the Australians of that time.[11] In return for their passage, migrants were subject to a two-year directed labour contract. There were only two classes of worker under this contract; men were 'labourers' and women were 'domestics'. They were to be housed initially in a 'Reception and Training Centre' where they would be given courses in the English language and the Australian way of life.[12]

2.10 Bonegilla Reception Centre

The largest Australian Migrant reception camp was the Bonegilla Migrant Centre. It was the first camp to be utilised as a migrant reception centre. It was considered an ideal settlement base because of its extant facilities as a former army campsite. In addition, it was some distance from the two major metropolitan centres (Sydney and Melbourne) and it was close to rural employment. The location also provided the opportunity if necessary, to control the migrants, as it was feared that if they were near metropolitan areas they would compete with

6 Australian Construction Services [Patrick Miller], Thematic History of Defence in Victoria, Volume 1
7 Australia and Immigration 1788-1988, Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, p.31
8 Australia and Immigration 1788-1988, Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, p.31
9 Jock Collins, *Migrant Hands in a Distant Land: Australia's post-war Immigration*, 1991
10 Australia and Immigration 1788-1988, Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, p.31
11 B & A Birskys, A Putnins, I Salasoo. The Baltic (Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian) Peoples in Australia, Australian Ethnic Heritage Series, General Editor Michael Cigler, AE Press, Melbourne, 1986, Preface.
12 Australian Construction Services [Patrick Miller], Thematic History of Defence in Victoria, Volume 1

Australians for the limited accommodation and form racial groups, which would prejudice the immigration program.[13]

2.11 Holding Centres

The holding centres were intended to provide short term accommodation for women and children where the father could not find family accommodation close to his place of work. Holding Centres were established in disused defence force facilities. Accommodation was basic but it was thought to be satisfactory because the displaced had been housed in rudimentary refugee camps in Europe. This combination of reception and holding centres were considered a satisfactory outcome for the initial settlement of non-British arrivals.

All of the states were to have access to this source of labour but more than half were located near country towns in NSW and Victoria. The location of these centres in rural areas was seen to help to meet the demand for labour in regional and rural areas and also supported the policies of decentralisation. The centres were networked with each other, and with the reception centres. Residents were moved around to meet job availability. This could mean a number of moves. This transience did not help a migrant to settle, nor did it provide a sense of well-being and overarching welfare. By 1951 there were three reception centres and twenty holding centres and these housed 47,300 people.

Decreasing number of arrivals in 1952 meant that some of the least attractive centres were closed and non-British families could be housed in the worker hostels. Breadwinners, where possible, were housed with their families at a holding centre. Once the displaced persons scheme ended in 1952 some of the holding centres were closed. By 1958 there only six government operated centres nationwide – Benalla and Bonegilla (Vic); Greta and Scheyville (NSW); Wacol/Enoggera (Qld); Woodside (SA) and Holden/Northam (WA). Benalla closed in 1967 and Bonegilla in 1971.

2.12 The Benalla Migrant Camp

The former Benalla RAAF base had been identified as being a potential location for a migrant camp during the immediate post war period. By 1949–50 it was obvious that there was insufficient accommodation for the numbers of new arrivals to Australia and in particular the Displaced Persons (DPs). By 1949 there was a large surge in numbers of new arrivals due to the increased availability of ships for transporting migrants from Europe in late 1948. The government reviewed the existing military camps, and the Benalla RAAF was one of the sites that was identified as potentially being suitable.[14] The Department of Immigration investigated the site and noted that there was a hospital, staff quarters, canteen, cinema, ablution blocks and sleeping quarters for single migrants and for migrant families. The main issue with the place was that its capacity was thought to be limited by the cooking facilities. However, the Benalla Migrant Camp was in operation by September 1949 and stayed operational until it closed on 8th December 1967.

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13 Glenda Sluga, Bonegilla 'A Place of No Hope', University of Melbourne 1988, p. 4

14 B Pennay, *Benalla Migrant Camp: A Difficult Heritage*, Benalla, 2015, p 17

The Benalla Migrant Camp was to be a temporary holding centre, unlike the Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre, which provided accommodation, and assisted in the processing of migrants from 1947 – 1971. As previously noted, Calwell's commitment to a 'white' Australia meant that the government found it difficult to meet the required migration numbers and especially sufficient British migrants. Baltic migrants were considered 'safe' and a number were sent to the Benalla Migrant Camp and for a time it was called the 'Balt Camp'.

The first years at the Benalla Migrant Centre were the busiest, with a peak occupancy of 1,063 migrants. The number of migrant arrivals decreased markedly when the displaced persons scheme drew to an end in 1952 and a number of the holding centres closed. Throughout the 1950s the resident population at Benalla remained at about 400 with an average of 200 people moving in and out each year and by the mid-1960s the occupancy did not exceed 250. The Migrant Camp at Benalla provided accommodation as well as a kindergarten, school, hall, hospital, shops and a gymnasium and primarily housed unsupported mothers. There was a limited access to jobs. Some residents worked at the centre itself, in administration, the kitchen, hospital, or as cleaners, while others found domestic work in Benalla, or worked at the nearby Latoof and Callil clothing factory and the Renolds chain factory.

By 1958 there were only six government operated centres remaining in Australia. Two were located in Victoria - at Benalla (renamed the Benalla Migrant Accommodation Centre in 1958) and Bonegilla. From this time the Benalla Centre provided accommodation for migrant workers in the district, and their families, and women and children with no male support. By 1967 there were only 135 residents at Benalla Migrant Camp and it was closed that year. The Department of Immigration estimates that during these years approximately 60,000 migrants passed through its gates.

What made the Benalla Migrant centre unique within the genre of the migrant camps is that it provided temporary accommodation for unsupported mothers. Dr Bruce Pennay has described these circumstances as follows: *In 1949, the Australian government faced problems in coping with the arrival of a large number of supporting mothers with children among its post-war immigrants. At the time the women were most commonly dubbed 'widows' or 'unsupported mothers': they were 'dependant', 'encumbered with children' and had 'no breadwinner'. The supporting mothers had been admitted at the request of the International Refugee Organisation to help it empty the displaced person refugee camps in Europe.i Harold Holt, the Minister for Immigration, explained, 'It was fully realised that their employment and accommodation would present a problem, but rather than let them become a hard core of unwanteds in whatever country of Europe they managed to drift to, Australia agreed to accept them on humanitarian grounds.' ii They were accepted as a humanitarian gesture, but within the large-scale immigration scheme intended to increase Australia's population and workforce. Accordingly, each of the women admitted was assessed as fit to work. Moreover, the women were either of child-bearing age or had children.*

Many of the supporting mothers were directed to the Benalla Holding Centre, where the former air force training camp was literally across the road from two newly built factories and a hospital which offered the women employment. Initially those arrangements, which R.E Armstrong, head of the Assimilation Division, dubbed the

'Benalla experiment', seemed to be work 'reasonably well'. At any one time supporting mothers and their children comprised about a third of the usual 400 residents at Benalla. With the more numerous transient families, they were housed and fed simply, but satisfactorily. The women were directed to paid employment across the road or within the camp itself. The jobs helped them contribute to the costs of their accommodation and that of their children, for all residents were required to pay for their upkeep. Indeed, careful track was kept of their tariff payments.[15]

The result was that most of these women through limited access, or opportunities to secure jobs and houses anywhere else, and as consequence spent longer at the Benalla Migrant Camp than migrant men or women did at any other centre in Australia. The availability of contractual work at the camp (a two-year contract) also saw many migrants staying much longer than their contractual arrangements. They formed relationships within the local community and arguably developed stronger community links than those at other centres such as Rushworth, Mildura or any other holding centre in Australia. Many made Benalla their first Australian home after leaving the camp.

2.13 Life in the Camp

Those migrants who were sent to the Benalla Migrant Camp were first registered at the Bonegilla Camp, and then, after an initial processing period they were moved to Benalla. There were different sources for migrants with the British migrant (as the most preferred) being strongly targeted by the government. The Displaced Persons (DPs) were people who had no country and were living in camps across Europe. These would have to be the most marginalised group to arrive in post -war Australia as migrants. There were migrants who came to Australia under the Australian Assisted Migration Scheme, and these were committed to work for two years, and they could be sent anywhere by the government.

Holding centres were often places where families were separated. Husbands could be directed to work on the Snowy Hydro Scheme or in the orchards of the Goulburn Valley. Husbands and wives often stayed at different camps. Regulations stated that women and children over 16 years worked. A married woman did not need to work if she was caring for a child. Children over 16 had to work and could be separated from their families. This policy affected only the families of non-British background and not the British.[16] Politicians promoted this policy as being short term and other benefits such as growing up in the country and decentralisation of labour were seen to be important. However, the discriminatory policies were viewed by many as undesirable. Primarily because prolonged separation of families saw the breakdown of marriages and families. Many families were separated through this policy. From a government perspective this policy was successful as it contributed to the completion of the Snowy-Hydro Scheme, the single most important post-war project, as it made extensive use of migrant labour.

The physical character of the camps was one of a place where the accommodation buildings were rudimentary and had few refinements. Many of the huts were unlined, lacked insulation, heating and cooling and there were

15 B Pennay, Appendix A, p
16 B Pennay, *Benalla Migrant Camp: A Difficult Heritage*, Benalla, 2015, p 6

few provisions for privacy. All of the inhabitants would have suffered from the heat and cold. In terms of what it felt like to live there, the dominant impression is of a camp that was physically and socially safe. It was a self-contained village for the majority of its inhabitants.[17] The village life was reinforced by the communal eating, bathing and washing facilities. The contained environment meant that there was less impetus to integrate into the local community and they were the 'other' - camp people and not townspeople – *them and us*. [18] Even when migrants left the camp to live in the town they often returned to visit friends, to attend camp services or they remained at workplaces where other migrants worked.

This 'us and them' attitude was also exacerbated by a lack of contact through meaningful opportunities to forge bonds. The migrant workplace tended to be the factories and the other workers were generally other migrants. The more traditional areas to make friends such as at church or school were also relatively inaccessible as there was a church at the camp and a state school. In particular the location of the Benalla Aerodrome School, State School 4651, at the camp reinforced the separateness of the migrant community. Most of the women had children and these children attended the camp school, and what is generally a very fertile area for making friends in a new environment was not available to this community. In essence, the self-sufficiency of the camp, and the truncation of potential linkages within the wider community supported a sense of the other, a place for those who had needs that could not be met by the standard and ordinary community places. While this was isolating in an overall sense, it appears to have created very strong bonds within the migrant community. This has meant that the school buildings and the former chapel building, have a heightened sense of place within the migrant community and have become 'public memory places'[19] Like all of us, childhood memories are formative and powerful, and can be strong determinants in terms of who and what we become. The tangible evidence for the strengths of the memories and attachment to these public memory places was clearly demonstrated through the submissions that were heard during the hearing held by the Heritage Council on 10 and 11 February 2016.

Language was also a barrier, and this is despite English language classes being held at the centre. Most of the working mothers were too tired to participate in English classes after work and after looking after their homes and families. Migrant staff also found that there was a difference between the displaced (DPs) persons/migrants. The assisted migrants had a purpose while the displaced lacked that same sense of purpose and self -confidence and because of this they did not mingle easily with the townspeople.[20]

The insularity was also compounded by the different family types. There was no typical family type; there were traditional families and also a number of parents without partners. The camp at Benalla housed many 'single' mothers who had work but once they paid their tariff for their accommodation they found it difficult to get ahead or live much beyond subsistence. This group would have found it very difficult to integrate into the community for a number of reasons such as financial constraints and the social stigma of not having a husband and the English language.

17 B Pennay, *Benalla Migrant Camp: A Difficult Heritage*, Benalla, 2015, p 27
18 B Pennay, *Benalla Migrant Camp: A Difficult Heritage*, Benalla, 2015, p 27
19 B Penny, Appendix I *Imagining School at Benalla Migrant Camp*, unpublished article, 2018
20 B Pennay, *Benalla Migrant Camp: A Difficult Heritage*, Benalla, 2015, p 27

Child care was an important feature of Camp life

Image 4 Klopsteins Benalla Migrant Camp Exhibition©

Attitudes in the town would also have contributed to a slow development of bonds between the new residents and the old. Initially, many in the Benalla community were not entirely enthusiastic to have a migrant camp for the Displaced Persons on the edge of town. The RSL stated that they wanted British migrants. In response to these attitudes, Benalla's Mayor Cr F R Harrison (Frank), invited Arthur Calwell to Benalla in support of the establishment of a migrant centre, and to explain why it was in the interests of Benalla and the nation. Calwell cited 'Populate or Perish' and that Australia needed a '20,000,000 population to hold Australia.'[21] Calwell encouraged the community and he said that the district was an ideal place for a migrant centre. The local paper the *Benalla Standard* said that the community should welcome the *DPs* and help these people rehabilitate themselves.[22]

Officially the migrant camp was strongly supported. Within a year of the establishment of the migrant centre the Governor of Victoria during a visit expressed his delight with the camp and the clothing factory where many migrants were to work. Community groups soon appeared more willing to support the migrant centre. The CWA arranged a handcrafts exhibition. The Red Cross delivered toys and books, and flowers and gifts for the patients in the migrant centre hospital at Christmas time. The migrants and local church groups celebrated together and

21 B Pennay, *Benalla Migrant Camp: A Difficult Heritage*, Benalla, 2015, p 17
22 B Pennay, *Benalla Migrant Camp: A Difficult Heritage*, Benalla, 2015, p 12

shared services. However, many others, and this included some of the local councillors, viewed the migrants as transients and not part of the real population of Benalla.[23] Many of these attitudes did modify over time, and by the late 1950s and early 1960s, many in the Benalla community recognised that their 'new Australian friends have played their part in making our town what it is today'.[24]

2.14 Economic Impact of the Camp

Benalla during the 1950s was a small rural service town with an economy that relied on providing goods and services to local businesses and residents. It also had a strong government presence with a large railway yard and a number of government departments (at least seventeen government offices in the 1950s). The surrounding pastoral and cropping districts were also prosperous and provided a strong economic stimulus. The Council also advocated for decentralised secondary industries and the Latoof and Callil clothing factory and the Renolds Chains factory were indicative of what was seen as the future of Benalla.

The economic impact of the camp has been less well recognised. The presence of a large workforce at the camp was integral to the success of the Latoof, Callil and Renolds Chain factory. The local building boom of the 1950s and 1960s with increased investment in housing (both private and public), schools, shops and town facilities was at least partially supported by the economic impact of the migrant camp. However, this was never directly acknowledged.[25] Clearly the closure of the camp in 1967 was of concern as local opinion was pushing for and had expectations that the army would resume the site and provide further stimulus.

2.15 Decline in Migrant Numbers

Migrant intake numbers subsided after the peak of the early years, of 1947-52. By 1952 Australia was experiencing some unemployment and the intake was curtailed.[26] This meant a reduction in the demand for accommodation and many camps were either closed or their capacity was reduced. By 1958 there were only six government operated centres remaining in Australia. Two were located in Victoria - at Benalla (renamed the Benalla Migrant Accommodation Centre in 1958) and Bonegilla. From 1958 the Benalla Migrant Accommodation Centre provided accommodation for migrant workers in the district, and their families and women and children with no male support. By 1967 there were only 135 residents at Benalla Migrant Camp and it was closed that year. Bonegilla remained in operation until 1971.

2.16 The site post 1967

After the migrant hostel closed in 1967 the airfields continued to be used for civil aviation purposes, principally for recreational gliding and ballooning. Many structures were demolished in the 1980s before the Council acquired

23 B Pennay, *Benalla Migrant Camp: A Difficult Heritage*, Benalla, 2015, p 20
24 B Pennay, *Benalla Migrant Camp: A Difficult Heritage*, Benalla, 2015, p 20
25 B Pennay, *Benalla Migrant Camp: A Difficult Heritage*, Benalla, 2015, p 25
26 Australia and Immigration 1788-1988, Department of Immigration, Local Government &. Ethnic Affairs, AGPS, Canberra, 1988, p. 36

ownership of both the airfields and the remaining structures in 1992. Short term leases have been given to various community groups for designated buildings. (See the Appendices A – E) for the history of each user group).

Up until relatively recently the history of the migrant camp at Benalla has been recognised but its cultural heritage significance was not fully appreciated. The City of Benalla Conservation Study (1992) identified the war time cultural heritage significance of the site. The migrant centre was referenced but its significance was seen as being secondary to the war time values. The National Trust assessed the site as being of state significance for its role as a former pilot training school during WWII. It also acknowledges that the place had been a Migrant Centre. The first public voice came from Ziggy Kulbars a former resident. He wanted the place to be respected for what it was.[27] His voice and the voices and opinions of other former migrants and their families, combined with the efforts of Sabine Smyth and her supporters of the Benalla Migrant Camp Photographic Exhibition has meant that the migrant story at Benalla has become more fully appreciated and understood. Sabine Smyth has collected images, developed a database, established contact with former migrants and their families and undertaken further research at a number of the government archival centres. This has resulted in a number of regular photographic exhibitions since the first exhibition was held on Australia Day 2013, and over the past five years Hut 11 has welcomed over 3,000 visitors. The 50-year celebration and reunion attracted 260 guests including a family from the USA.

It is largely from this base that a nomination for inclusion in the VHR (Victoria Heritage Register) was made to Heritage Victoria. This nomination in recognition of its cultural values to the state (in addition to its local heritage values) was initially not supported by the Heritage Victoria, but a Heritage Council hearing was held, and the nomination was upheld and the place is now included in the VHR.

It is clear, when viewing the history of the place and taking into account the significant efforts that the former migrant community and their supporters went through to get the cultural significance understood and recognised, that migration and Australia's immigration history is complicated. It also demonstrates that there is still much work to be done to fully appreciate what migration means to the nation's sense of self. The multiple histories of arrival, contact and settlement are still yet to be fully recognised in the story of nationhood.

[27] B Pennay, *Benalla Migrant Camp: A Difficult Heritage*, Benalla, 2015, p 43

3.0 PHYSICAL ANALYSIS
3.1 The Site

Hangar Lane & the former P1 huts

Aerial view of the site

The registered area of former Benalla Migrant Camp is located in the south-west corner of the Benalla Airport Complex.

The Benalla Airport lies to the east of Benalla and it is bounded by Samaria and Kilfeera Roads. This area was once farmland but urban growth has seen residential and semi-commercial development gradually approach the airport from the east and towards the north and south boundaries. However, the views from the airport to the north-east are still semi-rural in character. The airport area is distinguished by its flat terrain and lack of geographical features.

The primary use of the entire airport complex is aviation. However, the site also offers opportunities for other public and community uses. Facilities include: the Benalla Performing Arts and Convention Centre (a Council run public venue); an Aviation museum (located in the Bellman Hangar) and the BARC huts (these are the heritage registered army P1 huts) and they are used by a number of community groups.

The surviving Bellman hangar is one of eight[28] Bellman hangars that were constructed on the RAAF base during World War II. The hangars were critical to the operations of the airfield during World War II. The other hangars have since been demolished or relocated. The Aviation Museum focuses on the story of the Number 11 Elementary Flying Training School (11 E.F.T.S.). The Museum provides an eloquent tribute to those instructors, students and support staff who contributed to the efforts of the Allies during World War II. The Bellman Hangar is currently not included in Victorian Heritage Register and is not included in the current Benalla Planning Scheme in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay.

3.2 General Physical Description of the Victorian Heritage Registered Area[29]

The registered area includes nine P1 huts, two toilet blocks, the concrete gate posts at the intersection of BARC Avenue with Samaria Road, a below-ground cistern, BARC Avenue itself together with kerb and channel and several unused electricity reticulation poles, concrete surface drainage channels found beside and to the rear of most of the huts and the metal tracks associated with (now demolished) Bellman Hangars and the remains of the asphalt tennis court now lying partially under Buildings 10 and 11.

Concrete gate posts marking the entrance to the camp

28 Figure 5 shows 8 hangars on the site. Tracks for the sliding doors can still be found in some areas where the hangars were located.

29 The inclusion of any place on the VHR is generally accompanied by a map and/or plan that describes the area in terms of its physical context. All fabric and this includes: any tangible structures, archaeological evidence or similar, and any identified intangible values that lie within this physical area have statutory protection. This area is protected by State Legislation the *Heritage Act* (2017). Refer to *Section 4 Cultural Heritage Significance* for a full description and explanation of this statutory process.

The registered area is outlined in yellow

The registered area includes the entrance gates, the clump of Schinus (peppercorn trees), a concrete capped well, BARC Avenue, Airport Lane and Hangar Lane and the nine P1 huts (now known as the BARC huts)[30] and two toilets. The section of the registered area that contains the BARC huts was largely devoted to family, community, religion and educational uses during the Migrant Camp period and because of these associations it has a strong resonance with most of the former residents. It is appropriate (and fortunate) that this area has retained much of its integrity and is relatively intact, as it has a high social, historic and cultural connection for many of the former residents, their families and their friends.

The former Migrant Camp residential and service areas are now largely redeveloped and there is little evidence of their former use. These areas are now home to an aged care residential centre, a caravan park and sheds.

3.3 Site Context

The collection of P1 huts and toilets have to a degree become subsumed by the airport and this is partially because of the diminishment of their context through the loss of original fabric. However, the huts that have been retained, have through their location (and proximity to the Bellman Hangar) and their relative integrity, maintained a particular appreciable relationship. The integrity of the huts is sufficiently high enough to ensure that there is a strong sense of place and identity. The utility and pragmatism that is associated with the post-war migrant program is still palpable for those who were residents and their families as well as for any visitor to this place.

In addition to an appreciation of the place as a migrant centre there is also some sense of the place as a war time base. The most significant surviving element is the Bellman Hangar. The runways are still largely on the same

[30] BARC – Benalla Accommodation Recreation Centre. This names dates from 1992.

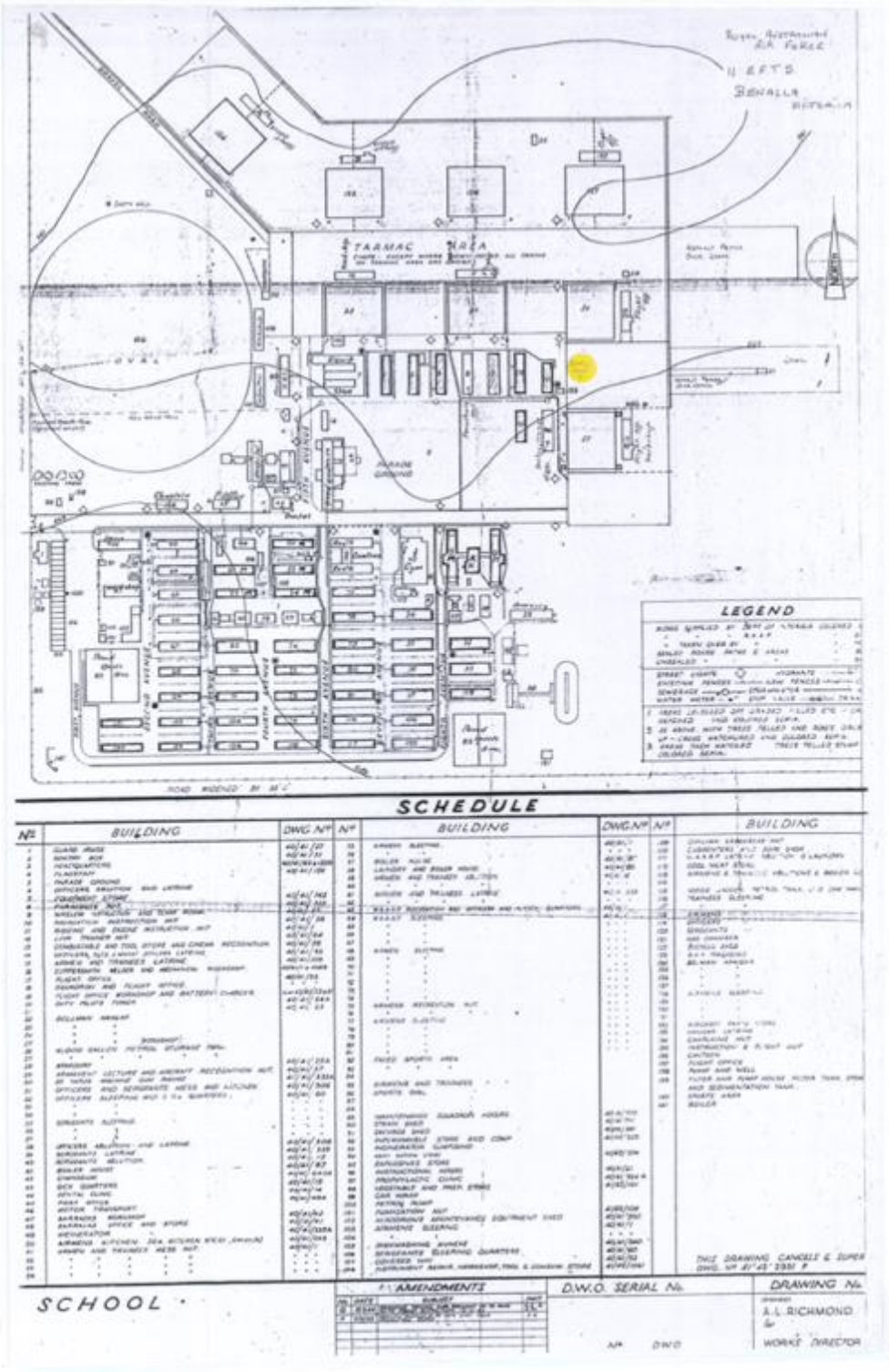
alignments. During the war there were four Bellman Hangars (Buildings 22, 23, 24 & 25) – see the military site plan. The other remnant area that has a military connection is the former Parade Ground and while it is being used currently as part of the caravan park it appears to retain many of its defining features and this includes the perimeter drainage.

The remnants of war time architecture might seem less pertinent to the context and setting of the former migrant camp from a contemporary perspective, but for the migrant residents, during the post war period it was also their immediate history. The immediacy of the war would have tempered the forging of early relationships with the wider community in Benalla. The oblique visual and contextual relationship that exists between the Bellman Hangar is important and the two histories have a strong relationship.

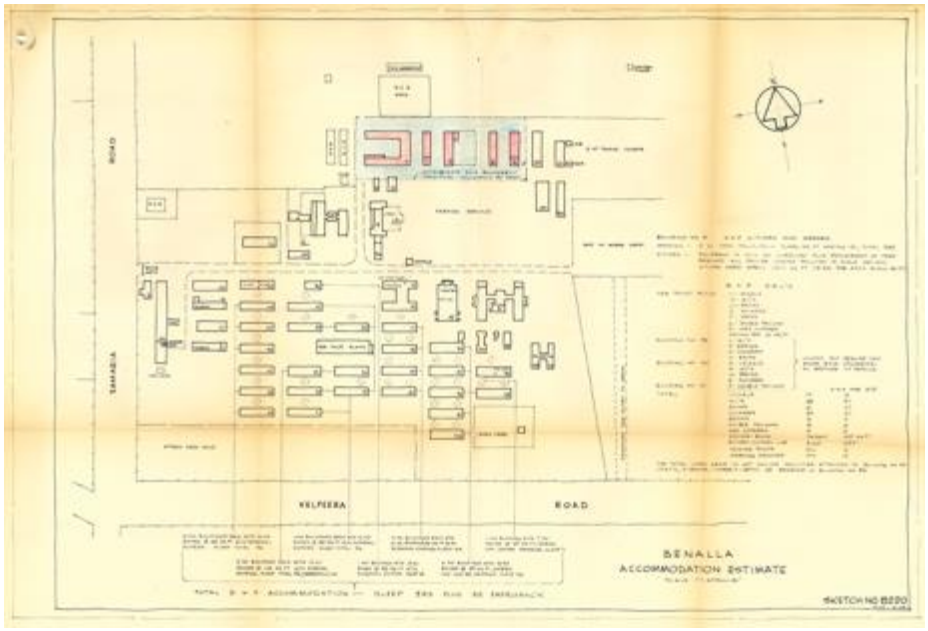
3.4 The location of the BARC Huts

Not all of the P1 huts are in their original location. However, by comparing the Army plans, the proposed migrant camp plans and contemporaneous images it appears that: buildings 61, 62, (toilet blocks); 63 & 64 (the Benalla Theatre Company); 65 (Mark Blyss Yoga) and 66 (Benalla Rose City Potters) are in their original locations. The Ballooning Victoria building and buildings 1A & 2B (Benalla Aeropark) have been relocated to their particular site. The Ballooning Club of Victoria occupies the approximate site of the Kindergarten, Creche and play area. Buildings 1A & 2B are in a similar location to the former Mechanics Store. Buildings 10 & 11 are located on the site of the former tennis courts. The Parade Ground was located behind and to the south of Buildings 64, 65, 66 and Ballooning Victoria.

Parade ground to the rear with administration and community buildings surrounding it. To the foreground are the surviving P1 huts Image Gruzewski Benalla Migrant Camp Exhibition©



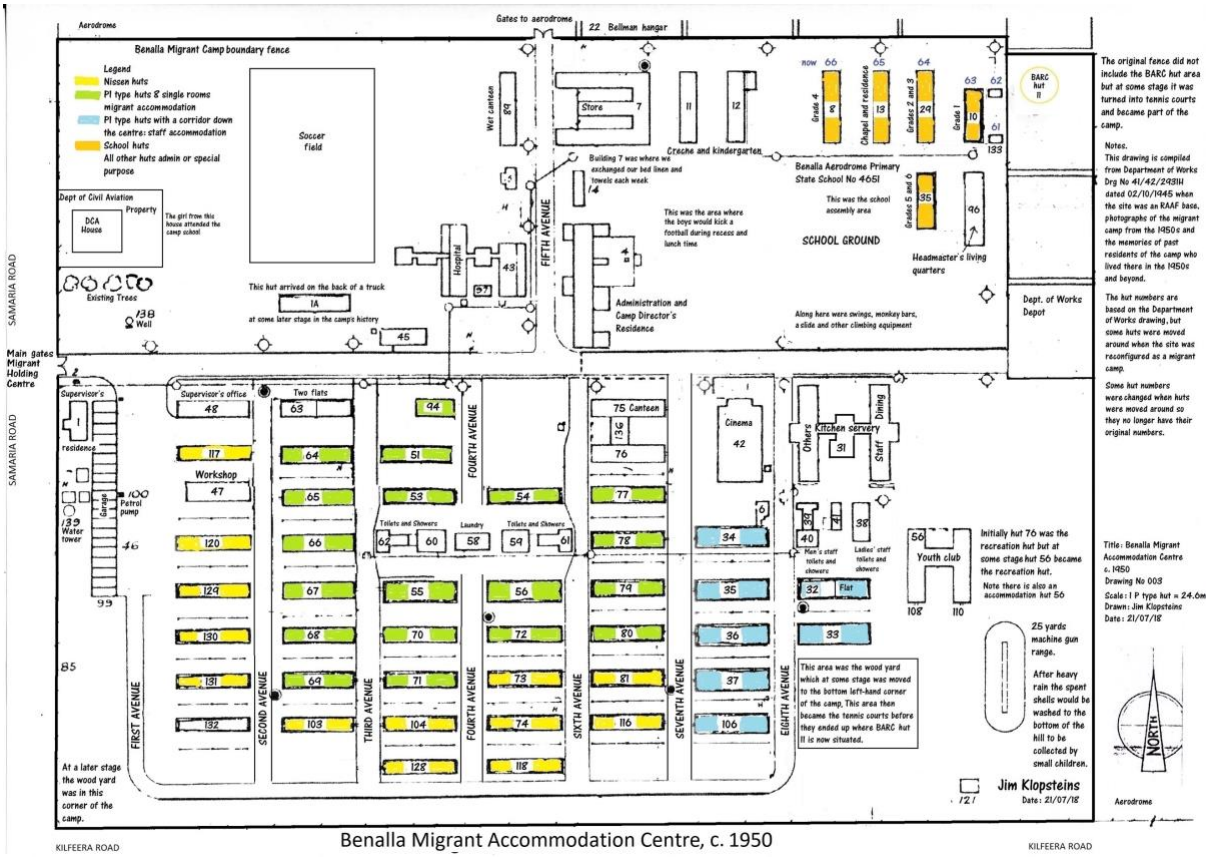
Plan of the site during its occupation by the military



Proposed plan for the migrant centre. **Date c1960s/70s**

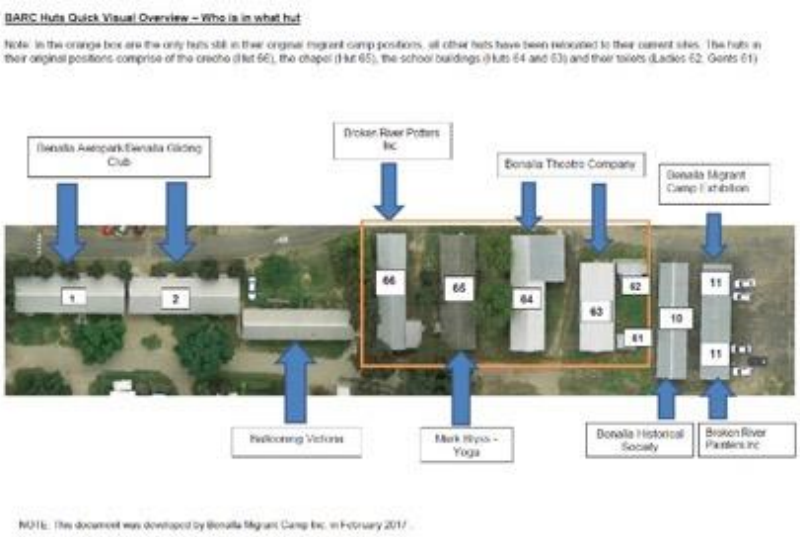
Source of image – Public Records Office Melbourne

Aerial image of the migrant camp c1950/60s. Benalla Migrant Camp Exhibition



Benalla Migrant Accommodation Centre, c. 1950

Site plan showing the layout during the occupation of the site by the Benalla Migrant Camp -this has been developed by Jim Klopsteins in association with the Benalla Migrant Camp Exhibition ©. See APPENDIX H for A4 image.



Location plan for Buildings and their user group

View of the former school rooms, toilets and tennis court

Varnick Image 8 Benalla Migrant Camp Exhibition©

The above image shows the layout of part of the registered area during the c1950s. The tennis court is adjacent to the male and female toilets and the two P1 huts with the banks of windows are the two school rooms. The Chapel is next to these two P1 huts and in the distance is another school room. This layout is largely similar to condition of the site in 2018 with the exception of the recent addition to building 64 (Benalla Theatre Club).

The later addition to the Benalla Theatre Club (Building 64) has removed the visual consistency of the line of theP1 huts.

View from the building 11 towards building 64 with its later addition.

View to the parade ground and the rear of the extant BARC huts

Merunovich Image 5 Benalla Migrant Camp Exhibition ©

Note the windows on BARC hut 66 are consistent with current conditions – this was a former school building.

3.5 The BARC huts – P1 huts

The BARC huts are P1-Type huts and these were designed and constructed for the army during World War II. The Second World War (WWII) and the establishment of a war time army depended on the building of a number of army barracks. This was logistically difficult as Australia had a relatively small construction industry with a limited capacity to construct a large number of buildings in a short time. The P1 hut was designed in a manner that made the best use of available resources and construction personnel. From this perspective, they were an ideal solution, as they were modelled on what was known, that is small scale domestic construction principles, and they were constructed from readily available building materials. This also meant that they were inexpensive to construct. While not true pre-fabricated buildings, they were also easy to move, and this benefit was better realised in the post-war period when the excess P1-huts were dispersed and became a more universal building type that is still in use today.

Australia's engagement in World War II was of a different scale and had different logistics to previous wars. During World War I, Australia was still clearly a dominion of Britain. Australian infantry was considered part of

the British military forces and was deployed by the British. This meant that the military camps, such as those at Langwarrin and Seymour were places for the organisation of troops prior to them being sent overseas for training. These centres had some permanent buildings but the troops were generally accommodated in tents.

WWII was different from a number of perspectives, and the most critical was the additional logistical requirements. A modern war required fluidity with the deployment of troops and supplies and integrated within this were services such as engineering, medical and dental support, supplies, catering, surveying, intelligence and administration all of which needed accommodation.[31] These military accommodation requirements were needed in Australia as troops were trained here prior to being sent overseas. The P1 hut became the standard accommodation unit and as such was integral to the success of the militarisation of Australia during the 1940s.

The P1 hut was not unique within the military world, but it was the Australian response. In part its design was predicated on the availability of hardwood and the commonality of its use within domestic construction. The British and Americans had been building similar simple rectangular timber structures with a gable roof and doors at each end. In addition, the British Nissen Hut and the American Quonset hut were another variation but these were more aimed at the prefabricated end of construction technologies. Both of these buildings are characterised by their semi-circular shape.

Nissen huts were used at Benalla both during the war and for migrant accommodation. They were invented during WWI and were in production by August 1916. At least 100,000 were produced in the First World War. The construction of these huts was revived during the WWII. The Quonset hut was a similar hut and they were manufactured in 1941 when the United States Navy needed an all-purpose, lightweight building that could be shipped anywhere and assembled without skilled labour.

The design of WWII buildings revolutionised the design of the light weight timber frame with the use of short sections of what was often green or unseasoned hardwood. The most significant technological changes largely applied to the invention of timber trusses that could span large open areas but the P1 hut also demonstrates changes in construction methodology. As already noted, the Nissen hut and the Quonset hut were steel-based prefabricated structures and these were exported across the Pacific. However, the majority of buildings constructed in the Southwest Pacific were constructed of timber because of the shortage of standard building materials. Steel was essential for armaments and munitions and this meant that unseasoned or green Australian hardwood became an important building material.[32] Up until this period, major timber structures used imported pines and firs. Local hardwood timber tended to be used for rudimentary buildings because despite its strength it tended to shrink and distort more during seasoning. Seasoned hardwood was not a material that could be produced readily as war time drying methods required several years to cure (dry) hardwoods. Unseasoned hardwood could be used, but for

[31] P Miller, *A little marvel in Timber and Tin – the Military P1 Hut of the Second World War*, Paper delivered at the 14th National Engineering Heritage Conference 2007 .

[32] P Goad, J Willis, 'Invention from War: a circumstantial modernism for Australian architecture, *The Journal of Architecture*, http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjar20, 2010, p 47

practicality it needed to be in short lengths, and up to WWII this had not really been explored. The use of short lengths of unseasoned hardwood had many advantages such as its short production time, low cost and there was a great abundance of this timber and many of the hardwood forests were close to transport links such as rail links. In addition, it was much stronger than imported soft wood and they could use nail joints such as skewed nail joints instead of carpenter joints such as tenon, mortice joints etc. This meant that unskilled labour could be used and the construction times were fast. The designs for these timber structures emerged from both the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Allied Works Council. Structures that capitalised on this new technology included trussed roof buildings (such as the P1 huts) and large buildings such as arched buildings and hangars.

These emergent technologies meant that the demand for military accommodation could be met through the relatively rapid construction of P1 type huts. The sizes of the P1 huts, (varying between 4.9m (16') to 6.1m (20'), in length), were ideal for the use of short pieces of timber and the P1 hut was built in their thousands.[33] Typically, the external cladding was corrugated metal or fibre cement sheet. Where it differed from standard building construction is that the floor was laid over the floor joists to create a platform and the timber stud walls were built onto this platform. This type of platform construction is similar in principle to the American Balloon frame. The timber frame had timber studs which were nogged and braced. The flooring platform was tongue and groove hardwood boards. Structurally, the most obvious changes were found in the design of the trusses. The earliest trusses were simple collar ties and later versions had king post trusses and tie rods. The changes in design were most likely in response to the use of short sections of unseasoned hardwoods, as the earlier collar ties would have initially relied on larger lengths of unseasoned timber and the consequence would have been warping and deformation.

The basic P type model could be modified for a variety of uses, such as messes, kitchens, surgeries, recreation huts, sleeping quarters, stores or similar. The standard P1 hut had five window openings on each side of the long wall. At each gable end there was a pair of ledged and braced doors with v-notched tongue and groove boards. A ventilation gap covered with bird-mesh was left at the top of the walls. Roofs were clad with either corrugated galvanised metal or corrugated asbestos cement sheeting. The P1 huts were rarely lined and the only form of furnishing were rows of clothes hooks.[34] During the course of the war there were changes to the design of the basic hut. The most obvious occurring with the window design and these included awning, casement and hopper windows.

The P1 huts were designed for twenty sleeping spaces. Other armies often had a bunk system which would double the sleeping capacity but the Australian practice was for single bed spaces. [35] The reason for this is not clear but

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33 P Goad, J Willis, 'Invention from War: a circumstantial modernism for Australian architecture, *The Journal of Architecture*, http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjar20, 2010, p 48

34 P Miller, *A little marvel in Timber and Tin – the Military P1 Hut of the Second World War,* Paper delivered at the 14th National Engineering Heritage Conference 2007

35 P Miller, *A little marvel in Timber and Tin – the Military P1 Hut of the Second World War,* Paper delivered at the

one explanation is that the original sleeping configuration was determined by the use of straw-filled palliasses laid directly on the floor with no bed at all.[36]

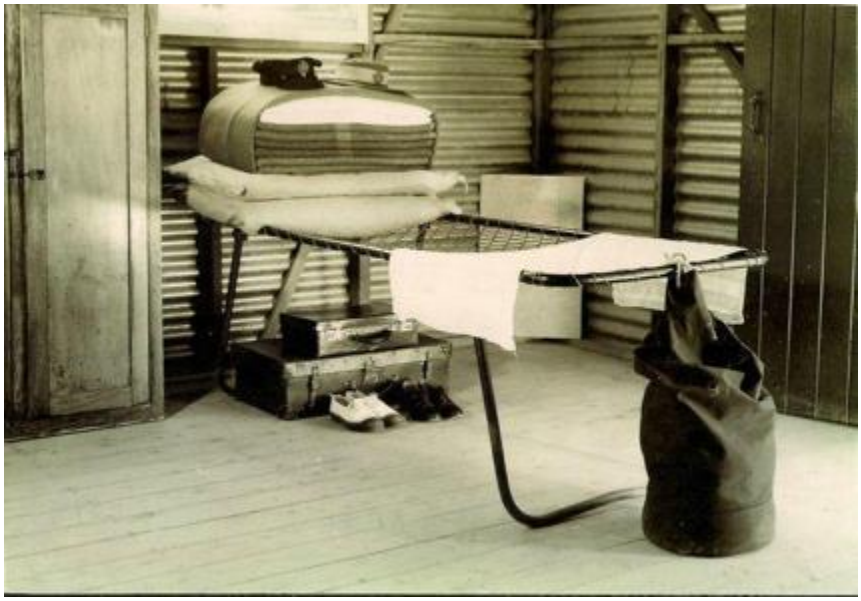


Image provided by Benalla Migrant Camp Exhibition©

3.6 Post War History of the P1 hut

After the end of WWII the government was resolute and wanted a regular army. This meant that Puckapunyal, Bandiana and Broadmeadows retained their military role and that the P Series huts were still in use well into the 1970s. Some of the former military camps became migrant centres such as Benalla and Bonegilla and the P1 hut became the first home for many new Australians.

The P1 huts are generally referred to by the users of the site as BARC huts. These are the army designed and constructed P1-type huts. The registered area includes nine P1- type huts and two toilet blocks. The toilets were constructed during the migrant camp occupation of the site. The huts were constructed using a standard P1-type design. The simplicity of the design was predicated on a rectangular hut (of standard dimensions) with a gable roof. The wall framing was a light-weight timber stud frame with timber trusses for the roof structure. The P1 huts were clad with horizontal corrugated metal wall cladding, and corrugated metal or asbestos cement roof cladding. The P1 huts sat on timber stumps with metal ant caps. The P1 huts have undergone varying modifications

14th National Engineering Heritage Conference 2007

[36] P Miller, *A little marvel in Timber and Tin – the Military P1 Hut of the Second World War*, Paper delivered at the 14th National Engineering Heritage Conference 2007

with two of the P1 huts being added to. The other P1 huts have had varying degrees of maintenance, modifications and minor changes.

3.7 General analysis of the extant BARC huts

BARC hut 1A with side by side rooms accessed by individual external doors.

The Benalla Aeropark BARC huts (1A & 2B), BARC Huts 10 and 11 were used as Migrant accommodation huts. They are important as they provide physical evidence as to how the P1 huts were organised during this period. Evidence of the type of buildings that were used to house migrants is now confined to four BARC huts – 1A, 2A, 10 & 11. BARC Huts 1A & 2B still retain their original configuration with side by side rooms accessed by individual external doors.

BARC huts 10 & 11 have lost their internal partitions but evidence for these can be found through markings on the floor and on the roof trusses. Both huts have had some of their doors removed and the former openings reclad.

BARC Hut 10

West elevation shows the original configuration of the doors and windows. The other side has been modified.

BARC Hut 10

Evidence of wall partitions.

The 'King post' has been modified to support internal linings.

BARC Hut 11

Both elevations (east and west) have been modified with most of the doors removed and replaced with galvanised metal sheeting.

Change of cladding indicates places where the doors have been removed.

The BARC huts have retained varying degrees of intactness and integrity. The huts that were used for education (buildings 63 & 64) have remnant features associated with this use and this includes some of the blackboards. The two toilet blocks (male and female) have retained many of their original features and this includes the layout, evidence of the former cisterns (with one original cistern still extant in the male toilets), the rudimentary wire and nail toilet roll holders, the primitive drainage for the wash basins; the timber doors to the cubicles and the concrete floors.

The two BARC huts used by the Benalla Theatre Company (buildings 63 & 64) have been modified. Building 63 has had the least intervention with the construction of a large opening on the northern elevation. However, the changes to building 64 have compromised the significance of this building. These changes included the removal of a section of the external wall and the construction of an addition to the east. This has markedly altered the architectural significance of this building.

Building 65 (Mark Blyss Yoga) has had some alterations. The most significant being the construction of an internal wall that has altered the original layout of the building when it was used as a Chapel. Externally there have been few changes and this is the only building that has retained its original corrugated asbestos roof and ventilators.

Building 66 (Broken River Potters) has undergone some changes and this includes the construction of a space to the rear for the pottery kiln. However, this building has largely retained its original external features. The floor is now a concrete slab.

The Balloon building has been altered and it is unclear as to the extent of the original configuration of the building. However, some windows have been altered as well as the western elevation.

Entrance gates

The main masonry pillars that formed the entrance to the Migrant Centre are extant, although the gate that secured the roadway has been removed. The galvanised pipe and wire mesh pedestrian gate is in situ and appears unaltered.

The entrance gates in 2018

The entrance gates during the operation of the migrant centre Image provided by Benalla Migrant Exhibition Centre©

Entrance gates during the occupation of the migrant camp

Jespersen Image 17 Benalla Migrant Camp Exhibition ©

3.8 BARC Avenue

The entrance road (BARC Avenue) and Hangar Lane is included in the extent of registration. BARC Avenue is lined with trees that have been planted with an informality that was also evident during the 1940s/50s. Many of the former residents describe the roadway as having flowering prunus trees, cypress and peppercorn trees.[37] There are a number of peppercorn trees (*Schinus Molle*) near the entrance, and these can be found to the north of the entrance gates. Today this entrance road has car parking on both sides of the road and it also provides access to the aged care facility.

BARC Avenue through its breaks in the gutters provides evidence of the location of the former streets. These streets were named First, Second, Third and Fourth Avenue and they were located on the south side of what is now referred to as BARC Avenue. The former Fifth Avenue has now been named Airport Drive. The roadway to the front of the BARC huts is Hangar Lane and it is a partially sealed road with gravel shoulders.

Remnant Peppercorn trees

In the grounds to the north side of BARC Avenue there is a large brick cistern with a concrete cap.

[37] Refer to the Landscape chapter in this section

Brick Cistern – with concrete cap

These types of wells were common water storage features and are found on many farms. It is most likely that this well belongs to the earlier use of the land when it was farmland and possibly marks the location of a former homestead. The clump of peppercorn trees are possibly from this period as they are typical farm yards trees as they were planted to help contain the dust and their resilience often provided the only green landscape feature during the long hot north-eastern summer months.

The well has been described by many former residents as a place to meet and as a focal point within the landscape.

Topor Image 8 Benalla Migrant Camp Exhibition ©

3.9 Stormwater and ground water drainage

There are a number of open drains that can be found at the perimeter of the huts. The drains are similar to a concrete spoon drain. This type of site drainage appears to be a typical feature of former war time Army camps. The drains were used to take the stormwater away from the environs of the camp buildings. A similar system is found at Bonegilla

3.10 Inventory Sheets

The following section includes an individual inventory sheet for each structure included in Heritage Victoria's Extent of Registration.

The building inventory is an integral part of the physical analysis of the former Benalla Migrant Camp. The 'inventory' format has been chosen because it provides a simple and comparative method of presenting information about each building element on the site. The surviving structures share a similar construction methodology and use of building materials. However, there are variations with the window designs, placement of doors and size of huts. Some of the changes can be attributed to recent modifications. Overall the huts have retained a medium to high integrity.

3.11 Building 1 (A)

Benalla Aeropark

North elevation Building 1(A)

South Elevation Building 1(A)

West Elevation Building 1(A)

Oblique view to the east Elevation

Building Use

Building 1(A) is used for accommodation by the Benalla Aeropark Inc.

Building Description

In general

Building 1(A) is a rectangular building with a gable roof. Each longitudinal section has regularly spaced paired timber doors and paired casement windows flank each set of doors. A flight of timber steps leads up to the entrance doors and central to the steps is a single galvanised metal pipe hand rail. Each gable end has a rectangular metal louvre. The walls are clad with short sheets of corrugated galvanised metal. The roof is clad with long sheets of corrugated metal.

Construction

The construction for the hut appears to follow the standard war-time P type timber framing methodology:

- The sub-floor is constructed with timber bearers, timber joists and a tongue and groove hardwood floor.
- This building has been re-stumped and raised. This has meant that the perimeter to the sub-floor area has been lined with three timber boards. This feature is not found on the other huts. The huts that have not been permanently re-stumped tend to have one plinth board only or none.
- The roof is a gable roof and while the truss system was not visible from the interior it appears to follow what is relatively standard on this site. The top chord of the truss is a paired timber chord with a timber section as infill. The paired timber chord projects out beyond the edge of the wall to provide support for the eave and gutters. This is a good example of the economic use of materials and innovative timber framing that was developed during this period.

- The roof has been replaced with long sheets of corrugated metal and the ridge capping is contemporary with a flat profile. The gutters have a quad profile and the downpipes are PVC.
- The walls are clad with corrugated metal laid on the horizontal and there are timber corner stops. The dimensions of the sheets are typical of the WWII period and appear to be the original metal cladding. It has a painted finish.
- The east elevation still has its original circular metal army identification plate.
- The doors to the units are paired timber doors. The construction of the doors is similar to the historic description of a typical P hut. The doors have been constructed with vertical timber boards and they are ledged and braced. Many doors retain what appears to be the original door furniture (knobs and locks). Many of the doors have modern flyscreen doors.
- There is a single flight of timber steps for each pair of doors. The centre of the steps has a galvanised pipe handrail.
- The windows are paired timber casement windows with each casement consisting of two panes with timber framing. The timber window framing is rudimentary and the sills are minimal. Above each window is a hopper vent. Many of these retain an early wire fly mesh on the outside and the inside face has a timber flap to control the ventilation.

Internal Description

Internally the hut is divided along the ridge line with a partition wall. Each longitudinal section is further divided into separate accommodation quarters. Room numbers 11 & 12 have a connecting door in the central partition wall.

Each of the rooms within this building have been fitted out as bedrooms. Some of the rooms have a mezzanine floor, some have a kitchenette arrangement and some have basic plumbing (sink/basin and running water). The fixtures and fittings vary in scale and type but due to the relatively small rooms they have made little impact on the general character of the internal spaces. All of the internal walls are lined. The composition of the lining varies but typically it is either Caenite, Masonite or plaster. The sizes of the lining boards vary and many have a batten finish.

Building Type

Army P1 Type building.

Date of construction

The P1 type hut appears to date from c1941 with the establishment of the No 11 Elementary Flying School [EFTS].

Modifications

External modifications include:

- Installation of air-conditioning units in the casement windows. This has meant that the original configuration of identical proportioned window panes has been lost.
- The re-roofing of the roof with modern long sheets of corrugated metal.
- Originally there were roof vents and these were removed during the re-roofing and not replaced.
- The ridge capping and gable ends have also been altered from the original design.
- There are a number of individual television aerials.
- The re-stumping of the huts has seen the construction of three boards across this bottom area and the loss of the original timber plinth. The boards have gaps between them. This has altered the low slung original appearance of the huts and their rudimentary appearance.
- The use of PVC down pipes.
- The external galvanised pipe hand-rails.

Building/Fabric Condition

The building is in fair to good condition.

3.12 Building 2 (B)

Benalla Aeropark Inc.

North elevation Building 2(B)

South Elevation Building 2(B)

West Elevation Building 2(B)

East Elevation Building 2(B)

Building Use

Building 2(B) is used for accommodation by the Benalla Aeropark Inc.

Building Description

In general

Building 2(B) is a rectangular building with a gable roof. Each longitudinal section has regularly spaced paired timber doors and paired casement windows flank each set of doors. A flight of timber steps leads up to the entrance doors and central to the steps is a single galvanised metal pipe hand rail. Each gable end has a rectangular metal louvre. The walls are clad with short sheets of corrugated galvanised metal. The roof is clad with long sheets of corrugated metal.

Construction

Building 2 (B) follows the typical methodology associated with the construction of P1 type huts. The construction for the hut appears to follow the standard war-time P type timber framing methodology:

- The sub-floor is constructed with timber bearers, timber joists and a tongue and groove hardwood floor. The sub-floor area has been lined with timber boards (three) and this is not found on the other huts. The other huts generally have one plinth board.
- The roof is a gable roof and while the truss system was not visible from the interior it appears to follow what is relatively standard on this site. The top chord of the truss is a paired timber chord with a timber section as infill. This paired timber chord projects out beyond the edge of the wall to provide support for the eave and gutters. This is a good example of the economic use of materials and innovative timber framing that was developed during this period.

- The roof has been replaced with long sheets of corrugated metal and the ridge capping is has a contemporary flat profile. The gutters have a quad profile with round PVC downpipes.
- The walls are clad with corrugated metal laid on the horizontal and there are timber corner stops. The dimensions of the sheets are typical of the post war period and on this basis are potentially original. It has a painted finish.
- The doors to the units are paired timber doors. The construction of the doors is similar to the historic description of a typical P hut. The doors have been constructed with vertical timber boards and they are ledged and braced. Many doors retain what appears to be the original door furniture (knobs and locks). Many of the doors have modern flyscreen doors.
- There is a single flight of steps for each pair of doors. The centre of the steps has a galvanised pipe handrail.
- The windows are simple paired casement windows with each casement consisting of two panes. The timber window framing is rudimentary and the sills are minimal. Above each window is a hopper vent. Many of these retain an early wire fly mesh on the outside and the inside face has a timber flap to control the ventilation. Where an air-conditioning unit has been placed in a casement window the original configuration has been altered.

Internal Description

The internal area of the hut is divided along the ridge line with a partition wall. Each longitudinal section is further divided into separate accommodation quarters. Room numbers 13 & 14 have a connecting door in the central partition wall.

Each of the rooms within this building have been fitted out as bedrooms. Some of the rooms have a mezzanine floor, some have a kitchenette arrangement and some have basic plumbing (sink/basin and running water). The fixtures and fittings vary in scale and type but due to the relatively small rooms they have made little impact on the general character of the internal spaces. All of the internal walls are lined. The composition of the lining varies with some: Caenite, Masonite, plaster board and other unidentified fibre sheeting. The sizes of the lining boards vary and many have a batten finish.

Building Type

Army P1Type building.

Date of construction

The P1 type hut appears to date from c1941 with the establishment of the No 11 Elementary Flying School [EFTS].

Modifications

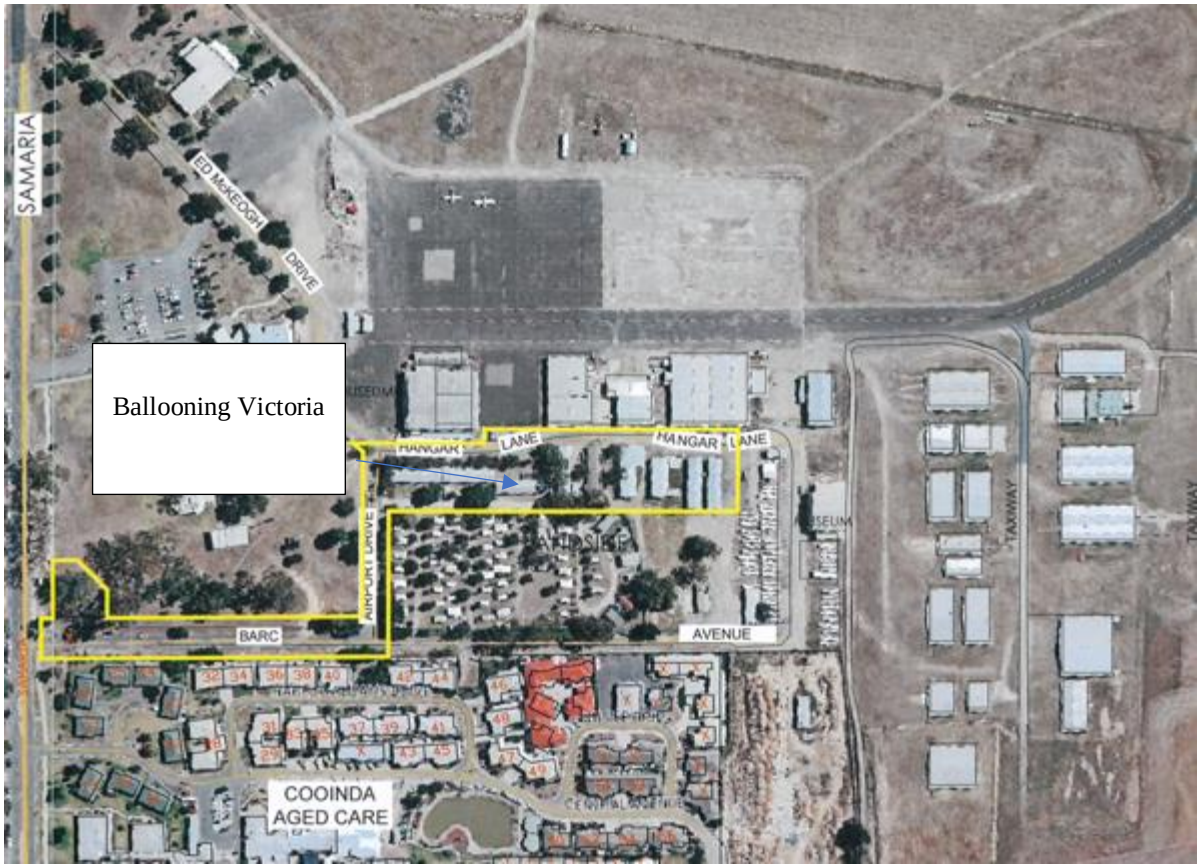
There have been some external modifications and these include:

- Installation of air-conditioning units in the casement windows. This has meant that the original configuration of identical proportioned window panes has been lost.
- The re-roofing of the roof with modern long sheets of corrugated metal. Originally there were roof vents and these were removed during the re-roofing and not replaced.
- The ridge capping and gable ends have also been altered from the original.
- There are a number of individual television aerials.
- The re-stumping of the huts has seen the construction of three boards across this bottom area and the loss of the original timber plinth. The boards have gaps between them. This has altered the low slung original appearance of the huts and their rudimentary appearance.
- The use of PVC down pipes.
- The construction of galvanised pipe hand rails.

Building/Fabric Condition

The building is in fair to good condition.

3.13 Ballooning Victoria



North Elevation

Detail of the timber deck

South Elevation

East Elevation

West Elevation

Present Use

Accommodation units with living areas and kitchen.

Building Type

Army P1 Type building.

Date

The P1 type hut appears to date from c1941 with the establishment of the RAAF No 11 Elementary Flying School [EFTS].

In general

The former Balloon Victoria P1 type hut is a rectangular building with a gable roof. The south facade has three regularly spaced timber framed casement windows at either end of the elevation. The central section has one timber framed paired window that is placed higher on the wall. It is not symmetrical to the rest of the facade. The north facing façade has four regularly spaced timber framed paired casement windows at the western end. The central portion of the façade has an entry door with a timber framed band of triple windows. The centre pane is fixed with sash windows on either side. The area to the front of this part of the façade has a large timber deck with a timber ramp that slopes to the east. The remaining area (eastern end) of this façade has timber framed paired casement windows.

The east elevation (gable end) has a central timber frame and timber door. There is a flight of timber stairs with a galvanised metal handrail. There is rectangular metal vent to the apex of the gable.

The west gable has been largely modified with new fibre sheet cladding with a modern timber panel door (with an upper glazed panel). A lean-to roof protects this door and falls to a walled area that is the wood store.

Internal Description

Approximately one third of the hut (the western end) is divided internally around the ridge line with partition walls and a central passage. These areas are further divided into separate accommodation quarters. Each of these areas have been fitted out as bedrooms. All of the internal walls are lined. The eastern section is a large living and open kitchen area. This has been fitted out with all new materials.

Construction

This building follows the typical methodology associated with the construction of P type huts.

The construction for the hut appears to follow the standard war-time P type timber framing methodology:

- The sub-floor is constructed with timber bearers, timber joists and a tongue and groove hardwood floor. The sub-floor area has been lined with timber boards (three) – this is not found on the other huts as they generally have one plinth board. However, this style of perimeter cladding (three base boards) was also used on Buildings 1A & 2B
- The roof is a gable roof with a typical WWII army roof truss. The top chord is paired and extends out to provide support for the eaves and gutter.
- The roof has been replaced with long sheets of corrugated metal and the ridge capping is a contemporary flat profile. The gutters have a quad profile with round PVC downpipes.

- The walls are clad with corrugated metal laid on the horizontal and there are timber corner stops. The dimensions of the sheets are typical of the WWII period and on this basis are potentially original. It has a painted finish.
- The door to the west façade is a timber panel door with a modern door handle.
- The timber paired casement windows each have two panes. The timber window framing is rudimentary and the sills are minimal. Above each window is a hopper vent. Many of these retain an early wire fly mesh on the outside and the inside face has a timber flap to control the ventilation. The triple band of windows are timber framed.
- The huts have been re-stumped with concrete stumps and ant caps.

Modifications

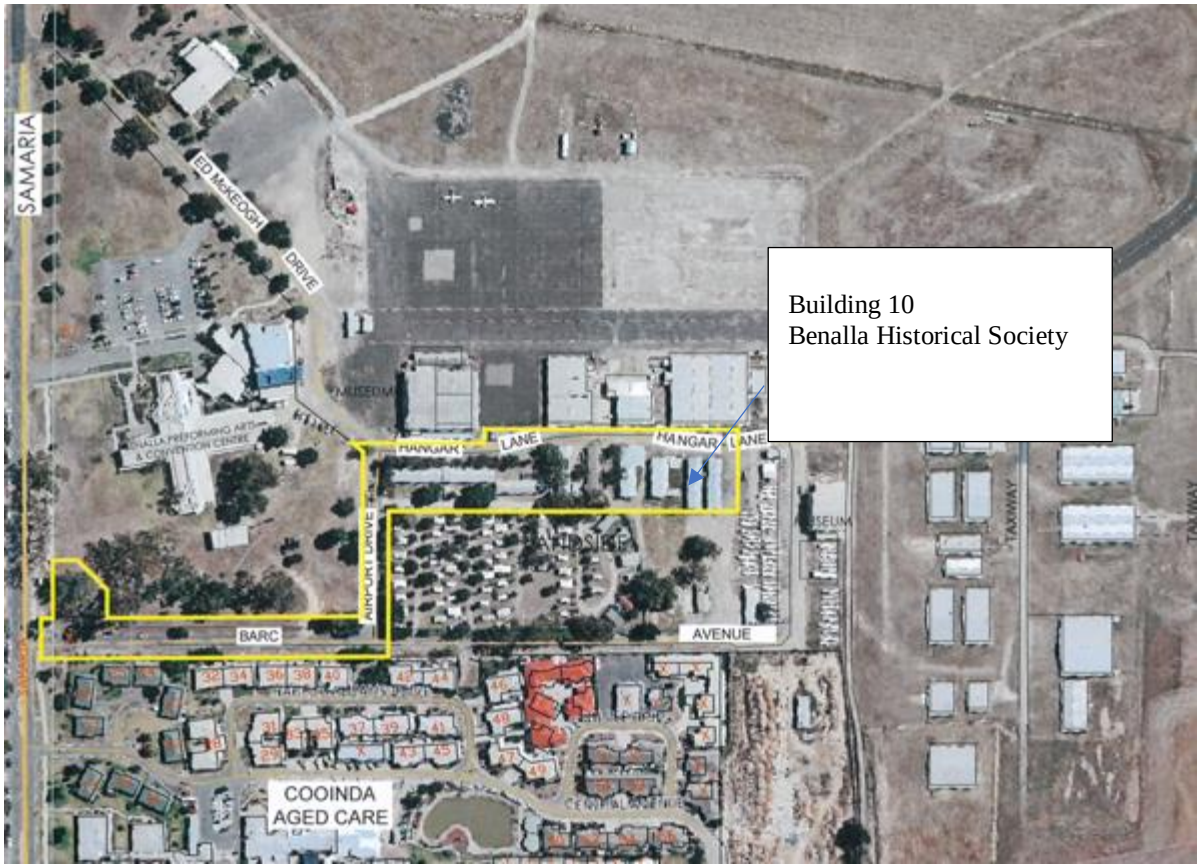
There have been some external modifications and these include:

- The re-roofing of the roof with modern long sheets of corrugated metal. Originally there were roof vents and these were removed during the re-roofing and not replaced.
- The re-stumping of the huts has seen the construction of three boards across this bottom area and the loss of the original timber plinth. The boards have gaps between them. This has altered the low slung original appearance of the huts and their rudimentary appearance.
- The construction of the timber deck to the front of the building.
- The use of PVC down pipes.
- The modifications to the west façade and this includes the replacement of the original galvanised corrugated metal with fibre sheeting, the introduction of a timber door and the construction of the lean-to roof and woodshed.
- It is unknown if the current internal layout is from the WWII period. It would seem more likely that the conversion into small accommodation units occurred during the post-war migrant camp period. The living area and kitchen area have been refurbished and this includes the introduction of solid fuel heating. It is unknown if the open area that is now a living area dates from the post-war migrant camp period. The windows are not typical and were possibly altered for this area. There is a question mark as to whether this was former administrative building.

Building/Fabric Condition

The building is in good condition.

3.14 Building 10 Benalla Historical Society



Site Plan

West Elevation

East Elevation

South elevation

North Elevation

Detail of changes to door and window configuration – west elevation

Detail of changes to door and window configuration – east elevation

Present Use

The Benalla Historical Society use this building for storage of items.

Building Type

Army P1 Type building.

Date

The P1 type hut appears to date from c1941 with the establishment of the RAAF No 11 Elementary Flying School [EFTS].

In general

Building 10 is a standard P1 type hut. It is a rectangular building with a gable roof. The original roof has been replaced with long sheets of corrugated metal. The sarking has become frayed and is in very poor condition. The gutters are quad and there is a timber eave. The walls are clad with painted corrugated metal sheeting. The sheeting sizes are the older short sheets. There are timber stops at all corners.

Both the east and west facades have been substantially altered. The west façade has had all but two of its original doors removed and they have been replaced by corrugated metal infill constructed over the openings. The east façade has also had all but two of its original doors removed and the openings infilled with galvanised corrugated

metal sheets. Where the doors have been retained there are timber steps (with no hand rail). The former openings are still flanked by the original timber framed and timber casement windows. These have been covered over with Perspex type materials. Above each window there are ventilation hoppers many of which still retain their wire mesh fly screens.

The building sits on temporary stumps (concrete paver and concrete stump with ant cap). The perimeter of the building has a timber plinth (bearer) that sits on the external line of stumps.

Internal Description

There is one transverse internal wall with a connecting door. There is evidence through changes to the floor where additional internal walls were located.

Construction

The construction for the hut appears to follow the standard war-time P type timber framing methodology:

- The sub-floor is constructed with timber bearers, timber joists and a tongue and groove hardwood floor. The sub-floor is not lined but has an exposed bearer and this rests on the stumps. This is not original fabric.
- The roof is a gable roof with a typical WWII army roof truss. The top chord is paired and extends out to provide support for the eaves and gutter.
- The roof has been replaced with long sheets of corrugated metal and the ridge capping is contemporary flat profile.
- The gable end of the roof has a rolled capping.
- The gutters have a quad profile with round PVC downpipes. There is a timber eave. The downpipes drain onto the site.
- The roof rafters run out to provide an overhang at the gable ends.
- The walls are clad with corrugated metal laid horizontally and there are timber corner stops. The dimensions of the sheets are typical of the post war period and on this basis are potentially original. It has a painted finish.
- The surviving timber doors are constructed from vertical timber members and are ledged and braced.
- A pair of timber framed and timber casement windows flank each paired door opening. The timber window framing is rudimentary and the sills are minimal. Above each window is a hopper vent. Many of these retain an early wire fly mesh on the outside and the inside face has a timber flap to control the ventilation.

Modifications

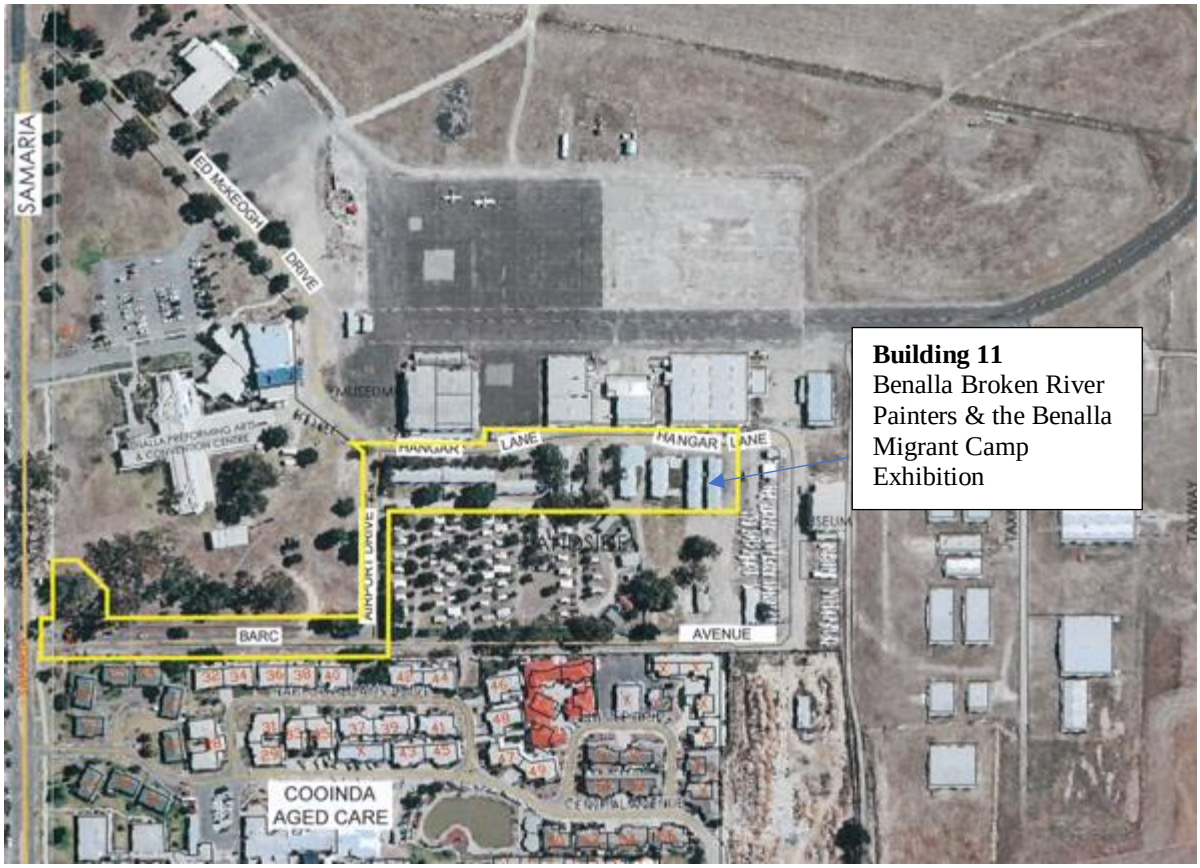
There have been some external modifications and these include:

- The re-roofing of the roof with modern long sheets of corrugated metal. Originally there were roof vents and these were removed during the re-roofing and not replaced.
- The huts have been temporarily re-stumped.
- PVC downpipes have been used and these drain from the perimeter of the building.
- The west and east facades have been modified through the removal of a number of the doors. The door openings have been replaced with corrugated metal cladding.
- The current internal arrangement has been modified. There is physical evidence on the floor (marks left from the removal of walls) of the former internal layout.
- The internal corrugated metal ceiling was installed over two periods – 2004 & 2006.
- The internal walls were removed when the Historical Society took over the hut in 1990.

Building/Fabric Condition

The building is in fair to poor condition.

3.15 Building 11 – Migrant Camp Exhibition and the Benalla Broken River Painters Inc.



Site Plan

East Elevation

West Elevation

North Elevation **South Elevation**

Present Use

Building 11 has two tenants. Two thirds of the internal space is dedicated to the Benalla Broken River Painters with the remainder of the internal space used by the Benalla Migrant Camp Exhibition.

Building Type

Army P1 Type building.

Date

The P1 type hut appears to date from c1941 with the establishment of the RAAF No 11 Elementary Flying School [EFTS].

In general

Building 11 is a typical P1 type hut. It is a rectangular building with a gable roof. The original roof has been replaced with long sheets of corrugated metal. The gutters are quad and there is a timber eave. There is no roofing finish to the gable ends.

The walls are clad with painted corrugated metal sheeting. The sheeting sizes are the earlier short sheet dimensions. There are timber stops at all corners.

The east elevation is missing one of the original door openings (and door). The west elevation is relatively intact with the original layout of doors and windows. Above each window there are ventilation hoppers many of which still retain their wire mesh fly screens.

The building sits on temporary stumps (concrete paver and concrete stump with ant cap). The perimeter of the building has a timber plinth (bearer) that sits on the external line of stumps.

Building 11 still retains its original army circular metal identification plate.

Internal Description

There is one transverse internal wall and this is the dividing wall between the two user groups. There is evidence through changes to the floor finishes, where additional internal walls were located. The Exhibition room has the clearest indication of the former wall arrangement.

Internal finishes in the Benalla Migrant Exhibition Centre

Evidence of the former walls - marks on floor

Wall finish with battens

The walls are lined with fibre cement sheets with battens. The ceiling lining follows the slope of the gable roof.

Interior view to the rectangular vent

External view of the vent

This is one of the only surviving ventilator covers.

Construction

The construction for Building 11 appears to follow the standard war-time P type timber framing methodology:

- The sub-floor is constructed with timber bearers, timber joists and a tongue and groove hardwood floor. The perimeter to the sub-floor is not lined and the bearer rests on the stumps.
- The framing is light weight timber framing.
- The roof is a gable roof with a typical WWII army roof truss. The top chord is paired and extends out to provide support for the eaves and gutter.

King post truss

The arrows point to the two timber chords for the truss. The internal space is filled with timber. The two pieces of timber project through the wall to form the eave support.

Other construction details:

- The roof has been replaced with long sheets of corrugated metal and the ridge capping is contemporary flat profile.
- The gable ends have no capping just the straight edge of the metal roofing.
- The gutters have a quad profile with round PVC downpipes. There is a timber eave. The downpipes drain onto the site.
- The roof rafters run out to provide an overhang at the gable ends.
- temporary concrete stumps with metal ant caps.

- The walls are clad with corrugated metal laid horizontally and there are timber corner stops. The dimensions of the sheets are typical of the post war period and on this basis are potentially original. It has a painted finish.
- The surviving timber doors are constructed from vertical timber members and are ledged and braced. The hut originally had six doors and only two have survived. Internally the evidence of the doors has been removed with the spaces covered over with sheets of plaster or fibre cement boards. Externally the former doorways have been covered over with corrugated metal. The doors are stored in the Council Storage Depot.
- A pair of timber framed and timber casement windows flank each paired door opening. The timber window framing is rudimentary and the sills are minimal. Above each window is a hopper vent. Many of these retain an early wire fly mesh on the outside and the inside face has a timber flap to control the ventilation.

Modifications

There are a number of external modifications and these include:

- The re-roofing of the roof with modern long sheets of corrugated metal. Originally there were roof vents and these were removed during the re-roofing and not replaced.
- The huts have been temporarily re-stumped.
- The downpipes drain directly onto the ground from the perimeter of the building. Some drain into open drains. These drains are part of the original fabric.

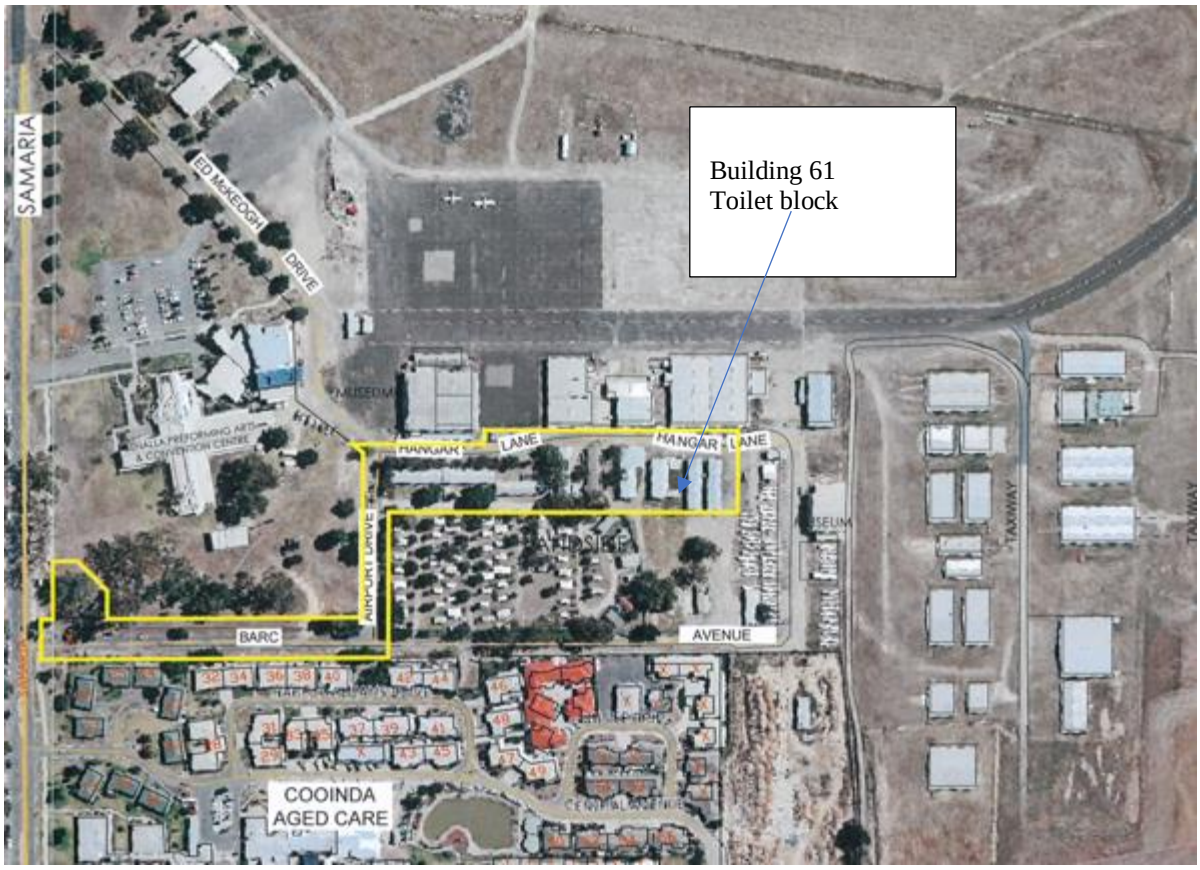
- One door has been removed from the east elevation.
- Internally some of the internal walls have been removed.
- The construction of timber joinery in the art space.

Interior view of the art space

Building Condition

The building is in fair to good condition.

3.16 Building 61 Toilet



Date

The toilets were constructed as part of the post war re-development of the site as a Migrant Camp. These toilets were largely used by the school community.

South Elevation

North Elevation

East Elevation

Door detail (south)

Present Use

Toilets (not in use)

Building Type

The toilets are not an adaptation of the P type of hut. They have been purpose built.

Date

The toilets were constructed (c1947) as part of the post war re-development of the site as a Migrant Camp. These toilets were largely used by the school community.

In general

The design and construction of the toilets are typical for the period. They are rectangular buildings with two cubicles. The roof is a relatively flat pitched skillion.

Construction

The toilets are constructed with a lightweight timber frame and are clad with corrugated metal cladding. The roof is a corrugated metal skillion roof without any gutters. The doors are constructed from vertical timber boards and are ledged and braced. One of the cubicles has retained an original toilet bowl and cistern. The vent pipe and capping are extant.

The internal walls are sheeted with galvanised metal sheeting and have been painted. The floor is a concrete slab.

Toilet pan and cast-iron cistern.

One of the surviving timber doors has clear evidence of the red colour paint that was used on many of the doors within the complex. This is evident from residue as well as some of the historic images.

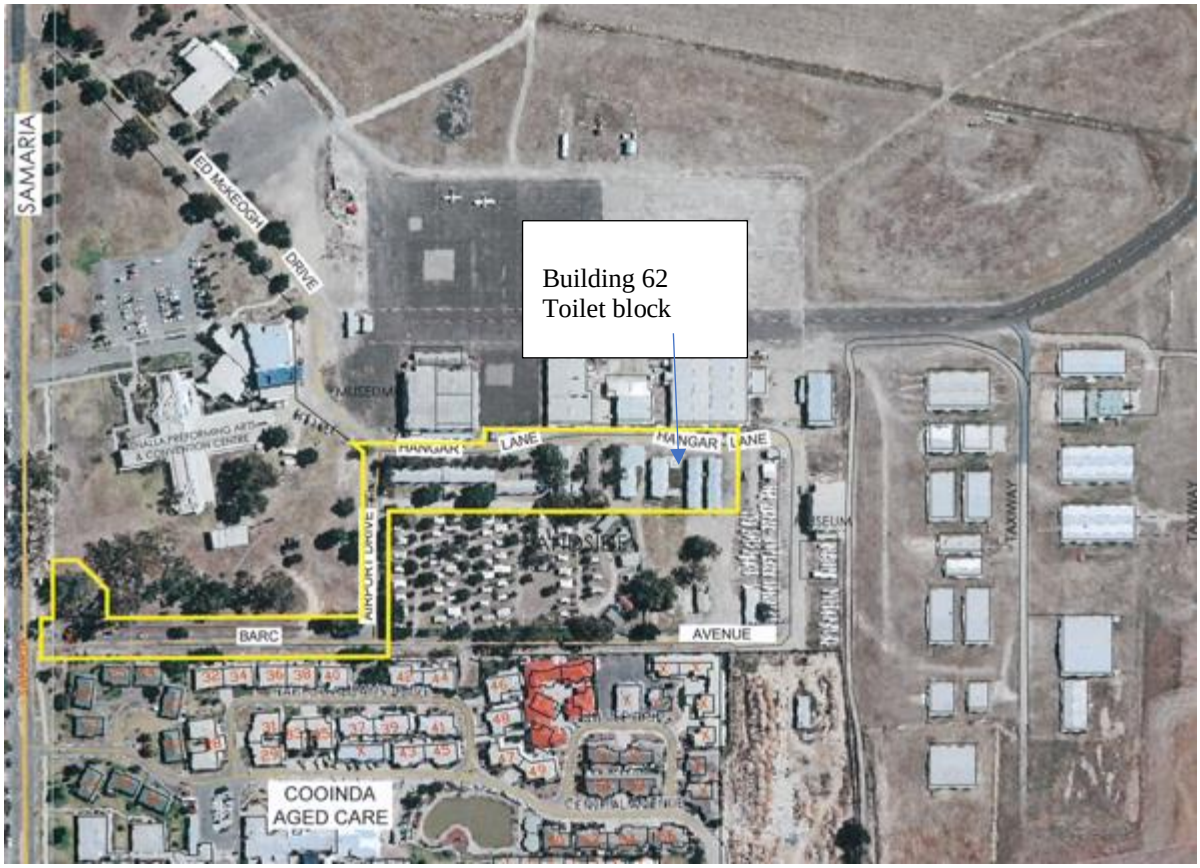
Modifications

There have been few modifications undertaken on this toilet block. It is not in use and because of this has retained original fixtures and finishes.

Building/Fabric Condition

The building is in fair to poor condition.

3.17 Building 62 – Toilets



North Elevation

South Elevation

East Elevation

Present Use

The toilets are still in use.

Previous Known Use

Toilets /wash room

Building Type

Purpose built toilet buildings.

Date

C 1947. The toilets were constructed as part of the post war re-development of the site as a Migrant Camp. These toilets were largely used by the school community.

In general

The design and construction of the toilets are typical for the period. They are rectangular buildings with four cubicles and four wash basins. The roof is a flat pitched skillion.

Construction

The toilets are constructed with a lightweight timber frame and are clad with corrugated metal cladding. The roof is a corrugated metal skillion roof without any gutters. The doors are constructed from vertical timber boards and are ledged and braced. The four cubicles each have a toilet and these are a more contemporary design. However, there is physical evidence of the former cistern and bowl. Of note are the utilitarian nail and wire toilet roll holders.

The basins appear to be original to the post-war period and their rudimentary drainage system is extant.

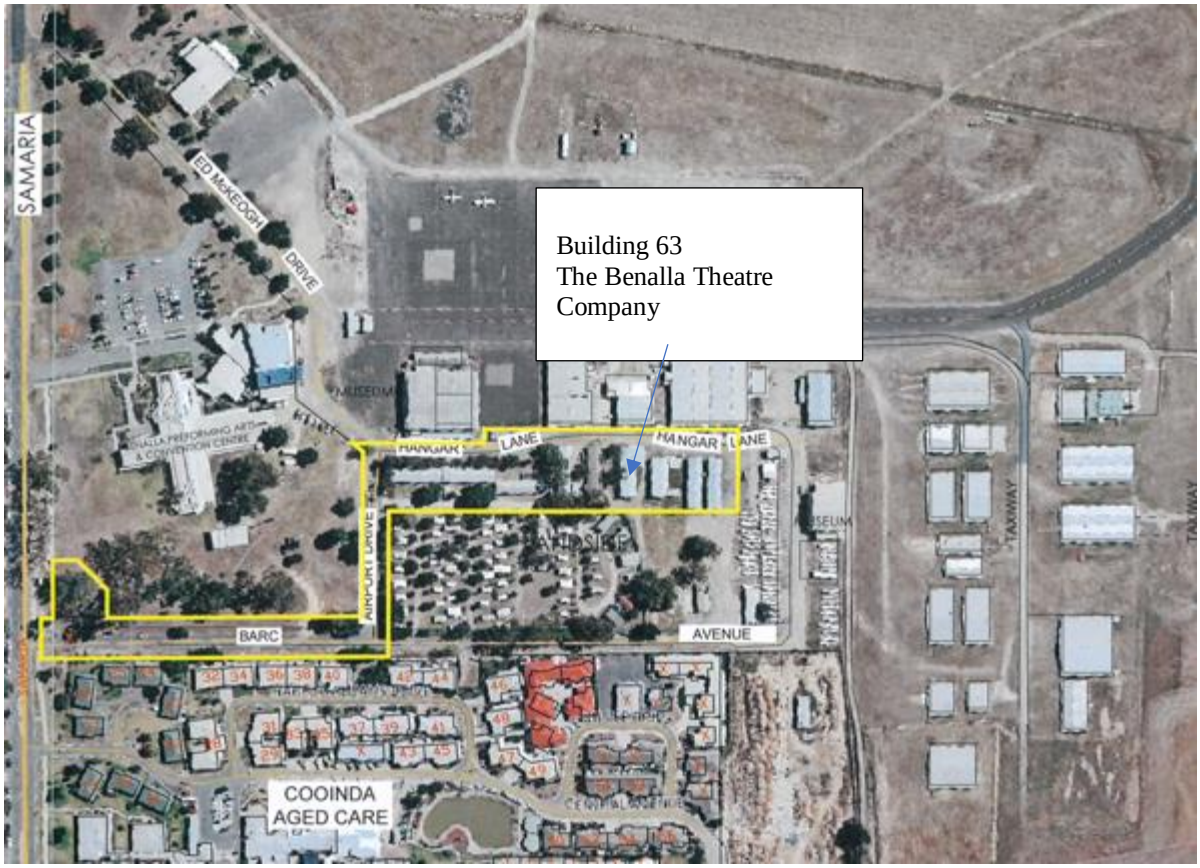
The internal walls are sheeted with corrugated metal and flat galvanised metal sheeting. The finish was painted. The doors are vertical timber doors and are ledged and braced. The floor is a concrete slab.

Toilet cubicle

Note the utilitarian wire toilet roll holder

Wash basins – note the drainage into an open drain

3.18 Building 63 – The Benalla Theatre Company



Site plan

East Elevation

West Elevation

North Elevation

South Elevation

Present Use

The building is being used as a theatre company rehearsal space and storage

Previous Known Use

School room

Building Type

Army P1 Type building

Date

The P1 type hut appears to date from c1941 with the establishment of the RAAF No 11 Elementary Flying School [EFTS].

Building Description

In general

Building 63 demonstrates many of the characteristics of a traditional P1 type hut. It is a rectangular building with a gable roof. The gable roof ends are finished with flat steel sheeting. The original roof has been replaced with long sheets of corrugated metal. The gutters are quad and there is a timber eave. The downpipes are PVC and they discharge stormwater to the base of the building.

The walls are clad with painted corrugated metal sheeting. The sheeting sizes are the older short sheets. There are timber stops at all corners.

The building has been re-stumped with concrete stumps and metal ant caps. There is no timber plinth and the timber bearers are visible.

The north façade has been altered with the introduction of a new door. This replaced an original ledged and braced timber door. The height and width of the door is greater than any of the original doors. There is no evidence of the typical rectangular metal vent.

The south façade demonstrates typical features associated with the P type hut although there is no evidence of the typical metal rectangular air vent.

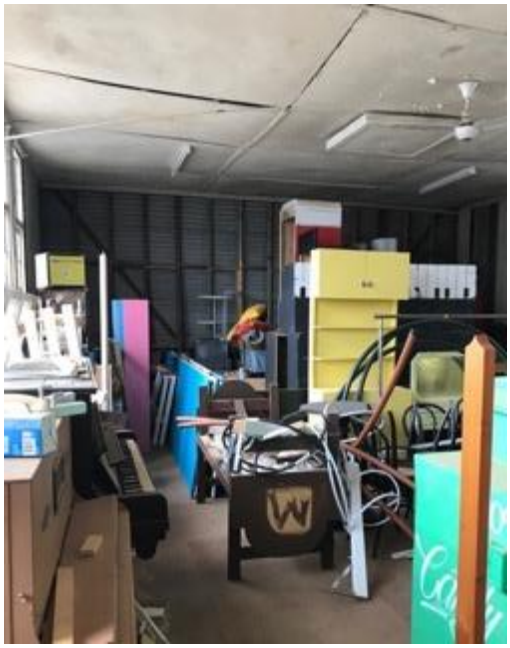
The east façade has four banks of three by three window sashes and one single one by three window sashes. The bottom row of windows (for all of the four window sets) slope inwards and have obscure glazing. The style of the windows is typical of the period and for the Department of Education.

The west façade demonstrates some of the more typical P hut features. These include four timber framed timber casement windows - albeit irregular spaced and one timber door.

Internal Description

Some of the walls are unlined or partially unlined. Some sections are lined with a fibre cement sheeting. The ceiling is fibre cement or similar and is in poor condition. The ceiling is flat and there is no view of the timber trusses from the interior. However, when viewed from the exterior the double timber chord for the truss is evident.

The floors are a mixture of a composite material and timber floor boards.



Internal views showing the unlined walls, variety of floor finishes. Note the white door this is an internal door finish as the external face varies from this style. The exterior face is more typical for a P type hut with vertical boards used for the face of the door.

Construction

The construction for the hut appears to follow the standard war-time P type timber framing methodology:

- The sub-floor is constructed with timber bearers, timber joists and a tongue and groove hardwood floor. The sub-floor is not lined but has an exposed bearer and this rests on the concrete stumps.
- The roof appears to be a typical WWII trussed gable roof. As noted the interior ceiling has obscured the truss but the ends of the truss are visible from the exterior and provide support for the eaves and gutters.
- The roof has been replaced with long sheets of corrugated metal and the ridge capping is a contemporary flat profile.
- The gable end of the roof is a flat sheet.
- The gutters have a quad profile with round PVC downpipes. There is a timber eave. The downpipes drain onto the site.
- The walls are clad with corrugated metal laid horizontally and there are timber corner stops. The dimensions of the sheets are typical of the post war period and on this basis are potentially original. It has a painted finish.
- The surviving timber door is constructed from vertical timber members and is ledged and braced.
- The Education Department styled windows are timber framed. The windows are potentially recycled casement windows that have been constructed to follow the Education Department style for this period.
- The windows on the west are typical P hut timber framed timber casement windows.

Modifications

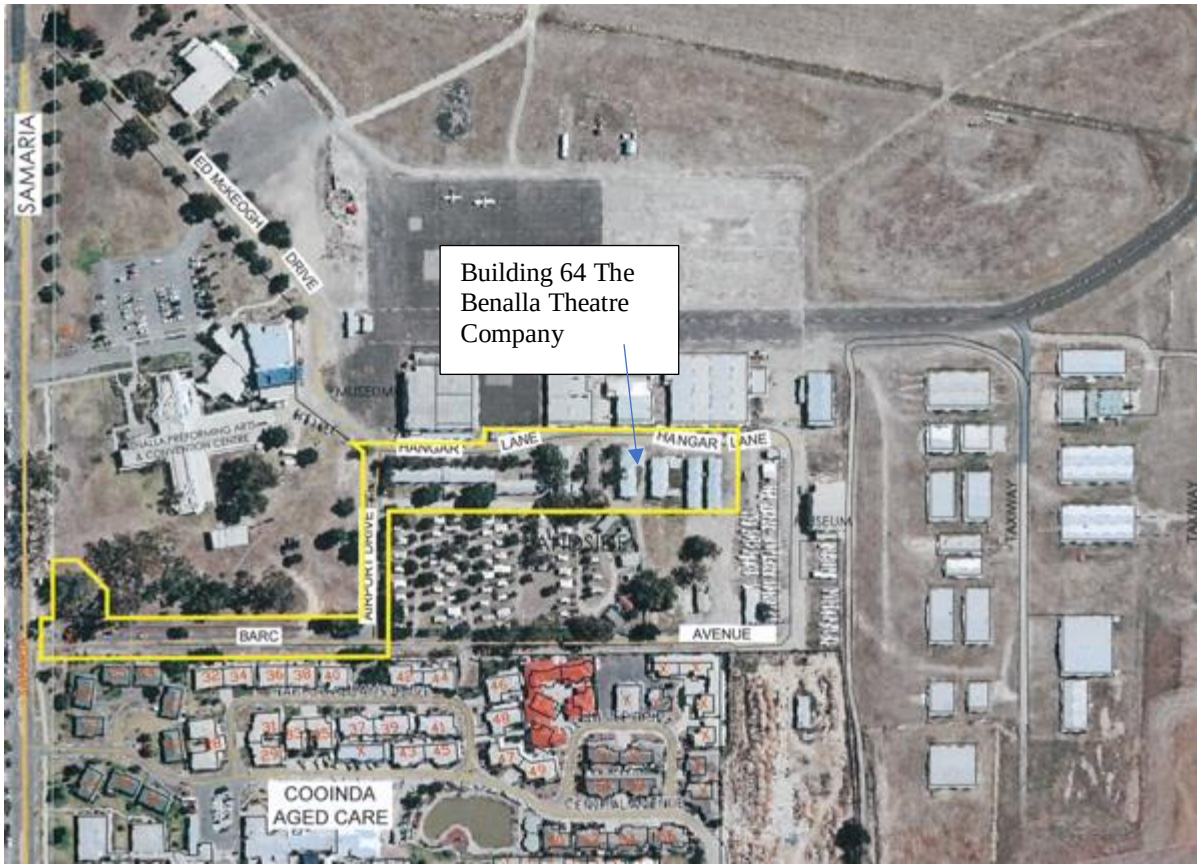
There have been some external modifications and these include:

- The re-roofing of the roof with modern long sheets of corrugated metal. Originally there were roof vents and these were removed during the re-roofing and not replaced.
- The huts have been re-stumped and new flooring installed.
- PVC downpipes have been used and these drain from the perimeter of the building.
- The north façade has been altered with the introduction of a new and larger door opening.
- Some of the original internal fittings such as light fittings and coat-hooks are now in storage in the Council Storage Depot.

Building/Fabric Condition

The building is in fair to poor condition.

3.19 Building 64 The Benalla Theatre Company



North elevation

View from Hut 11 towards the addition

South elevation

East Elevation -the school room wing

West elevation

Present Use

Theatre space and storage

Previous Known Use

School/kindergarten building. The school was known as State School 4651.

Building Type

Army P1 Type building

Date

Building 64, a P type hut appears to date from c1941 with the establishment of the RAAF No 11 Elementary Flying School [EFTS].

Building Description

In general

Building 64 demonstrates many of the characteristics of a traditional P1 type hut. However, the contemporary addition to the front has altered the appreciation of the simple geometry of the building. The addition is rectangular in shape and is an extension of the original building. It has a skillion roof. The original form of the P1 hut is appreciable from the west and south. This includes the rectangular body with its gable roof. The gable end of the roof is finished with flat steel sheeting. The original roof has been replaced with long sheets of corrugated metal. The gutters are quad and there is a timber eave. The downpipes are PVC and discharge stormwater to the base of the building.

The original section is clad with painted corrugated metal sheeting. The sheeting sizes are the older short sheets. There are timber stops at all corners. It has been re-stumped with concrete stumps and metal ant caps. There is no timber plinth/cover boards and the timber bearers are visible.

The original section of the north façade was a featureless façade but the addition has altered this aspect. The addition is clad with new sheets of corrugated metal and there is a front door. The east façade of the addition has a large aluminium framed window.

The south façade demonstrates typical features associated with the P1 type hut and there is a typical metal rectangular air vent.

The east façade has three banks of 3 x3 window sashes and 2 x 3 window sashes. The bottom row of windows (for all of the four window sets) slope inwards and have obscure glazing. The style of the windows is typical of the period and for the Department of Education. The sashes appear to be recycled casement sashes.

The west façade demonstrates some of the more typical P hut features. There are four timber framed, paired timber casement windows. The door is constructed from vertical timber boards and is ledged and braced. The internal face of the door is a c1960s door.

Construction

The construction for the hut appears to follow the standard war-time P type building timber framing methodology:

- The sub-floor is constructed with timber bearers, timber joists and a tongue and groove hardwood floor. The perimeter to the sub-floor is not lined but has an exposed bearer and this rests on the concrete stumps.

- The roof appears to be a typical WWII trussed gable roof. As previously noted, the interior ceiling has obscured the truss but the ends of the truss are visible from the exterior and provide support for the eaves and gutters.

Internal Description

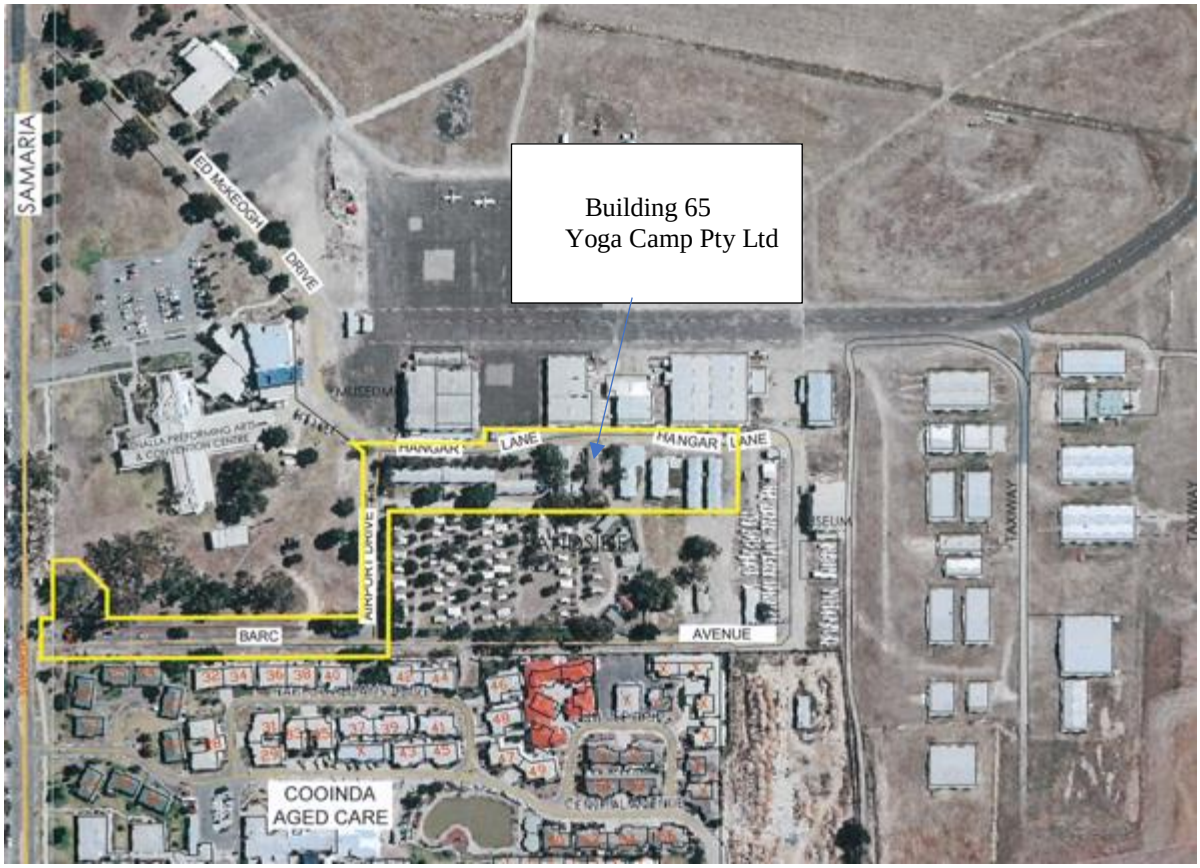
- The interior of the front section of the hut has been markedly altered. Part of the original wall has been removed and this combined with the additional space has created a large internal area that is used for rehearsals and preparation. A warren truss has been used to span the space where the original wall was located.
- The former school room at the rear of the building has retained some of its original features and this includes the blackboard. The original wall and ceiling cladding (flat ceiling) is still evident. The lining materials are fibre cement panels with battens. The floor is carpeted.

The altered front section of Building 64. The open plan space created by addition and the removal of an external wall.

The former school room to the rear – note the typical inward sloping windows and the black board.

View to the west. The panel door is an internal door and the original timber door is extant (external).

3.20 Building 65 Yoga Camp Pty Ltd



Site plan

North elevation

South elevation

West Elevation

East elevation

West elevation – entry to studio

West elevation – entry to former Presbytery (accommodation)

Present Use

Yoga Studio

Previous Known Use

The chapel, and Presbytery (bedroom, kitchen bathroom)

Building Type

Army P1 Type buildings.

Date

Building 65, a P type hut appears to date from c1941 with the establishment of the RAAF No 11 Elementary Flying School [EFTS].

In general

Building 65 is a typical P type hut. It is a rectangular building with a gable roof. The roof is clad with corrugated asbestos cement sheeting. This type of roof was once common throughout the compound and this is the only surviving example. The gable end finish is typical of the asbestos roofing and its curved apex is a defining aesthetic element. The gutters are quad and there is a timber eave. The PVC downipes discharge into an open gutter at the base of the building.

The walls are clad with painted corrugated metal sheeting. The sheeting sizes are the earlier short sheet dimensions. There are timber stops at all corners.

The building has been re-stumped with concrete stumps and metal ant caps. The bearers are visible as there is no boarding to the perimeter of the sub-floor area.

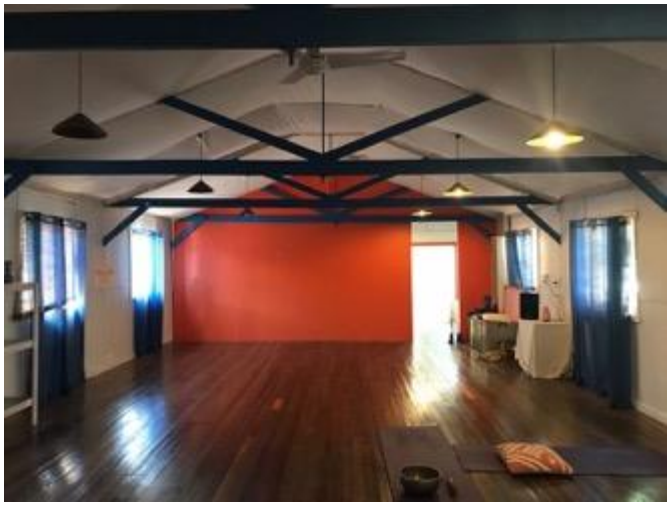
The north façade has retained its rectangular metal vent and there are a number of contemporary service items including two air-conditioning condensers.

The south elevation has largely its original features. It has a rectangular metal ventilation vent at the apex of the gable and the army identification plate is extant.

The east façade has a semi regular spacing of timber framed, timber paired casement windows. There is one timber framed door (vertical timber boards and ledged and braced).

The west façade has four timber-framed, timber paired casement windows, a timber door (vertical timber boards and ledged and braced) and a covered entrance porch. To the north of the entrance porch is a single glazed window and to the south of the entrance there is a timber framed, paired timber casement window.

Internal Description



The main hall

Patched floor area

The main hall has an internal wall constructed (in the last 5 years) that now separates the former chapel area from the congregational area. This area has the original tongue and groove timber floor. There are some patched areas. The floor has been sanded and finished with some form of epoxy seal.

The rafters are exposed and the ceiling lining has been covered over with a thick material cover. The original ceiling linings are in poor condition.

Detail of the fabric ceiling

Former chapel area (the altar was in this location). The altar is now located at a place at Tatong.

The area that contained the alter has largely retained its integrity. Original features such as the wall linings, the floor and the casement windows are extant.

General view of wall, timber ledged and braced door, timber trusses, floor finishes and ceiling

Construction

The construction for Building 65 appears to follow the standard war-time P type timber framing methodology:

- The sub-floor is constructed with timber bearers, timber joists and a tongue and groove hardwood floor. The perimeter to the sub-floor is not lined and the bearer rests on the stumps.
- The framing is light weight timber framing.
- The roof is a gable roof with a typical WWII army roof truss. The top chord is paired and extends out to provide support for the eaves and gutter.

3.21 Building 66 Benalla Broken River Potters Inc.

Site Plan

North elevation

South elevation

East elevation

West elevation

North-west Elevation

South-east view to kiln

Present Use

Pottery studio with kiln attached (kiln is a later addition)

Previous Known Use

Unknown

Building Type

Army P1 Type buildings.

Date

Building 65, a P1 type hut appears to date from c1941 with the establishment of the RAAF No 11 Elementary Flying School [EFTS].

Building Description

In general

Building 66 is a typical P1 type hut. It is a rectangular building with a gable roof. The original roof has been replaced with long sheets of corrugated metal. The gutters are quad and there is a timber eave. The gable ends have a roll top finish. The walls are clad with painted corrugated metal sheeting. The sheeting sizes are the earlier short sheet dimensions. There are timber stops at all corners. The building appears to have had a concrete slab laid throughout. TBC

The fenestration pattern on this building is atypical when compared to the other buildings on site. There are contiguous bands of sash windows at the southern end of both the east and west facades. The northern end of the building (both the east and west façade) has continued with more typical use of timber framed, paired timber casement windows. This window arrangement is original as historic photos show a similar arrangement on one of the P huts used during the migrant camp period.

A large corrugated metal kiln has been constructed at the south-east end of the building. The kiln is located next to the existing walls of the P1 hut and access to the kiln is via a doorway.

View toward south end of hall

View towards the north end of the hall

Kiln area showing areas of original wall

Kiln area showing areas of original wall

Internal Description

The wall finishes are a combination of fibre cement sheeting with battens and other unidentified materials. The cement sheeting/plaster ceiling linings follow the profile of the roof line. The floors have a linoleum/vinyl finish and it is not clear whether the original timber floors have survived. Some shelving has been fixed to the walls and other cabinetry. However, it appears that most of the furniture is freestanding.

Construction

The construction for Building 66 appears to follow the standard war-time P type timber framing methodology:

- The floor is a concrete slab.
- The wall framing is light weight timber framing.
- The roof is a gable roof with a typical WWII army roof truss. The top chord is paired and extends out to provide support for the eaves and gutter.

4.0 CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

This section discusses the cultural heritage significance of the place.

The cultural heritage significance of the Former Benalla Migrant Camp was determined at a hearing held by the Heritage Council on 10 and 11 February 2016. There was widespread support for the inclusion of the former migrant camp on the state register. This included support from a group of eight former residents who now live in Benalla and hundreds of former residents who were living elsewhere, including interstate and overseas. The interest in this hearing was also demonstrated by a petition which had attracted over 1,400 signatures. The hearing itself had an audience of over 100 people which is remarkable in itself.

During the hearing a number of the former residents provided submissions to the Heritage Council. The retelling of their memories was supported by the assiduous research undertaken by Professor Bruce Pennay. Many of the former residents were extraordinarily generous when it came to sharing their experiences with the audience. This evidence was at times a very personal and intimate snapshot of what their life was like prior to migration. It was clear from the retelling of these events that for many, this period of their lives was often traumatic, and the attendant emotional impacts are with them right up to the present day. In addition, the evidence provided by the children of the migrants also gave those in the audience a sense of how migration had impacted on their family life and why the preservation of the former Migrant Camp was also important to them. The descriptions of the migrants' experiences, both pre-camp and during their camp life, was often emotionally charged and many in the audience were brought to tears. What became so vividly clear is that the Benalla Camp came to mean safety and a home with a future for those migrants who lived there, and as a consequence of this, it has become a place that is an anchor for those memories and emotions.

Australia is a country that is built on migration but there are few places that demonstrate how migration has historically been managed. Particularly how family life and the life of children has been managed. The Bonegilla Migrant Centre demonstrates many of the values found at Benalla, but it only played a short role in the life of the migrant. Whereas, the Benalla Migrant Camp was intimately linked for a far longer period with the lives of those migrants who had little support, such as single mothers and families, and as such, has become a more complex place in terms of its cultural heritage values. All of the migrants at Benalla came from a non-British background. The identified cultural values found at the Benalla Migrant Camp are not universal for all migrants, and because of this complexity they are important to record, as the former camp assists in demonstrating one of the most basic forces behind migration, and that is a search for a safe home and for many, a safe home for the whole family.

Image of the Gebauer family in front of the Bellman Hangar

Gebauer 2 Image provided by Benalla Migrant Camp Exhibition©

4.1 Statement of Significance – VHR Citation

As part of the analysis of the current VHR Statement of Significance needed additional amplification to ensure that the significance of the place is fully represented.

This review of the VHR citation now includes a targeted recognition of the community life of the migrant camp and in particular the life of the child as a migrant. The social and emotional impact on the children who spent many of their formative years at the Benalla Migrant Camp was clearly felt during the Heritage Council hearings. Subsequent research undertaken by Professor Pennay has provided a clearer understanding of the nature of this particular period and place. This includes a considered exploration of how this particular period impacted on the former residents and their children and the importance that public places, such as the kindergarten, the school and the chapel have as keepers of memory. That these places resonate for the former residents and continue to do so for their families is apparent. What is also important is that this public record in terms of physical fabric is available to the wider community to experience in order to provide an insight into concepts such as migration, change, home, family and safety within changing global dynamics.

The current VHR citation can be found at Appendix F

Cultural Values of the former Benalla Migrant Centre

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 G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

What is significant?

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp including associated buildings, landscape features and a range of on-ground and below-ground infrastructure.

The former school buildings, toilets and evidence of the playground and the former Chapel contribute to an understanding of the role of the place as a home for families and in particular supporting mothers and their children.

History Summary

The Benalla Migrant Camp was established in September 1949 on land previously used by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) as an Elementary Flying Training School (1941-1944), making use of the accommodation and facilities which remained. The camp was part of a bold immigration programme launched to increase the population, and hence the labour force, of Australia. Reception and training centres were established to provide accommodation and training and between 1945 and 1965 for more than two million migrants who came to Australia as a result of an international promotional campaign. The largest Australian migrant reception centre was the Bonegilla Migrant Centre which was the first camp to be used for this purpose when opened in 1947. Victorian holding centres were established at country locations at Benalla, Mildura, Rushworth, Sale West and Somers. The Benalla Migrant Camp operated as a holding centre and provided accommodation as well as a kindergarten, school, hall, hospital, shops and a gymnasium and primarily housed unsupported women who had limited access to jobs. A number of migrants stayed longer than those at other camps. Some residents worked at the centre itself, in administration, the kitchen or hospital, or as cleaners, while others found domestic work in Benalla or worked at the nearby Latoof and Callil clothing factory and Renold Chain Company factory. By 1958 Benalla (renamed the Benalla Migrant Accommodation Centre) and Bonegilla were two of only six government operated centres remaining in Australia. During its 18 years of operation an estimated 60,000 migrants were accommodated. After its closure in 1967 the airfield continued to be used for civil aviation purposes, principally for recreational gliding and ballooning. Many structures were demolished in the 1980s before the former City of Benalla acquired ownership of both the airfield and the remaining structures in 1992.

Description Summary

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is located on land which previously formed part of the World War II RAAF Base at 1 & 57 Samaria Rd, Benalla. The land contains nine P1-type huts, two toilet blocks, concrete gate posts at the intersection of BARC Avenue with Samaria Road, a remnant below-ground cistern, BARC Avenue itself together with kerb and channel and several unused electricity reticulation poles, and concrete surface drainage channels beside most of the huts. The huts were constructed using a standard P1-type design with timber frames, gabled ends, horizontal corrugated iron wall cladding, and corrugated iron or asbestos cement roof cladding. Five out of the eleven buildings have apparently been moved within the former RAAF base and varying degrees of maintenance, modifications and minor additions have occurred to those eleven buildings over time.

This site is part of the traditional land of the Yorta Yorta Nations.

How is it significant?

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is of historical and social significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

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 G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

Why is it significant?

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is of historical significance for its association with post-World War II non-British migration. A large number of these migrants were supporting mothers with children. Benalla was Victoria's longest-lasting holding centre and played a distinctive role in settling vulnerable groups of non-British migrants into Australia in the post-war years.

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is rare as one of only a small number of examples of a post-World War II holding centre for non-British migrants.

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is of social and historic significance for its connection with former residents and their families and for its ability to interpret the experiences of post-World War II non-British migrants, supporting mothers and their children to the broader Victorian community. The particular needs of this migrant group meant that the Migrant Camp at Benalla provided accommodation as well as a kindergarten, school, hall, chapel, hospital, shops and a gymnasium.

Most of these women had limited access, or opportunities to secure jobs and houses anywhere else, and as consequence spent longer at the Benalla Migrant Camp than migrant men or women did at any other centre in Australia. The availability of contractual work at the camp (a two year contract) also saw many migrants staying much longer than their contractual arrangements

History

Post-War Migration to Australia and Accommodation Centres

In the immediate post-war years, the Department of Immigration was established in Australia and a bold immigration programme was launched to increase the population, and hence the labour force, of the country. Between 1945 and 1965 more than two million migrants came to Australia as a result of an international promotional campaign to encourage migration to Australia. A large number of migrants arrived as part of an assisted passage scheme which targeted migrants from Britain but expanded to provide assistance to migrants from a variety of European countries. Others were displaced persons who had fled their countries during the war. In return these migrants were required to stay in Australia for at least two years and work in allocated jobs.

Reception and training centres were established to provide accommodation and training for newly arrived non-British migrants in Australia. Many of these were set up at former military camps where accommodation and facilities already existed. Contracted to work in allocated employment, migrants were initially housed in these centres while awaiting employment instructions. While at these centres, migrants received medical checks, and attended courses in English language and the Australian way of life.

By 1951 three reception centres and an additional twenty holding centres were in operation in Australia, briefly housing more than 40,000 non-British new arrivals. The holding centres were, in effect, short term camps with residents remaining there for between four to six months. Over half the holding centres were near country towns in inland NSW and Victoria and most of these opened in 1949.

Over time the type of migrant began to change, with increasing numbers of families, non-working dependents and single mothers requiring accommodation. Existing reception centres could not accommodate the number of new arrivals and newly designated holding centres were opened to provide short term accommodation for women and children.

The largest Australian migrant reception centre was the Bonegilla Migrant Centre which was the first camp to be used for this purpose when opened in 1947. This former army campsite was selected for its distance away from the metropolitan areas of Sydney and Melbourne in an attempt to avoid accommodation and employment competition and the formation of racial groups in the cities. The centre was also close to rural employment. Similarly, Victorian holding centres were established at country locations at Benalla, Mildura, Rushworth, Sale West and Somers. Over time several hostels were also established in the industrial or less developed outer suburbs of Melbourne, for example at Altona, Broadmeadows, Holmesglen, Maribyrnong, Nunawading and Preston.

The Benalla Migrant Camp operated as a temporary holding centre from September 1949. At the time of opening there was a large surge in numbers of new arrivals due to the increased availability of ships for transporting migrants from Europe in late 1948.

In 1949, the Australian government faced problems in coping with the arrival of a large number of supporting mothers with children among its post-war immigrants. At the time the women were most commonly dubbed 'widows' or 'unsupported mothers': they were 'dependant', 'encumbered with children' and had 'no breadwinner'. The supporting mothers had been admitted at the request of the International Refugee Organisation to help it empty the displaced person refugee camps in Europe. Harold Holt, the Minister for Immigration, explained, 'It was fully realised that their employment and accommodation would present a problem, but rather than let them become a hard core of unwanteds in whatever country of Europe they managed to drift to, Australia agreed to accept them on humanitarian grounds.' They were accepted as a humanitarian gesture, but within the large-scale immigration scheme intended to increase Australia's population and workforce. Accordingly, each of the women admitted was assessed as fit to work. Moreover, the women were either of child-bearing age or had children. Many of the supporting mothers were directed to the Benalla Holding Centre, where the former air force training camp was literally across the road from two newly built factories and a hospital which offered the women employment. Initially those arrangements, which RE Armstrong, head of the Assimilation Division, dubbed the 'Benalla experiment', seemed to be work 'reasonably well'.iii At any one time supporting mothers and their children comprised about a third of the usual 400 residents at Benalla. With the more numerous transient families, they were housed and fed simply but satisfactorily. The women were directed to paid employment across the road or within the camp itself in administration, the kitchen or hospital, or as cleaners. The jobs helped them contribute to the costs of their accommodation and that of their children, for all residents were required to pay for their upkeep. The particular needs of this migrant group meant that the Migrant Camp at Benalla provided accommodation as well as a kindergarten, school, hall, chapel, hospital, shops and a gymnasium. [38]

Most of these women had limited access, or opportunities to secure jobs and houses anywhere else, and as consequence spent longer at the Benalla Migrant Camp than migrant men or women did at any other centre in Australia. The availability of contractual work at the camp (a two year contract) also saw many migrants staying much longer than their contractual arrangements. They formed relationships within the local community and arguably developed stronger community links than those at other centres such as Rushworth, Mildura or any other holding centre in Australia. Many made Benalla their first Australian home after leaving the camp.

When the facility closed in December 1967, an estimated 60,000 migrants had been accommodated at this camp. In comparison the Bonegilla Migrant Camp housed about 320,000 immigrants between 1947 and 1971.

The first years at the Benalla Migrant Centre were the busiest, with a peak occupancy of 1063 migrant in 1951. The number of migrant arrivals decreased markedly when the displaced persons scheme drew to an end in 1952 and a number of holding centres closed. Throughout the 1950s the resident population at Benalla remained at

38 B Pennay, Appendix A, p

about 400 with an average of 200 people moving in and out each year and by the mid-1960s the occupancy did not exceed 250 with an annual turnover of about 240.

By 1958 there were only six government operated centres remaining in Australia. Two were located in Victoria - at Benalla (renamed the Benalla Migrant Accommodation Centre in 1958) and Bonegilla. From this time the Benalla Camp provided accommodation for migrant workers in the district, and their families and women and children with no male support. By 1967 there were only 135 residents at Benalla Migrant Camp and it was closed that year. Bonegilla remained in operation until 1971.

After the migrant hostel closed in 1967 the airfields continued to be used for civil aviation purposes, principally for recreational gliding and ballooning. Many structures were demolished in the 1980s before the Council acquired ownership of both the airfields and the remaining structures in 1992. Short term leases have been given to various community groups for designated buildings.

4.3 Local Cultural Heritage Significance

Proposed statement of significance for the local cultural heritage significance of the place.

The extent of the Heritage Overlay mapping will need to include the Bellman hangar (and a suitable curtilage), and the extent of the former parade ground. This is in addition to the existing curtilage.

What is Significant?

The surviving structures, features and archaeological evidence that date from the RAAF and the No 11 Elementary Flying School occupation of the site and this includes the Bellman Hangar and the nine P1 huts and the former Parade Ground. The physical evidence that identifies where the former streets were located, such as the crossovers in the gutters.

The physical evidence associated with the former Benalla Migrant Camp and this includes the: nine P1 huts, the two toilets, the entrance gates and the remnant landscape features such as the peppercorn trees and the well. The physical evidence also includes structures and archaeological features that have shared values with the army occupation of the site.

BARC hut 66 is associated with the Benalla Mural. The tiles were made and fired in the hut. There is no physical evidence associated with this period in the form of the original kilns or internal joinery.

The BARC huts 1A & 2B are associated with the Gliding Club of Victoria. The huts are used for accommodation and the internal layout largely follows the original layout associated with the migrant occupation of the place.

The plantings of Eucalypts are not significant and do not contribute to an understanding of the place and/or its cultural values.

The late 20th century kerb and channels are not significant.

How is it Significant?

The place is of local historic, technical and aesthetic cultural heritage significance to the Benalla Rural City.

Why is it Significant?

The surviving features that date from the RAAF and the No 11 Elementary Flying School are of historic significance as they provide tangible physical evidence of Benalla's role in training students to fly planes during World War II. The No 11 Elementary Flying School was part of the Empire Air Training Scheme that trained air crews for the British Bomber Command throughout the war.

The Bellman Hangar is of historic significance as it provides tangible physical evidence of the type of hangar accommodation that was used at the Benalla RAAF base during its time as an Elementary Flying Training School.

The Bellman Hangar is of technical significance for its construction methodologies and materials.

The surviving P1 huts and toilets demonstrate the adaptive re-use of the site and its reinvention as a migrant camp. The few changes that were made to the military site demonstrate the social and cultural attitudes to migration during this period.

BARC Hut 66 was used in the manufacture of ceramic tiles for the Benalla ceramic mural. This mural is widely acclaimed and recognised as an important cultural feature within the township of Benalla.

The establishment of the Gliding Club of Victoria at the airfield is historically important as it has one of the longest associations with any place in Australian for this purpose. HERCON criterion A

The BARC huts are of aesthetic significance for their design and construction. These rudimentary and utilitarian buildings are representative examples of the types of buildings that were designed and constructed for military accommodations. The simple rectangular forms with a low-pitched gable roofs and utilitarian claddings clearly define a war time aesthetic. HERCON criterion E

The Bellman hangar is of technical significance for its prefabricated design. These hangars were constructed by the British military during World War II and they were designed to be a temporary hangar capable of being erected or dismantled by unskilled labour with simple equipment and to be easily transportable.

HERCON criterion F

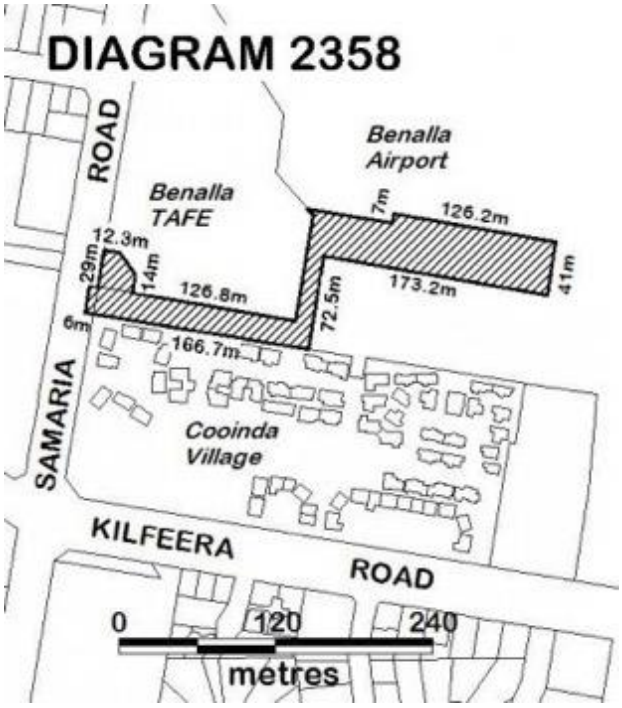
The Bellman hangar is a rare surviving building type and it has retained a high degree of its integrity. HERCON criterion B

The construction method and the particular structural use of unseasoned hardwoods in the P1 huts is of technical significance. The huts are now becoming rare surviving war time structures. HERCON criteria B & F

5.0 STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Heritage Act (2017)

The VHR lists and provides legal protection for heritage places and objects that are significant to the history and development of Victoria. The former Benalla Migrant Camp is included in the VHR as a heritage place, with the place ID H2358.



The extent of curtilage is all of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2358 and encompassing part of Lot 2 on Plan of Subdivision 509898, part of Lot 1 on Plan of Subdivision 347898 and part of the road reserve for Samaria Road.

Victoria Heritage Register

The *Heritage Act* (2017) is the Victorian Government's key cultural heritage legislation and it provides the legislative framework for the protection and conservation of places and objects of cultural heritage significance in Victoria. The Act identifies and protects places and objects that are of significance to Victoria.

The types of things that can be protected by this piece of legislation vary widely and any place or object does not have to be 'old' to qualify. They include:

- Places that have archaeological evidence and/or artefacts;
- Buildings and structures;
- Groups of buildings (precincts);
- Landscapes and this includes gardens and trees;
- Landscapes that have a cultural meaning, such as gold diggings (Castlemaine);

- Cemeteries and other public or private memorial landscape features such as memorial avenues; and
- Objects, and these can include paintings, collections, machinery and other items.

Permit Triggers

If a place is included on the VHR approvals are required from Heritage Victoria for most works. Minor repairs and replacement with like for like might not require a permit. **However, before commencing any works an applicant should consult with Heritage Victoria, as this site is not a simple place in terms of materials**. The approval comes in the form of a permit or a permit exemption. Approval is need for any proposed changes to significant elements as well as **non-significant** parts of the place. This is because works even to non- significant areas can have an impact on the cultural heritage significance of the place. This impact can be physical or visual and it needs to be assessed by Heritage Victoria.

For instance, Building 66 recently applied to install a new kiln in an area that is not significant. The potential impacts that were considered were as follows:

- Would it require a new vent and if yes would this vent be visually intrusive?
- Would the installation of the kiln require alterations to existing fabric?
- Will the kiln require any electrical upgrades?

What might be a relatively simple job in an area that would appear to have a minimal impact on the values of the whole place still needs to be assessed for any unforeseen impact.

A heritage permit does not mean that other regulatory approvals no longer need to be sought or complied with. Relevant building codes, the *Disability Discrimination Act* 1992 (DDA), Energy codes and/or other planning triggers might require a permit and advice from the relevant authority should be sought in conjunction with Heritage Victoria. **Other codes developed by other regulatory authorities do not over ride Heritage Victoria's statutory authority.**

A number of the features within this complex are particular to the period and its former use. For instance the electrical pull cords are still functioning in Building 66. It is now difficult to source the switches and when these cease to work a careful assessment will be required as to how best manage retaining this evidence as well as ensuring that there is an alternative. The door and window furniture i.e. (locks and fasteners) are also highly significant and will need to be retained. Approval will need to be sought to install additional locking mechanisms as the existing features will need to be retained. The timber floors are also highly significant as they retain markings on the floor and this is evidence of the previous patterns of use. Approval will need to be sought prior to the application of any finishes or repairs to these floors. It is preferable to contact Council and/or Heritage Victoria prior to undertaking any works just to ensure that the what is being proposed will satisfy the provisions of the *Heritage Act* 2017.

How to apply for a permit from Heritage Victoria

A permit application is required for works. The permit application form is available from Heritage Victoria's web site: *https://www.heritage.vic.gov.au/*

The application generally requires a number of additional pieces of information apart from a completed application form.

The type of information required will include:

- Application fee;
- Property title (this title needs to be generated within a certain period but is readily available from www.landata.vic.gov.au;
- Most applications will require a Heritage Impact Statement (HIS). Heritage Victoria provides guidelines for the preparation of these documents;
- Depending on the type of works a full set of architectural drawings showing existing conditions & proposed changes will be required; and
- Images can assist in providing accurate information with regard to existing conditions.

The permit application can be lodged electronically. This permit will attract a permit fee.

Once the application has been lodged the Executive Director has a statutory time frame of 60 days in which to determine a permit application. If advertising is required, or additional information then this time frame is extended. Any permit application is referred to the Responsible Authority In this instance it is the Benalla Rural City and this allows Council to make a submission and this submission must be considered by the Executive Director.

When Heritage Victoria assesses the impact of the works as proposed in the permit application it is looking at the impact the works could have on the cultural heritage significance. It may also consider economic or reasonable use impacts.

A pre-application meeting can be requested and this is recommended if the proposed changes are complex. If a permit is refused, or the applicant disagrees with the permit conditions the applicant can lodge an appeal to the Heritage Council. The appeal will need to be lodged within 60 days of the Executive Director's decision.

Third party appeal rights can apply under the *Heritage Act*, but it can only be triggered by a person or organisation with a 'real and substantial interest' in the property (e.g. a community group, historical association, etc). Their rights are only to request an appeal against the refusal of a permit, but **not** against the issue of a permit.

If the works are of a minor nature or do not impact on elements of heritage significance then it may be possible to apply for a minor works approval under Section 92 of the *Heritage Act.* A permit exemption form is available from the website as well.

6.0 CONSERVATION POLICIES

6.1 Introduction

A Conservation Policy is intended to provide direction and guidance for the physical management of the former migrant camp. This includes appropriate methodologies for the conservation of significant fabric as well as providing guidance for potential changes and adaptive re-use and/works. The policies relate to the significance of the place as a whole. Where appropriate, specific policies have been developed for particular buildings and/or elements within the site.

The policies have been developed with an understanding of the heritage values of the buildings and the landscape elements. This has included an understanding of the relative significance of different components and specific elements within the site to the identified heritage values.

In addition, any pertinent statutory and other constraints have also informed the development of the Conservation Policies.

Repairs and maintenance as part of conservation works have also been considered in policy development. The surviving buildings have different uses and a variety of vested interests as to their future uses. As the buildings are not all under one ownership or leasehold this has meant that the extent of maintenance and repairs are not uniform. The result is a variation in the integrity and physical conditions of each building and some are showing signs of accelerated decay.

These issues will be addressed generally in policy, and specifically in the Conservation Works & Maintenance Schedule. See Attachments 1 & 2.

6.2 Policy Development

Cultural Heritage Significance

The Benalla Migrant camp is recognised at a local level in the Benalla Planning Scheme [Heritage Overlay HO77] and it is included in the Victorian State Heritage Register (VHR H2358).

The inclusion of the former Benalla Migrant Camp on the Victorian Heritage Register was driven by the concern of a number of former residents and other individuals.

It is a timely commemoration and recognition of the experiences of migrant women, children and families from a non-British background. Many of those who came to this camp had different experiences to those who passed through places such as Bonegilla Migrant Centre as evidenced in the presentations by the ‘camp kids’ and families at the Heritage Council hearing.

A Statement of Significance is the controlling element for any site. It is a distillation of all of the reasons why a place has been found significant and is deserving of statutory protection. Most decisions about the future of any site will refer back to the statement of significance. It is the role of a CMP, and in particular through its development of policies, to provide a pathway for use and change while at the same time ensuring the cultural heritage significance of the *place* is maintained.

Policies by their very nature can seem nebulous and not clear, but if they are used in conjunction with the statement of significance, they should provide a pathway for an assessment and determination of the scope of any proposed works. The following is a brief explanation of how to use a Statement of Significance.

A statement of significance identifies ***What is Significant?.*** This largely relates to the actual physicality of the place and a tangible sense of what made it significant. There should be sufficient original fabric to clearly demonstrate what it is about this site that has a historical resonance and importance to the identified values.

In the Statement of Significance for this place, a physical description and history follows the ***What is Significant?***. These two elements identify the actual significant fabric of the place and provide an interpretation of the importance of the physicality of the *What*.

The ***How is it Significant?*** are how the place represents the official cultural values. These values are a standard set of values and a place needs to satisfy at least one of these official values at a state level for it to be considered to be of state significance.

The ***Why is it Significant?*** expands on why the physical elements are significant. The *Why* needs to respond to each of the identified official cultural values. In a sense it defends the identified cultural value.

An Analysis of the Statement of Significance for the Benalla Migrant Centre

The Statement of Significance identifies the following tangible elements as being of significance.

The ***What*** states: *The Former Benalla Migrant Camp including associated buildings and a range of on-ground and below-ground infrastructure.* These are features are listed in the **Description Summary -**

The registered area includes:

- Nine P1-type huts
- Two toilet blocks
- The concrete gate posts at the intersection of BARC Avenue with Samaria Road
- A below-ground cistern
- The peppercorn trees
- BARC Avenue itself together with kerb and channel and several unused electricity reticulation poles. Any evidence within the roadway and kerb and channels that demonstrate the former wartime layout of the roads within the site
- Concrete surface drainage channels beside most of the huts, and
- Original asphalt tennis courts (the extent of which is partially obscured by Hut 10/11)

The Buildings

All of the buildings are of significance, and this is despite some of the changes that have occurred since they were used as part of the migrant camp. Each building has retained significant fabric both externally and internally.

The P1 huts

Buildings 1 & 2 (Gliding Club of Victoria); Buildings 10 (Benalla Historical Society); Building 11 (Benalla Broken River Painters & Benalla Migrant Camp Exhibition); Ballooning Victoria building, Buildings 63 & 64

(the Benalla Theatre Company); Building 65 (Mark Blyss Yoga) and Building 66 (Benalla Rose City Potters) are of significance.

Buildings: 61, 62, (toilet blocks); 63 & 64 (the Benalla Theatre Company); 65 (Mark Blyss Yoga) and 66 (Benalla Rose City Potters) appear to be in their original locations and this is of significance.

The two toilet blocks

The toilet blocks are significant and retain many of their original fittings and fixtures and this includes the rudimentary drainage system found within the buildings. The surviving evidence of earlier cisterns is also of significance.

Concrete surface drainage channels beside most of the huts

These hard-landscaping elements are of tangible significance. They provide clues and markers as to the former layout of the site. They are the 'ghosts in the landscape' that hint at the former uses.

Other identified archaeological evidence

Any evidence of earlier services such as electrical, septic, water and stormwater pipes are of significance. It is clear that a number of clay pipes are still underground and in use. When upgrades occur these will need to be retained and new services constructed around them.

Any other archaeological evidence that surfaces during works will need to be identified and Heritage Victoria will need to be notified.

Unused electricity reticulation poles and service connections.

Evidence of any above ground services that relate to the military or migrant occupation of the site is of significance.

Entrance Gate posts to BARC Avenue & BARC Avenue

BARC Avenue is of cultural heritage significance.

The concrete gate posts at the intersection of BARC Avenue with Samaria Road are of significance. They have retained their integrity and are relatively intact.

The entrance area to BARC avenue has intangible cultural values. This area represents arrival, the boundary of the camp and the interface between the camp and the 'outer world'.

The area to the north of the site is of significance and this includes the Peppercorn trees, the informal plantings and the open grassed areas. The cistern contributes to the tangible significance of this entrance area. This particular area has also been identified as being integral to the an understanding of the intangible cultural heritage significance of this place.

The concrete crossovers found in the changes to the kerb and channel of BARC Avenue are of significance as these changes identify the location of the streets (2,3,4 & 5 Avenues). These streets were used during the army and migrant occupation of the site.

It is important to identify the tangible and the intangible as the following policies will provide the framework for the conservation of these elements. As well as identifying the physical items that have significance it is important to understand why these particular items have been given this status.

Why the *place*[39] is significant at the State level is set out below:

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is of historical significance for its association with post-World War II non-British migration. It is an example of one of only a small number of surviving centres which had been part of a network of camps that were established and used to accommodate migrants throughout Victoria and Australia. Benalla was Victoria's longest-lasting holding centre and played a distinctive role in settling vulnerable groups of non-British migrants into Australia in the post-war years.

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is rare as one of only a small number of examples of a post-World War II holding centre for non-British migrants.

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is of social and historic significance for its connection with former residents and their families and for its ability to interpret the experiences of post-World War II non-British migrants, supporting mothers and their children to the broader Victorian community. The particular needs of this migrant group meant that the Migrant Camp at Benalla provided accommodation as well as a kindergarten, school, hall, chapel, hospital, shops and a gymnasium.

Most of these women had limited access, or opportunities to secure jobs and houses anywhere else, and as consequence spent longer at the Benalla Migrant Camp than migrant men or women did at any other centre in Australia. The availability of contractual work at the camp (a two year contract) also saw many migrants staying much longer than their contractual arrangements

The ***How*** it is significant is essentially a statement and the ***Why*** is the supporting evidence.

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is of historical and social significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

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 G Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

The following statement describes **why** and it is relatively straightforward to translate this value to fabric:

[39] *Place means a geographically defined area. It may include elements, objects, spaces and views. Place may have tangible and intangible dimensions.*

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is of historical significance for its association with post-World War II non-British migration. It is an example of one of only a small number of surviving centres which had been part of a network of camps that were established and used to accommodate migrants throughout Victoria and Australia. Benalla was Victoria's longest-lasting holding centre and played a distinctive role in settling vulnerable groups of non-British migrants into Australia in the post-war years.

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is rare as one of only a small number of examples of a post-World War II holding centre for non-British migrants.

Despite the changes to location and the alterations of many of the buildings, understanding and appreciating their roles and uses as accommodation and community buildings in a migrant camp is relatively straightforward. From this premise it is also relatively straightforward to manage the physical fabric and the landscape setting.

The identified social significance can also be identified within the fabric. However, this social significance is often found in the less tangible fabric. This can be far more difficult to identify and protect. For this place the social and intangible values are very high and the fabric is supportive of these values but they also rely heavily on elusive characteristics. That is a characteristic that cannot be readily 'captured' in the built or landscape form.

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is of social significance for its connection with former residents and their families and for its ability to interpret the experiences of post-World War II non-British migrants to the broader Victorian community.

It is also clear from the Council Hearing that there is a strong sense of intangible heritage values associated with this *place*.

The following Conservation Management Policies must therefore not only describe how to conserve the physical and tangible but also provide a mechanism that will ensure that the more intangible values are not lost.

6.3 Policy Objectives

The primary objective during the development of conservation policies is to ensure that the cultural heritage significance and the identified values of the whole place are maintained. This is achieved by ensuring that future works are undertaken with reference to the principles of the *Burra Charter*, *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013*.

This includes:

- *The protection of the aesthetic and architectural presentation of the place;*
- *Ensure that all aspects of the cultural heritage significance of the place are respected;*
- *The conservation (preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation) of fabric; and*
- *To provide guidance for adaptive re-use; change and redevelopment.*

Levels of Significance

An analysis of the statement of VHR statement of significance identifies elements and parts of the site that have significance at a State level these are referred to as having primary significance. There are some elements that have little or no significance and these are referred to as being of minor or no significance. The site also has local cultural heritage significance.

Primary significant fabric:

. *all structures or elements that relate to the use of the site as a migrant camp;*

. *all landscape elements that relate to the period that the migrant camp functioned and any associated structures,*

landscape features and hard landscaping.

Minor or no significance:

Structures and/or site elements which are of little or no significance are generally those which are of recent construction and/or those whose function was peripheral rather than fundamental to the principal functioning of the site as a migrant camp.

It should be noted that in some circumstances the blending of fabric is such that it is not entirely clear, and unless fabric can be clearly identified as being post Migrant Camp occupation, it will be considered to be of primary significance.

Elements such as finishes where possible will have a level of significance attributed to them.

Hard landscape features are important as they provide a clue as to the original layout and setting for the camp. Within this extant landscape there is evidence of the formality of the former army barracks and its inherent layout. Overlaid are the remnants of landscape features that pertain to the Migrant Camp. The final layer is representative of the subsequent changes with the resumption of the site by the other interest groups.

Primary significant fabric:

Buildings 1 & 2 (Gliding Club of Victoria); Buildings 10 (Benalla Historical Society); Building 11 (Benalla Broken River Painters & Benalla Migrant Camp Exhibition); Ballooning Victoria building, Buildings 61 & 62 (toilet blocks); Buildings 63 & 64 (the Benalla Theatre Company); Building 65 (Mark Blyss Yoga) and Building 66 (Benalla Rose City Potters)

This includes the structural systems, the typical construction materials as well as all original fixtures, all floor finishes and linings unless otherwise identified as being of little or no significance.

Any evidence relating to the use of buildings 63 & 64 as educational facility, such as the blackboards, is of primary significance.

The location of Buildings: 61, 62, (toilet blocks); 63 & 64 (the Benalla Theatre Company); 65 (Mark Blyss Yoga) and 66 (Benalla Rose City Potters)

The huts that have been moved while not in original positions are in a location that supports an understanding of the typical layout of the buildings associated with the former Benalla Migrant Camp.

BARC Avenue, the entrance gates, the cistern, the landscape features and this includes the Peppercorn trees, to the north of the roadway.

The informal plantings of trees to the north of BARC Avenue.

The utilitarian and regular layout of the huts and their relationship to the paths, roadways and the airfield.

All archaeological evidence and this includes the open drains, pathways, services/infrastructure.

All evidence of former services.

Minor and of no significance:

All elements of little or no significance are all those not identified as of primary significance.

The later concrete stumps, temporary masonry footings and tie down materials

All 21st century changes to the landscape unless these have been restoration of original features.

The concrete floor in Building 66.

The polyurethane finish on the floor Building 65 (Mark Blyss Yoga)

The internal wall between the main body of the space and the former Chapel area. Building 65 (Mark Blyss Yoga)

The addition for the pottery kiln Building 66 (Benalla Rose City Potters)

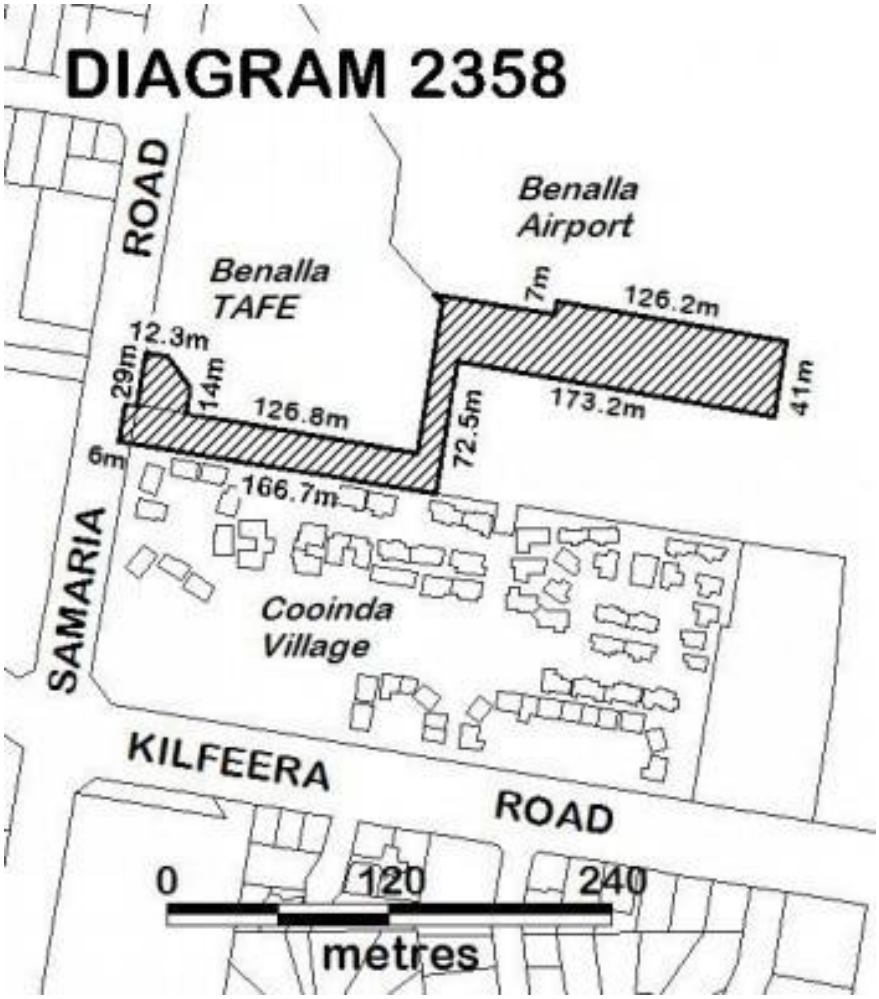
The 21st century addition to the east of Building 64 (the Benalla Theatre Company

The new door Building 63 (the Benalla Theatre Company)

The War Memorial at the entrance gates

General Conservation Policies

The following policies are general conservation policies and they apply to the whole complex that is the Registered area.



Policy

The whole place and this includes all of the primary significant structures, identified features and landscape elements, and the setting provide the physical evidence of the cultural heritage significance of the former Migrant Camp.

The retention and conservation of these primary significant elements should be of primary consideration when considering any works, changes to fabric or use.

All future conservation and adaptation works which will or could potentially affect elements of cultural heritage significance should have regard for the principles of the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance [*The Burra Charter* 2013].

All future conservation work should be carried out by persons with relevant conservation experience and expertise.

The primary objective of any conservation or management action or works should be to avoid or minimise an impact on the cultural heritage significance of the place.

Adaptation of significant fabric and/or elements or features should avoid or at least minimise impacts on the identified heritage values and overall significance of the place. The *Burra Charter* advocates a cautious approach to change while recognising the need for a continued use and compatible development of places of cultural heritage significance.

Policy

A permit policy and appropriate suite of exemptions should be developed in consultation with the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria.

At present there are no permit exemptions identified. A list of proposed permit exemptions for the Registered area will be developed in conjunction with Heritage Victoria. These will assist in its future management and to allow minor works as well as works that would not have an adverse impact on the cultural heritage significance to be undertaken without a permit.

Policy

The maintenance of the former Benalla Migrant Camp should be seen as a continuous protective care of the fabric and this should at all times remain a priority activity. Maintenance should be guided by the principles established in the Burra Charter and in a manner consistent with the identified values of the place.

In general day to day maintenance work can be carried out with regard to the conservation policies and without employing the services of a qualified conservation practitioner but it is strongly recommended that a qualified conservation practitioner inspect the place once a year and prepare a list of remedial conservation works [if necessary] and to provide an appropriate methodology for these works.

Areas that require particular attention and **are not to be** treated as having little or no significance include the **timber floors, timber doors, timber trusses, timber windows and the internal and external walling.** Any works to these areas could trigger the need for a permit and it is strongly advised that appropriate advice is sought before undertaking works to these areas.

For example: a permit will be required to sand the floors. The floors show through changes to the floor finishes physical evidence of a former use. In addition timber floors can only withstand a couple of sandings before they need to be replaced.

Repairs

Repairs to significant structures should replace like with like [that is the replacement of any material that might be missing, decayed, broken etc] with fabric to match existing. This should include an assessment of the suitability of the replacement material of the extant fabric. In some instances, the material that is being replaced might not be the same as the original material. If this is the situation then a qualified heritage consultant should be contacted and a permit might be required. When replacing any materials, it is best practice to replace only what is strictly necessary, instead of the replacement of the whole element/feature. In areas where there is missing original fabric this should be reinstated or reconstructed but only if the evidence exists as to its earlier state or form.

Particular regard will need to be undertaken with the repair of windows and doors. Replacement of whole units such as complete doors or windows is to be undertaken as a last resort. This fabric is highly significant. If windows are to be repaired a suitably qualified restorer will need to be sought as whilst the current windows are rudimentary in nature it is this aspect that is valuable.

Alteration and adaptation

In General

All alterations and adaptations should be undertaken in a manner that is sensitive to the existing fabric. This also applies to: internal planning; all original fabric and any other identified primary significant fabric/features. Adaptation and alterations should follow the *Burra Charter*[40] principles. Of primary importance are the principles that include the 'cautious' approach recommended by the Charter where as little as possible of the significant

[40] The *Burra Charter, The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance,* 2013, see the web site - *australia.icomos.org › Publications* for further information.

fabric is changed and any new works should not distort the physical evidence. This applies to fabric of primary and contributory significance. Elements of contributory significance can provide areas or opportunities for greater change.

In order to meet all statutory requirements all proposed changes will require careful consideration of the types of uses and the potential impact that these changes will have on significant fabric and the cultural heritage significance. This includes considering the ramifications of compliance with other statutory agencies. However, use is critical to the ongoing viability of the place as it ensures a purpose, economic sustainability and maintenance of fabric.

It is unlikely that the Benalla Migrant Camp will ever be used again as a migrant camp or as an army barrack and this means that any future use will need to be part of managed change. This should be undertaken within a framework of conserving significant heritage values. Most changes of use require adaptation and alteration of significant fabric. Even a use such as a museum requires changes that could have the potential to affect the cultural heritage significance. For instance, as a museum and a place that will be used by the general public, consideration has to be given to the *Disability Discrimination Act*; public safety and with regard to other statutory requirements.

The potential needs of any user group will largely need to be accommodated within the confines of the basic hut presentation. Any proposed use will need to be considered as to the impact that it might have on the utilitarian nature of the buildings. As many of the internal finishes are relatively fragile any proposed use will need to be considered and assessed as to the potential impact that the use could have on the integrity and intactness of the buildings.

Policy

Adaptation of and new works to significant buildings, spaces or elements should not detract from the overall cultural heritage significance of the place.

Alteration and adaptation works for elements and areas of primary significance

Where alteration or adaptation is proposed it needs to be necessary and justifiable. Works should involve minimal physical alteration to significant fabric, should not adversely affect the significant exteriors of the buildings, the interior spatial quality or significant decoration, and generally should be sympathetic to the buildings and their setting.

Where change is required it should avoid permanent intervention into areas and elements of primary significance and all changes and installations in these areas should be reversible, i.e., not requiring significant reconstruction to the heritage fabric when the interventions or additions are no longer required.

If some fabric is to be sacrificed every effort should be made to ensure that intact representative examples of elements and areas of primary significance are maintained.

External works, such as possible extensions and additions to facilitate a viable new use for a building, should have regard for minimising visual impacts on the subject building. Additions and extensions should be recessive to the original building. As these buildings are of a specific scale and dimension and this character is significant additions will need to be carefully considered. An addition might be supported if it can adopt a respectful scale to the

addition; locating an addition to the rear or less publicly visible elevations of buildings; separating the addition by a link. The addition/new works should also be distinguished from the old in terms of fabric, the objective being to ensure that the original is able to be visually identified as separate to the new works.

Policy

Any works should be undertaken with a minimal impact on primary significant fabric and avoided if possible.

Works to elements and areas of contributory significance.

Adaptation is possible, as long as the works are contained as much as possible within their original envelope and are respectful of the original layout and significant fabric. It is preferable that losses of original fabric necessitated by such changes are minimised.

Policy

Works to elements and areas of contributory significance should retain as much of the original configuration and spatial layouts and as much fabric as possible.

General principles to consider when undertaking works to elements and areas of primary and contributory cultural heritage significance

The following principles should be considered when undertaking works to any significant fabric.

- Ensure a contrast between old and new fabric - this will need to be sensitive and not a striking contrast. Sometimes a small notation on joinery etc with the date of alteration will be the be the most sensitive outcome.

- Retain sufficient original fabric to ensure that the significance of the place is not compromised

- Where the interior of a building is significant, and depending on the nature and extent of this significance, internal adaptation works should aim to work as far as is possible within the existing significant layout and internal plan, and ensure that the original and significant finishes and fabric, and/or significant architectural and spatial features are retained and interpreted as far as possible

- Where original internal walls are required to be removed, then evidence should be retained through, preferably, partial removal only and/or the retention of wall nibs.

- Where significant fabric is removed, its original location should be documented, and the items catalogued and, if practical, stored safely against possible future reinstatement or reuse within other huts. These types of works are generally not supported and would only be considered under special circumstances.

- The introduction of partitions or stud walls, where this is deemed an appropriate insertion into the interior, should minimise physical impacts on significant fabric (walls, floor, ceilings, window and door openings, etc).

- Works undertaken to meet compliance with the current Building Code of Australia (BCA), the Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA) and/or other relevant Australian Standards (i.e. relating to health, safety, security, access and egress) should: be informed by the assessment of significance of the building or structure, and recommendations relating to the management and conservation of significant fabric included in this report; and have regard, where possible, for avoiding or limiting physical and/or visual impacts on significant buildings by seeking to locate such works in less visible or sensitive areas/elevations of buildings, or in already altered or modified areas, or by seeking to minimise removal of, or alteration to, significant fabric.

- Consider and investigate alternative approaches to the resolution of functional, safety, BCA, DDA or health requirements in order to minimise any adverse impact upon significant fabric or features.

Works to buildings and site elements of little or no significance

The complex contains few elements of little or no significance. Where elements exist that have little significance they can be adapted, or if they are intrusive they should be removed.

Policy

Works to buildings and site elements of little or no significance can be undertaken.

Environmental Performance

Generally, it is expected that the environmental performance of buildings of heritage significance warrants consideration in future works.

For this particular group of buildings such actions have the potential to require intervention which is destructive of original fabric and compromises or reduces the assessed significance of the place.

Moreover, the poor environmental performance – lack of insulation, inadequate heating and cooling and most other general performance measures as per Australian Standards are part of the historic significance of this place. Any alterations for an improved environmental performance will need to be assessed by a suitably qualified heritage practitioner. This does not mean that the buildings cannot provide a comfortable environment but that particular care will need to be taken with the introduction of new services and materials.

Policy

Measures to improve the environmental performance of buildings of heritage significance should be carefully calculated and undertaken with sensitivity. Many standard changes such as changing glazing, walls, roofing materials would fundamentally alter the cultural significance of the place.

Hazardous Materials

If asbestos is identified this material will need to be removed from the site. However, containment and encapsulation should also be considered as part of the proposed works.

Policy

Where hazardous materials are encountered and if available as an option, an approach of containment and encapsulation is to be preferred over removal.

This policy can apply to some types of asbestos if asbestos is relatively inert and is maintained and not disturbed it can present as a minimal hazard.

Landscape Policies

The conservation policies relate to the overall management of the landscape. Refer to the identified landscape elements of primary and contributory significance.

Note that the peppercorn trees are of significance and will need to be monitored.

Policy

Retain all surviving sections of concrete paving, concrete drains and similar hard landscaping features.

Design future landscaping to reinforce and complement the 20th century features.

Views and Vistas

The visual relationships between buildings and groups of buildings are of significance and any proposed works which may potentially impact on this valued aspect of the site should be carefully considered. Acknowledging the location of some of the huts has changed – the proximity is sympathetic to the cultural values.

Site Development

The siting, placement and scale of new works should have regard for the historical pattern of development

Evidence of earlier buildings – footings, landscape elements etc should not be removed or overwhelmed by new development.

New works should not impact on, or diminish, the prominence of the regularity of the layout of the individual huts or their modest scale and footprint.

Care should be taking in siting new buildings and development not to disrupt the relationships between the historic buildings on the site.

Consideration should be given to landscape elements of significance in siting new buildings or development.

External materials and finishes for new works can be contemporary, but should avoid materials which will have an unacceptable level of visual impact and prominence.

The design and form of new works should avoid a 'faux' historic approach, or one which reproduces the character and appearance of the historic buildings within the site.

Applications for statutory approvals for new works and development should be accompanied by a heritage impact statement which analyses the proposed works and assesses their impacts on the significant values and fabric of the place, including adjacent or nearby significant buildings, the landscape context and the broader site.

In terms of the siting and placement of new buildings, development has typically followed a grid layout with space between and around buildings; this is evident in the historic images and plans. There is considered to be limited scope for new development within and abutting the historic core. There should be no new development in the spaces between the camp buildings.

In all cases, the form and siting of any new buildings and landscaping should be carefully considered so as to avoid impacts on the presentation or experience of the significant complex

Design, Form & Materials

The adoption of a contemporary design aesthetic for new works is generally an appropriate response, although the selection of materials and colours is important. Lightweight materials such corrugated galvanised metal, plywood, timber and other similar utilitarian materials provide reference for future works and contemporary application.

The design and form of new works should also avoid a 'faux' historical approach, or one which seeks to reproduce the character and appearance of the historic buildings. Generally, the prevalence of buildings of a low scale with regular footprints offers guidance on what might be appropriate for new works, but this is subject also to the placement of the works and their visibility within the site.

It is a policy recommendation that community interest in the precinct be encouraged and that the support of migrant communities for the conservation and interpretation of the precinct be actively pursued.

7.0 Recommended Actions

The following recommended actions are intended to assist the owners of the place to plan works that will assist in the management of the heritage place. These proposed works include physical conservation works as well as works that are aimed at providing a better understanding of the intangible cultural values.

7.1 Intangible Values and how they can be better represented at this *place.*

It is clear when one views the immediate history of place that it is an understanding of the personal and intimate relationships to this place that have enriched the cultural values. This was demonstrated through the state registration process and at the Heritage Council hearing. Much of the early historic analysis largely related to the identified history and its relationship to the fabric. What was missing was a nuanced understanding of the place and that became evident during the registration process. During the Heritage Council hearing it became patently obvious that there were other histories and memories that had not been identified. The submissions provided an additional perspective that enriched ones understanding of what this place represented, and how, through appreciating this specific history it can inform our understanding of this particular aspect of Victoria's history. The submissions also provided a better sense of what the cultural values are, and how and why they should be communicated to the wider community. In particular it was the evidence of the children who had grown up in the

camp or the children of those parents who had spent much of their early life in Australia in the camp, that provided such a rich understanding of the place.

Sabine Smyth has provided the following observations:

…visitors to the exhibition at Hut 11 are moved by the outline of the former rooms on the floor. They describe tiny rooms, the heat, the lack of privacy, and the long walk to the toilets and showers. Walls / original fabric can be touched and windows can be peered out of, affording the visitor a view similar to that of the former camp days – onto the next hut…[41]

Sabine Smyth also describes how visitors can look to the east towards the edge of the former camp which was fenced off by a barbed wire fence and bordered by the aviation security tower. It was from this tower that many of the photos of the site were taken. The line of the fence was just outside the existing asphalt which was the location of the former camp basket- ball courts.

This is reinforced by Dr Bruce Pennay in a submission to this CMP:

The Benalla Migrant Camp was a holding centre that accommodated a wide variety of people, but it is the way in which it housed unsupported mothers and their children that it is most clearly distinguished from other centres, including Bonegilla.

… (there are) *important ways of conserving the buildings to recapture intangible values…In particular the ambience of place. There is no other more fitting place in Australia in which I can stand and ponder what it meant to be a child of a post-war migrant family than the only surviving school room of a migrant camp school.*[42]

What is required to address the expression of the identified cultural values?

i The place can provide a better understanding of migrant life through targeted exhibition spaces.

This should include:

- The development of exhibition spaces that recreate the life in the Camp from a child's perspective. This is important and the development of one of the school rooms would assist in the interpretation of those values.

- More space needs to be allocated to a better representation of the residential life of the migrant community.

41 Sabine Smyth email correspondence 24 April 2018

42 Submission provided on 26 July 2018 to the Benalla City Council

- The religious life in this community was very important and this needs to be better represented through exhibition spaces. It would be ideal to bring back to the camp the original altar and to reintegrate the importance of religion within the site through dedicated spaces.

Image provided by Benalla Migrant Camp Exhibition©
Omielczuk 3

ii Conservation Works

The place needs targeted conservation works. The works outlined in the Conservation Schedule (Attachment 1) need to be prioritised.

This schedule should ideally be adopted by Council and the owners of the buildings. It would be optimal for a committee of management to be established. This committee could then be responsible for the co-ordination of works and ensure that the works are undertaken in a timely and professional manner.

As there is a similar extent of works for each building it would be best practice for the works to be timetabled according to urgency (this is noted in the schedule) and completed at the same time. It will be far more efficient for these works to be completed simultaneously and not on *ad hoc* basis. This is because of the specialist character associated with these works.

Care should be taken when undertaking these works that any hazardous materials such as asbestos or lead paint are dealt with appropriately.

Paint colours have not been provided in the Conservation Schedule. It is recommended that paint scrapes be taken and the colours analysed. It appears that there were a number of colours used on the buildings. Once this colour range has been determined then a colour palette can be developed for a consistent approach.

The Maintenance Schedule should be adopted by Council and the owners of the buildings. It is important that maintenance is undertaken as it is the cheapest and least interventionist form of conservation for any place.

iii Strategic works

As noted in the analysis of the cultural heritage significance of the place the intangible values need to be protected and enhanced. A suite of strategic works are required to assist in this process.

This could take the form an overall strategic works document that would need address the following objectives:

- **Entrance to the *place***

The entrance area is clearly of particular significance and the intangible cultural values associated with this place have been identified by many of the former residents.

It is recommended that consideration be given to the following to improve the sense of arrival

- **Interpretative Signage**

A sign describing the cultural heritage significance of the place should be placed near to the entrance gates.

This should be accompanied by a site plan.

Consideration should be given to interpretative signage identifying the former location of the streets ie First, Second, Third, Fourth Avenue. The locations of the streets are still identifiable on examination of the original kerb and gutter arrangement in BARC Avenue .

- **Re-instatement of the galvanised pipe and woven wire gates.**

These need not be operable or could be fixed as open. The pedestrian gate still exists.

- **Landscape Works**

Many of the former residents have described the landscaping within the Migrant Camp. The entrance (BARC Avenue) has been noted as being informally planted with flowering prunus, cypresses and other deciduous trees. The particular species that were common during this period can be identified and assistance should be sought from John Hawker, Heritage Victoria.

It is recommended that seating should be provided in this area to provide a place for reflection.

- **Car parking**

As part of the management of entrance to the site, it would be ideal to remove car parking from the road sides. The parking restrictions need only apply during the day. If this cannot be achieved, serious consideration should be given to restricting car parking within 45 metres of the entrance gates.

- **The re-location of the War Memorial.**

The significance of this place as a former military base during the war has not been fully recognised. As part of this CMP it is recommended that the Bellman Hangar and the Parade Ground be included in the extent of registration. A memorial that was located within a more appropriate cultural context such as near to the Bellman Hangar would have a far greater resonance and would provide better opportunities to demonstrate the cultural complexity and the history of this highly significant war time site. It would also provide more opportunities for the community to commemorate the sacrifices that were made by the large number of people who were trained at this site and served in the war and to commemorate those who died in the service of what was then the Empire.

- **Naming of the Streets**

Consideration should be given to the return of the original street names. This would include re-instating Fifth Avenue. The original names are critical to understanding the nature and character of the site as a former military base.

Streets that lie within the registered area should have street names that reflect the history as that will assist in an understanding of the place.

- **Signage**

A significant priority should be given to the development of a suite of comprehensive and stylistically consistent directional and interpretive signage. As the site is somewhat hidden, this should involve a range of measures:

iv Landscape Plan

The site currently has an amorphous and disconnected character. The original camp had a clear character and this was supported by the physical separation of the place from the township with fencing and gates. This is an important element for an understanding and better appreciation of the intangible significance.

The types of gates and fences that were used can be identified from images. It is clear that internal fences were more domestic in character - that is timber posts with wire infill or similar. It is recommended that as part of any Landscape Plan this is considered. This need not be a secure fencing of the whole site but an indicative fence that creates a sense of enclosure and enforces the regularity and conditions found when living in a camp.

The objectives of the Landscape plan should include:

- Site definition
- Restoration of the lightly treed landscape to north side of BARC Avenue
- Appropriate planting in the registered area

- The removal of the Eucalypts in the area around Buildings 1A & 2B
- Fencing guidelines
- Road Treatments
- Footpath design (location and materials)
- Within this landscape plan consideration should be given to a methodology for the retention of the asphalt and the outline of the tennis court
- Location and design of interpretative area

v Signage Plan

A signage plan that sets out the type, style and extent of signage on the buildings. This should include a:

- Directional signage plan, and a
- Interpretative Signage plan

APPENDIX A HISTORY OF BROKEN RIVER POTTERS INC

(Source for this history: the Broken River Potters Inc.)

The Broken River Potters was founded in 1970, under another name. There is no clear knowledge of when the change of name occurred. The club relocated to the workshop, under the Benalla Art Gallery, in 1977. An Arts Committee, which included Benalla potters, had raised community funds to pay for the construction of this purpose-built Community workshop. In 2009, the kiln was disconnected, as it was deemed a fire hazard. All work was then transported 15 km, to the home of Pat McGauty (President), to be fired in her personal kiln. Obviously, this was an enormous task, so new members could not be recruited.

In September 2010, flood water came up through the toilet, carrying raw sewage. Under OH&S, the workshop was deemed a health hazard and we were evicted from under Art Gallery. The club only survived because of Pat McGauty's ongoing commitment to the club, whereby, she allowed the club to work in her home studio.

The club was led to believe that when the Mural was finished, we would be allocated BARC Hut 66, which was being used for the making and firing the Mural tiles. However, when the time came, this didn't happen and submissions were made to Council for a new workshop. Finally, the group approached Pat Claridge in 2011, and with her help, we were finally, allocated Hut 66, in 2011

Much work needed to be done, before we the workshop could be used. It needed 3 phase electricity installed for the kiln as well as re-wiring. Cupboards and a glazing bench needed to be built and the kiln needed to be transported from the gallery and installed with an exhaust fan. Our Secretary, Lorna Hobbs, applied for grants to cover these costs. The grants, awarded, were from the following: Tomorrow Today ($5000), FRRR (nearly $5000), Benalla Council ($2500).

Members spent the first six months of 2012, cleaning, painting all the internal walls, cupboards and replacing the putty in the windows. The workshop was officially opened on 28 June, 2012, by a previous, prominent member, Dulcie Sanderson.

The official purpose of our club is to *"provide opportunities, for all members of the community, to learn and produce ceramic works, in a self-help environment that strengthens the health and well-being of members. This includes special workshops for the club and community organisations, as needed".* Workshops have included, those run for several years by Pat McGauty, for disabled clients of Central Access and also one semester for Edspace students. We have volunteered our time to run workshops for the Tomorrow: Today Foundation, as part of their Connect 9 program to promote resilience in Year 9 students.

Because we have such a supportive environment, quite a few members look to the club as an aid to maintaining their mental health and well-being, a few were referred by G.R.O.W. Some come from disadvantaged backgrounds, relying on disability pensions or income support, so funds are limited. Also, because we are the only non-profit club in NE Victoria, providing facilities and free tuition by sharing our expertise, some members travel over an hour, coming from Ruffy, Barnawartha, Bright, Eldorado and King Valley.

Since we have been at Hut 66, we have held an annual Exhibition at the workshop, to help promote the Arts Precinct and showcase our work. Benalla is famous for its Ceramic Mural and we are proud to continue the tradition of ceramic arts in Benalla and of our community contributions.

APPENDIX B BENALLA MIGRANT CAMP INC.

(Source for this history: Benalla Migrant Camp Inc.)

Background

On Australia Day 2013 a photographic exhibition was held involving 100 images of life at the Benalla Migrant Camp. The Benalla Migrant Camp was open between 1949 and 1967, and the exhibition was in memory of the over 60,000 post-war Migrants from Europe, who lived there. This unique, moving exhibition told of the daily lives of 22 families, as captured in their personal photos.

The exhibition was a huge success, with over 1,000 visitors in 5 days. Many visitors came from interstate. In the lead up to and during the exhibition more than 100 people with a personal connection to the camp submitted forms to indicate they were also willing to share their family's stories, and contribute photos and memorabilia and that they were in favour of a permanent exhibition at the original camp site off Samaria Road, adjacent to Benalla Airport.

Benalla Migrant Camp Inc. formed in April 2013 in order to progress with this important work.

Our Vision

Preserving the stories of the Benalla Migrant Camp forever

Our Mission

We will collect and preserve the history of the Benalla Migrant Camp through the personal photos and memorabilia of the former residents. We will do so with a sense of urgency, as time is running out to collect first hand accounts.

We will focus on collecting photos, but also the written, oral and filmed stories of the former migrant camp residents (and their children) who are still alive, in order to bestow meaning upon this collection.

We will grow the exhibition and promote its relevance to our local community and within our region of Victoria.

We will always keep in mind that this exhibition is to honour the memory of the migrants who lived at the camp, and that our work keeps our focus firmly on our objectives to this end. In other words, we shall not take on projects that do not align with the following objectives.

Our Key Objectives 2013 - 2023

. The collection of first-hand accounts and the digital preservation of historical material relating to the Benalla Migrant Camp, which is relevant and suitable for permanent exhibition.

. An exhibition space at the site of the former amp, involving indoor and outdoor areas, which will be permanently protected as a Benalla Migrant Camp Memorial Site.

. The development of a marketing plan for the exhibition including advertised opening hours, a web presence, and a design/style concept for the site.

. An annual Australia Day Event that is informal and fun, and in harmony with our vision and mission.

. Collaboration with other migrant history projects, such as The Bonegilla Migrant Experience, for our mutual benefit.

. Fundraising to realise these objectives, including grant applications.

APPENDIX C GLIDING CLUB OF VICTORIA

A History of the Early Years, 1929 -1979

(Source for this history: Gliding Club of Victoria)

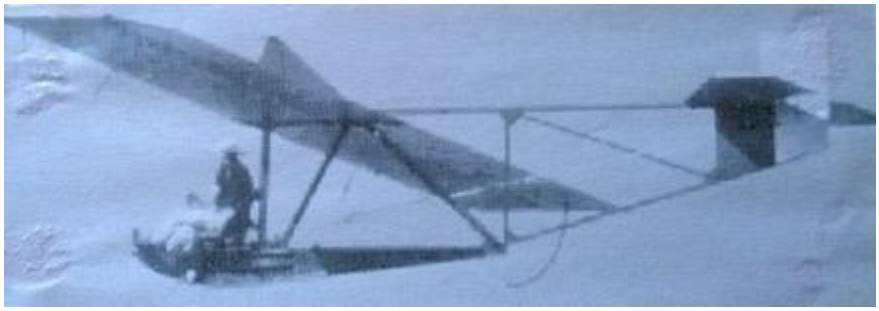
The GCV was formed during a period in 1929 when gliding in Australia quite suddenly achieved a degree of popularity for which no realistic answer ever became available. Very considerable publicity by the news media and magazines such as "Popular Mechanics" resulted in clubs being formed all over Australia. The most promoted club was the Glider Club of Australia, an organization which "Popular Mechanics" seemed to promote most actively; this Club forming branches in most States. Many of these groups failed to really get started and rapidly faded into oblivion.

Club records show that the GCV was officially set in motion at a meeting in a City restaurant on September 27, 1929 and it is recorded in the minute book that the inaugural members present were Messrs. W.R. Garrett, D. Brown, J. Turner, R. Harrison, K. Shields, Flight Lieut. Dr. James (all Citizen Air Force personnel), E. Howden, C.J. Gordon and F. Waters. W. Garrett was elected Chairman, F. Waters Honorary Secretary and R. Harrison Honorary Treasurer. The name "Gliding Club of Victoria" was decided on at the next meeting on October 11. The Club membership indicated a strong Air Force and social influence as quite a number of the members were Citizen Air Force personnel and the Vice Presidential list included the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Councillor H. Luxton, Air Commodore R. Williams (later Air Vice Marshall Sir Richard Williams) and Canon E. Jellicoe Rogers, plus politicians and senior Army Officers. The first General Meeting was convened on November 18, 1929 and Ray Garrett was officially elected as President. The annual subscription was fixed at £1 and gliding was to be free up to the first six hops, thereafter the charge was to be 5d. per flight.

The Club's first glider was a Zogling type primary (cost £58), named the "Falcon" later known as "The Brick" on account of its keen gliding angle and heavy empty weight. This glider was christened by Mrs. Richard Williams with champagne at a public opening flying day on Saturday, August 23, 1930 at Essendon Aerodrome. The first flight was carried out by Ray Garrett from a bungee launch to approximately 30 feet. "The Sun" newspaper recorded the event with a full front page spread and reported a crowd of 2,000 present. A second primary glider was ordered from the Shaw Ross Aviation Company in October 1930 at a cost of £75. This machine, a Rhon Ranger type and christened "Condor", started its flying career in 1931. Another primary was bought from a G. Rice Oxley and operated until 1937 when it was sold to the Wangaratta Gliding Club. Records indicate a number of other primaries existed but some confusion exists as to ownership, and the eventual fate of these machines.

The Club was riding on the crest of the wave of gliding popularity and even though the crash rate was high, members flocked to join the Club to have a go in a primary and "experience the thrill of gliding flight". It is recorded that one notorious bearded character is said to have jumped out of the Primary while it was airborne because "he did not have enough confidence to make a landing". One startling crash witnessed by young Ken Davies occurred when a woman trainee was given a few verbal instructions on which way to move the stick and rudder, then she was launched by an overlarge shock cord crew. The machine did a sort of stall turn at the end of

the launch and the pilot fell out. The nose of the glider finished embedded in the earth close to the badly injured unfortunate woman. The result of this accident was that female members were banned.



GLIDING CLUB OF VICTORIA A History of the Early Years, 1929 -1979

The Club's first social event was held on July 29, 1930 when 130 people attended a Cabaret Dance at the Princess Ballroom, Howey Place, Melbourne. Dancing was from 8.00 to 11.30 p.m. and tickets were priced at 5s 6d (including supper). The evening is recorded as being both a financial and social success.

The Club lost the use of the Essendon flying field later in 1930 and operations were transferred to Rosanna - a 15 minute walk from the railway station. Late in 1930 the Gliding Association of Victoria was formed to bring together the multitude of clubs that were starting up in the State and the GCV agreed to change its name to the Melbourne Gliding Club in January 1931.

The Club's first flying year coincided with a boom in Australian gliding. By September 1930, membership had risen to more than 300. Within a few months, the excess of enthusiasm had started to wane, no doubt the high accident statistics had some bearing on it, and the Club settled into a period of consolidation. Most of the original members seemed to fade into the background. Flying operations were transferred from Rosanna to Coode Island (Fishermen's Bend) with expeditions to hill sites such as Tower Hill (Koroit) and Mt. Fraser (Beveridge).

The Club's Annual Report for 1932 records an Easter trip to Tower Hill with nil gliding due to wet weather except for two flights by Fred Gascoigne (now V.S.A. Treasurer). No other flying was recorded for the first five months of the year due to the need to rebuild one Primary and recondition the second one. When this work was completed, it is recorded that 600 flights were made by the end of September at a cost of 1 penny per flight. In October 1932, a 1922 model Dodge car was purchased for auto towing and flights of up to 11 minutes were being made from the high tows.

The "Falcon" was damaged in 1932 and took two years to rebuild. Because this was the machine used for training, no new trainees could be processed and interest in the club waned somewhat. The "Condor" was fitted with a nacelle in mid-1933 and became known as a secondary type glider. The improved performance coupled with car tows up to 1000 ft. gave much longer flights and flying standards improved.

For the next three years the Club continued to operate from Coode Island and Mount Fraser with varying degrees of success. Primaries were damaged and rebuilt at what seemed regular intervals, and the fate of some of the machines has proved difficult to trace. On August 19, 1936, the Club was incorporated as a limited liability non-

profit company and officially changed its name back to The Gliding Club of Victoria; the Gliding Association of Victoria having faded into oblivion. Since the period in 1930 when the name was changed to the Melbourne Gliding Club, records indicate the Club name seemed to fluctuate at various periods between the GCV and MGC. The 1936 balance sheet indicated a profit of £2S.3.4 for the year with assets of £191.13.9. Two new primaries were purchased and records indicate a fleet of four or five primaries - some with nacelles fitted. Activity in 1936 also seemed to be on the upgrade after two years of stagnation as 330 flights were recorded and 23 members were financial.

1937 saw a year of considerable development. Training operations were transferred from Coode Island to Laverton and a small hangar at Beveridge, built mainly of scrap material and of doubtful ownership, was extended to 100' x 20'.

The "Condor II" and Rice Oxley Primaries were sold and a Grunau Baby sailplane was purchased from Edmund Schneider's glider factory in Germany. This machine was considered a high performance sailplane and was the first sailplane to be imported into Australia. It arrived in August 1937 and cost £203.6.10.

The Grunau made the first recorded cross country flight in Victoria from Laverton to Deer Park - 6 miles - on December 29, 1937, and it is recorded as a Victorian distance record. The pilot was Ron Roberts. Roberts also achieved the first thermal flight in the Grunau at Laverton, recording a 20 minute flight with a climb to 1600ft.

In 1938 all the major Australian gliding records were gained by Club members with the Grunau Baby.

The Club President, Geoff Richardson, who had designed and built a sailplane of similar performance to the Grunau, test flew his machine "Golden Eagle" the same day as the Club's Grunau Baby was first flown. This machine is still flying and is currently owned by the Beaufort Gliding Club.

A small hangar was built at Laverton and this enabled the primaries to be stored in a rigged condition, thus allowing more time to be devoted to training. (Rigging a primary could be a long, tedious business). Winch launches were used on occasion to support 4AF tows and bungee launches. However, just as the Laverton site was starting to show increased useage for training, the Club was banned from the area at the start of World War II, due to its proximity to Point Cook and Laverton Air Force base.

Following on the success of the Grunau Baby, an order was placed with Slingsby Sailplanes for a"Kirby Kadet" in kit form (cost approx. £90) to provide a medium performance glider for the more inexperienced pilots. The kit of components arrived early in 1940 and the machine was constructed and ready for operation by the end of the year. Whilst operated with reasonable success for the first two years, the "Kadet" apparently was not a popular machine to fly, as it received very little use after 1942. When sold in 1953 it had logged only 55 hours total flight time. Late in 1940, training operations resumed after a break of almost a year since the close down of the Laverton field, when the Club started to operate from the Belmont Common at Geelong. A National soaring meeting had been held at this site in January 1940 and it proved most successful. It was during 1940 that construction started on the first of the famous Duckworth Dodge winches. This unit commenced trial operations at the Beveridge Easter Camp in 1941 and laid the launching pattern for Club operations right through to the 1970s when winching

was abandoned at Benalla due to Department of Transport restrictions. Construction of the first trailer type winch commenced in 1942.

Flying operations at Geelong were again curtailed when the field was resumed for a military camp in July 1941. The Club then shifted to a field at Mordialloc and the Laverton hangar was shifted to this site. Some problems were experienced with the Mordialloc field as it proved to be very rough and subject to flooding. Wartime restrictions prevented any grading operations, so only winching operation was possible. Due to these problems, little training was again possible for some time. Vandals also proved a problem right through the six years that the Club operated there. Problems also occurred at the Beveridge hangar in 1942 with vandals, and a wind storm damaged the hangar and some of the gliders stored inside it.

Whilst total flying hours each year over the past five years averaged between 50 and 70 hours, 1942 proved an exceptional year with an average flight time of 20 minutes per launch for timed flights. This was the first full year of winch launching, no car tows being recorded. The first recorded Club night soaring flight was achieved by Ken Davies in June 1942 when he slope soared the Grunau for 32 minutes at Beveridge. The following year, Norm Hyde achieved a 55 minute night flight at Beveridge. It was during 1942 that the idea of a dual trainer was conceived and a tandem machine was designed by Norm. Hyde.

A syndicate of 7 members built the machine, later christened the "Merlin" and it was test flown Easter 1943. The "Merlin" was a major advance in the training of pilots as it eliminated the long painful process of primary training. Although initially a syndicate machine, it was almost exclusively used to train Club members and was eventually taken over by the Club in 1947. For state of the art, it proved to be quite a successful two seater and was one of a very few two seaters in operation in Australia. Following a mishap at Benalla in January 1949, the machine was badly damaged and it was later sold in an unrepaired condition.

1943 proved to be a mixed bag of luck for the Club. The "Hawk" primary spun in at Mordialloc and the pilot received fatal injuries (the first fatal accident in the Club), Charlie Lambeth raised the Australian Duration Record to 9 hours 51 minutes in the Grunau at Beveridge (he was having a sickie!) and membership almost reached the 100 mark, for the first time since 1930. Reg Pollard received serious head injuries when struck by the wing of the Merlin during a bungee launch at Beveridge.

For a period of 5-6 years from the early 1940's, tremendous efforts were made in the construction of equipment. Four winches were built after the original prototype was modified several times, the "Merlin", the "Utility" and a primary were designed and built at at Fawkner, trailers were made, and the gliders were all subject to major repairs at various intervals. The driving force behind this construction period was the Duckworth and Hyde group and most of the work was carried out at the workshops of the Dowling Bros. located at Fawkner. In addition to the new equipment, the Beverige hangar rebuilt on two occasions (after storm damage) before being finally destroyed by a wind storm in 1948, the Mordialloc hangar was dismantled and re-erected at Fawkner and three private machines were built by members. The construction of the "Utility", whilst initially a private venture by Norm Hyde, is worthy of note. This machine was conceived, designed, built and test flown by Norm Hyde and members between the period July 8, 1944 and September 17, 1944. The Club purchased the glider some weeks later for the

price of the materials. In addition to the construction programs, the Club, mainly through the efforts of Secretary Duckworth, was very actively involved in the development of a National body from the late 1930's to oversee the needs of gliding. The Australian Gliding Association was developed and was a loosely knit body of various State Associations and clubs working through a central secretariat run by R. Duckworth. Apart from keeping the clubs throughout the country informed by circular as to the happenings in the various areas, considerable effort was devoted to the political sphere, particularly in relation to the payment of subsidies to assist clubs to acquire equipment. This subsidy was paid pre-war, but suspended in 1939 and the efforts of the AGA, through the GCV, resulted in its reintroduction after the War. Club members involved in the management of the AGA also made regular safaris around Australia to other clubs to help keep them informed. The present Gliding Federation of Australia developed as a direct result of the early efforts of the AGA.

While all the construction activity was in progress, the flying field problem remained with hill soaring operations at Beveridge, Primary training at Mordialloc, and when Mordialloc was abandoned, operations were carried out at Fawkner and Reservoir. In 1945 a new field at Somerton became available. Needless to say, with all the construction and repair activity, wartime problems and gypsying from flying field to flying field, not too much flying activity was recorded.

In 1944 only 25 hours were logged and it was not until 1947 that the 100 hour barrier was broken. This was the year that 22 pilots attended the Club's first Christmas Camp at Benalla and the results of the expedition proved quite startling for those attending.

During the 14 day period, the three Club machines taken to Benalla flew 63 hours and numerous cross country flights of significance were achieved. Best distance flown was 85 miles by Norm Hyde which was far in excess of anything that had ever been achieved in the past. Aerotow facilities, provided by a Tiger Moth, were available throughout the Camp and proved their worth for getting better soaring flights. The Club had experimented with aerotowing for the first time the previous year at a camp at Yarram and this laid the foundation for the current day aerotow operations.

Another milestone in the Club was the introduction of "Airflow" as a Club newsletter, publication continuing to the present day.

Following the successful summer of 1947/48, flying activity started to diminish again partially due to extensive repairs being needed to the Grunau after it was blown over at Somerton. The need to transport the equipment each weekend to a flying site also took its toll on the enthusiasm and after the "Merlin" two seater was damaged at the 1948/49 Benalla Christmas Camp, new member intake declined somewhat. In fact, for a number of reasons, it was ten years before membership numbers returned to the level of 1948. With the loss of the two seater, any training carried out was with the two primaries, and this situation existed until the Club was able to put the "T31B" into operation early in 1953. This machine was imported as a kit and assembled in the Club workshop at Merlynston. Late in 1949, the construction of this workshop was commenced and it became the focal point of the Club for a number of years. Coincidentally, with the slow decline that had set in, Richard “Dick” Duckworth and Norm Hyde found it necessary to drop out of active participation after many years of sterling service. The nucleus of a new group came to the fore and started the building process again.

Apart from the workshop and "T31" construction a "Grunau Baby" was purchased in an unfinished condition and completed by members (the first glider to be built in Australia by E. Schneider Pty. Ltd. and the first Club glider to be fitted with dive brakes). A more powerful two drum winch was also constructed. When the T31B was completed, Primary training was phased out. The Primaries, "Kadet", "Utility" and Dodge single drum winches, tow car and the remains of the "Merlin" were sold, reducing the Club fleet to two Grunaus and T31B. A registered modified jeep replaced the unregistered tow car and this made the Club self-reliant to a degree in the transport of equipment to the various flying sites.

The flying field problem consumed considerable time of the very active Committee in the late 1940s and early 1950s and eventually a proposal was adopted to shift the flying operations permanently to Benalla. Coincidentally, with the shift to Benalla, the Department of Civil Aviation amended the height limits at Benalla and the Club found itself restricted to 3000 ASL. To help overcome the problem, a program of radio installations was started. Radios were designed and built for the sailplanes, control tower and jeep, but the system proved unsuccessful after much effort and it was abandoned.

At this time also, the Club instituted the requirement for pilot medical examinations, and resulted in all flying members being required to hold Student Pilot Licences.

The Club settled into Benalla late in 1952 and was granted the use of the hangar and a hut for use as a clubhouse (No. 1 clubhouse building). Flying was carried out on a spasmodic basis for some months until the Ford two drum winch was completed.

The year 1954 - the Silver Anniversary year - proved to be a real turning point. The completion of the construction program, a lack of aircraft damage, plus regular flying at Benalla proved a real boost to the Club. Over 300 hours were flown compared with the usual 50-75 and the Red Grunau actually flew an incredible 140 hours without damage. Also during 1954 the prototype Kookaburra flew and the Club immediately ordered one of these machines.

This sailplane was delivered to Benalla by aerotow and this delivery flight was the forerunner of many long distance tows in Australia. The Kookaburra, which was the first fully enclosed Club sailplane, proved very popular and a second one was ordered three months after it started operations. When the No. 2 Kookaburra was delivered, the T31B and original Grunau that had been with the Club since 1937, were sold. Steady progress was made in the mid 1950s and in 1956 another Schneider sailplane, "the Nymph", was added to the fleet. Unfortunately, this fine sailplane was almost written off after just 12 months of operation, and was returned to Schneiders for rebuilding instead of being repaired by Club members. Also in the mid 1950s, the principle of a C.F.I. was abandoned in preference for a panel of instructors to control the flying operations. This system proved very satisfactory and the Committee delegated the management of flying operations to the Instructor Panel, a system still in operation in 1979. Other major steps taken in the mid 1950's were the upgrading of the clubhouse with the initial provision of accommodation for up to 30 members and hot showers. A second building was shifted on site and facilities further improved. The GCV Flying Accident Insurance Trust was also formed and after weathering a few stormy periods, settled into a worthwhile and viable proposition to protect the members from high repair bills.

Little other change occurred in the Club in the remainder of the 1950s. Membership figures hovered around 110, annual flying hours around 600, the Duty Pilots Panel was instituted and the Club tried its hand at share farming the unused areas of the aerodrome (successfully). The Club also tried its hand at running Air Pageants with the intention of promoting gliding and adding to Club finances. The first one was held at Benalla in 1955 and a well-organized program attracted a large crowd. The second Pageant was organized at the Laverton Air Force Base and proved an outstanding success with a crowd estimated at 80,000 present. A mass aerotow flypast, organized with a group of instant tug pilots went a little astray and a number of gliders finished up scattered around the western suburbs. Financially, both pageants were moderately successful.

The first genuine National Championship was held at Benalla over Christmas 1958 and 16 sailplanes participated. This was probably the biggest gathering of performance sailplanes ever assembled in Australia. Club President, Dave Derbyshire, who had steered the Club through its difficult periods for almost ten years, stepped aside due to his personal business commitments and Jim Barton took on the job. The way was cleared for the introduction of permanent aerotow facilities. An ex-Army Auster Mk.III VH-GCV was purchased for £300 in 1960. The first pie cart was built, the modified jeep and sole remaining survivor of the Dodge winch era sold, and another two drum winches planned. The clubhouse dormitory was also reworked to set it up as a complete building with small rooms to provide additional accommodation. Whilst the Club entered the 1960s with only four sailplanes (three Kookaburras and a Nymph), it was in a sound financial position, flying was readily available and the general club infrastructure was in good shape. Relations with the D.C.A. were sound and the future at Benalla looked reasonably assured. Feeling confident, the Club ordered a Ka6 sailplane, a machine of world class performance. Membership started to grow, club aircraft exceeded 1000 hours flying time in a year for the first time, and the Club adopted a policy of having annual C. of A. and repair work carried out on a professional basis wherever possible. The Ka6 sailplane proved an excellent investment and, shortly after it came into operation, a second machine was ordered. Little other change occurred in the equipment other than the replacement of the two winch cable retrieving jeeps.

The Club hosted another Australian National Championship during Christmas 1964 and Club personnel were very actively involved in the organization. The former Migrant Camp facilities were used to accommodate most of the competitors and crews.

Extensive long-range plans were developed in the mid 1960s that laid the basis for the Club's operations as they are today. During the 1950s and early 1960s the type of person attracted to gliding was undergoing a slow but significant change. More flying time was demanded and a corresponding decrease in personal effort became evident. Members were prepared to pay more for services, sailplanes were starting to increase in price to a significant degree, and the basic costs of controlling operation 120 miles away from its management centre were starting to mount. If Club management were to keep the flying costs at a reasonable level, the practical answer was to slowly open up the flying operations to provide flying every day. A further point that received considerable attention was the need to demonstrate to the D.C.A. that the GCV were a very permanent establishment on Benalla Airport.

Even after 13-14 years of permanent occupancy, there were times when the Club felt that the Department thought it almost itinerant. The Club originally settled into Benalla on a monthly tenancy basis and that situation existed right through to 1977 when the Benalla City Council assumed ownership of the airport.

The Club Committee adopted the proposals and some weekday flying started to take place with honorary instructor supervision. The first positive aspect of the new policy went into operation in August 1966 with the appointment of a maintenance engineer, followed a few months later, with a part time instructor. The instructor assumed full time duties with a part time assistant in 1970 and a part time office assistant also joined the payroll the same year. A major capital expenditure program then started with the development of the full time operations program. A steel framed and clad glider maintenance workshop 50' x 40' was purchased and erected by Club members and the now redundant Merlynston workshop was sold. A replacement Kookaburra for VH-GRM, which received very major damage in 1965, was purchased, two Arrows, a Blanik, two Boomerangs and another Auster were purchased and all were in operation by early 1967. The Nymph was phased out of the operations at the start of the re-equipment program.

Hours flown at the Club jumped from 900 for the year from 1162 to 2300 in 1966/67 while flying membership figures went from 82 to 158. A point of some significance worth noting was the total of over 2(X) pilot conversions required with the introduction of the three new types of sailplanes, and this program was completed without incident. The long planned fluid drive "Super" winch, powered by an International engine, which came into operation in 1966 plus another Ferguson tractor. All these equipment movements put the GCV in the forefront of Australian gliding and for the first time since the late 1940's, the Club became operators of the biggest fleet of Club owned sailplanes. The pace of the operations continued to grow rapidly for the remainder of the 1960's and the operational year 1969/70 produced 3750 hours. Coupled with the growth in flying hours, aerotow operations grew rapidly and in 1969/70, 800 hours towing time was logged. At the same time, winch launches dropped from a peak of 5600 in 1966/67 to 2135 and when D.C.A. finally banned winching late in 1970, the changeover to all aerotow operations proved almost a non-event.

When viewed in retrospect the 1960s proved to be an exciting decade for the Club. The development of the fleet and ancillary equipment, the great increases in flying hours and membership, upgrading of clubhouse facilities and employment of staff were all achieved without any real additional costs to the members' flying costs per hour flown. The growth required very considerable effort from the administrative side and the Club infrastructure was suitably developed to meet the requirements. This resulted in a considerable percentage of the members being involved in the running of the Club through various groups and sub-committees. Financially, in the 10 year period, the Club's assets (at original cost valuations) had grown from $19,000 in 1960 to $89,000 in 1970. Three sailplanes received extensive damage and several received minor to moderate damage, but the era of wooden sailplanes did mean that repairs were always possible, quite often with semi- skilled labour; funds were available for repair through the Insurance Trust. The rapid growth rate of flying operations continued into the mid 1970's when just on 9500 hours were flown by club sailplanes, motor glider and tugs. Of some significance is the first 600 Kms cross country flight flown from Benalla in 1973 in a Libelle. Flying hours started to stabilise at this time and over the following four years, only grew by 5-600 hours.

As a result of the World Competitions being held at Waikerie in 1974, a number of top class fibre glass sailplanes became available, and this event signalled the start of a major growth in the private owner area. The Club, in keeping with the rest of Australia, went through a major upheaval in privately owned sailplanes and from 1979, no less than eighteen sailplanes were put into operation by members. Although Club flying hours stabilised over this period, activity at Benalla, resulting from the increase in the number of onsite sailplanes, continued to grow and the ever changing face of the Club continued to evolve to meet the day to day requirements.

In order to ensure the Club maintained control over the overall operations and to protect itself from possible powerful private owner minority group factions such as have developed in other gliding clubs, the Club Committee developed the Private Owner Policy. The premise was that while limiting the number of private machines that could be treated with the "open door" policy, it protected the long time private owner member who had generally put a lot into the Club, and restricted the rights of the new brand type of private owner who learned to fly, bought a sailplane and the Club provided the rest. Due to the rapid increase in private sailplane ownership, this policy was overturned in the early 1990s.

For the third time, National Championships were held at Benalla during Christmas 1970 and once again, the airfield camp was taken over by the Club. Three to four hundred people were accommodated and fed for the 14 day period. Most of this effort was again handled by honorary assistance from the members. The Club moved into the fibreglass era with the purchase of two Libellcs in 1970 and with the introduction of these machines, the last Kadet was phased out. The fleet changes in the early 1970's included the addition of a third Libelle and a third Super Arrow, the phasing out of one Boomerang and the modification of the other two Boomerangs to Super Arrow standard, and the disposal of a Kookaburra when VH-GRM returned to service after four years of gradual rebuild by honorary assistance from the members.

The first Motor Falke commenced operation late in 1971 and with it, a major change in ab- initio training procedures took place. Pupils were now taught the basics in the Motor Glider, then transferred to aerotow training. The result was a much quicker trained pilot with much more continuity of training. Genuine cross country training in outlanding procedures was also possible for the first time and the results of this training were soon demonstrated in the improved safety standard of cross country flying.

On the aerotowing scene, a major upgrading took place with the introduction of 160 h.p. Pawnees VH-KLA and V11-FSJ. Auster VH-GCV was sold. VH-KLA was developed as a specialised two seater towing machine with full dual control and set the pattern for the Club's present day fleet of tugs. VH-FSJ, a standard 150 Pawnee airframe with a 180h.p. Lycoming engine, proved to be one of those lucky buys. Purchased for $5000 it was eventually phased out in 1979 after 5,200 hours of towing, 41,820 aerotows, and when sold for three times its initial price, it was a fully upgraded tug aircraft.

The rapid increase in flying hours regrettably brought with it a high accident rate and from 1970 to 1975 several expensive accidents occurred, particularly to the high performance aircraft that were involved in outlanding accidents. Most of these incidents resulted from pilots - some very experienced - pressing on long after being committed to a landing.

The cost of repairs totalled quite a high figure and the Insurance Trust eventually adopted a policy of outside insurance coverage in order to preserve Club assets. Unfortunately, also, the direct effect of these accidents resulted in higher Insurance Trust fees and prevented the Club from investing in other capital equipment. The increased flying also forced the Club to increase the staff from an Engineer and Instructor, and part time office assistant. A tug pilot, Diana Simpson, commenced work in 1971, and a general assistant, Bob Smith, started in 1972. By the following year, both the tug pilot and assistant were replaced with a Director of Operations, Tony Hayes, and two instructors, Doug Robinson and Matt Flanagan. Apart from changes to actual personnel, Bill Simpson retired for health reasons late in 1975 and Tony Hayes resigned early in 1974. The only additional staff added since 1974 was the appointment of Mrs. Pat. McKeough to the Benalla office late in 1974.

Bill Simpson's position was taken by Peter Johnson and Ed McKeough was appointed Director of Operations following the resignation of Tony Hayes. Engineer Ron Keane resigned in 1976 after ten years of excellent service and Reg Pollard was appointed Club Engineer. Clubhouse facilities were under severe strain in the early 1970's and, due to the insecure tenure of Benalla, little progress was being made with the Committee's hoped-for new clubhouse complex. An additional army hut was purchased and shifted on site in 1974. No. 2 hut was reworked to provide office facilities and a few general improvements made to the complex. The Club now provided nearly 100 beds. No further changes took place to the Clubhouse facilities apart from the addition in late 1978 of a new toilet/shower block, but prospects were excellent for the construction of a clubhouse facility suited to the needs. As the Club entered the mid-1970's the enthusiasm for progress was at an all-time high and a Kestrel 19 metre sailplane was added to the fleet. Total annual hours flown had risen to just on 9500, a primary glider, built for historical purposes by a group supervised by Ken Davies, was completed, material for a large hangar complex was purchased and Laurie McKinlay completed a 750 Kms triangle in world record time. Right at this peak, the Club received a severe jolt when an accident involving the Motor Falke, while engaged in a training exercise, resulted in the tragic deaths of two members, honorary instructor Hugh Eddy and Peter Charles. A replacement Motor Falke was purchased within a couple of weeks and training operations were soon back to normal.

The year 1976 was some year. It started with a new round of fleet changes with the delivery of the first Hornet VH-BMW, the phasing out of the last Auster M VH-MBA when it was replaced with a two seater Pawnee 235 VH-MCF, specially re-worked for glider towing, and the introduction of a fleet of five Romanian IS28B2's. Two Kookaburras, a Blanik, two Arrows, and a Libelle were phased out of the operation. The Libelle VH-GBP was lost in a spectacular accident when it crashed in heavily timbered country on the side of Mount Buffalo, the Hornet received major damage in an outlanding accident, and the Kestrel was damaged in an outlanding, receiving further damage in a trailering accident on the return trip to Benalla. The Libelle finished up in the tops of trees 30-40 ft. above the ground; fortunately the pilot did not receive any significant injuries, and he was able to extract himself and descend to the ground. The Libelle was eventually retrieved after a number of trees were felled and the remains carried out. Additional damage sustained in the recovery process resulted in the machine not being in an economically repairable state and the wreckage was sold. The phasing out of the Kookaburra as the Club's basic training machine was the end of a major era in the Club.

The Kookaburra had been the backbone of the Club for 22 years and during this period six Kookaburras had been on the Club's register. They flew a total of 22,820 hours and trained some hundreds of pilots. To help finance the

equipment and facility upgrading, a continuing Deposit Scheme was set up whereby members were invited to subscribe loan money with a guarantee of repayment within thirty days on request.

In conjunction with the fleet upgrading, a program was commenced to fit the fleet out with electric variometer systems, radio and flight time recording systems. The Club had been operating a base station and some portable VHF units since 1970, but had deferred the fitment of permanent units. As the Club entered the last two years of the 70s, the program to upgrade the tugs to three 235 h.p. specially modified Pawnees was completed with the introduction of VII-BXP in October 1977 and VH-PXT in December 1978. The first Pawnee V11-KLA was sold in 1977 when BXP arrived and FSJ mid-1979. The last Pawnee PXT cost the Club $35,000. To cater for the growing fleet of sailplanes, the first section of the hangar complex was erected in 1978 shortly after the Benalla City Council assumed ownership of the aerodrome. This section provided ample accommodation for the 1S28 fleet and was erected with part professional and part Club labour over a few weeks.

What could be the most significant long term move the Club made at that time, was the purchase of a 375 acre block of land at Goorambat late in 1977 for $73,200. This land was considered suitable for the building of an airfield and in the event of Benalla aerodrome ever being closed down, the Club had an area on which to develop. The aerodrome tenancy problem had been with the Club for 48 years and even though the Club moved to Benalla permanently in 1952, its tenancy remained on a monthly basis right up until the Airport was acquired by Benalla City Council in 1977. Whilst a large amount of capital would be required to develop Goorambat, the continued build-up of Club resources over the next few years was planned to provide the necessary backing if a move was ever required. Goorambat was to be funded from continued farming over a 5-6 year period and was not to cost the members any money. This land was also planned to act as collateral for future financing requirements. The purchase of the Goorambat land was only made possible by the purchase of a parcel of land nine acres in size, located between the Hume Highway and the north west corner of Benalla Aerodrome which was purchased for $6,000 late in 1968. Rentals from this land paid for it within six years and it was sold in 1977 for $31,000. This parcel of land was originally purchased for a clubhouse site, but the project collapsed when guarantees of long term tenancy on the Aerodrome sought from the D.C.A. did not eventuate. On the operational side during this time, the flying operations saw the 800kms barrier broken on several occasions, total hours flown in club sailplanes and tugs exceeded 10,250, the accident rate decreased to a record almost nil significant damage, the continued growth of weekday course flying and weekday member flying activity, the development of basic cross country training courses and the introduction of a high performance fibreglass Janus two seater on a leased basis.

Club membership at the end of 50 years of operation had doubled and the depreciated value of club assets was calculated at $350,000. When compared with the figures of the previous ten years of a membership and a balance sheet asset valuation of $44,000, it demonstrated the forward planning of the Club and the success that was achieved by settling into Benalla in 1952 in spite of the tremendous difficulties that existed in the early 1950's.

Bibliography

Source: Barton, J. a. (1995). Transcripts. Vivienne Drew.

APPENDIX D

Benalla Theatre Company

(Source for this history: Benalla Theatre Company)

Benalla Light Opera Company & Benalla Drama Club amalgamated in January 1985 and formed a new Company called Benalla Theatre Company.

Prior to this, Musicals were performed by Benalla Light Opera Company (BLOC) who had no fixed address until 1979 when they moved into Hut 64 at BARC – Benalla Accommodation and Recreation Centre, Samaria Rd. Benalla Drama productions were performed by Benalla Drama Club (BDC) in their rented hall in Benalla Street called "The Blue Door'. When this was demolished in 1978 they moved to Huts 31& 59 at BARC

According to (Dr) Brian Greed the first performance of BLOC was a Gilbert & Sullivan production directed by Len Hall in 1957 and performed in the Town Hall. After that a musical production was held each year.

In late 1975 the Benalla Town Hall was closed down and a clothing factory was set up in the main hall. The Town Hall remained closed until it was reopened to the public in 1984 with a lot of community involvement especially from the Benalla Rotary Club, The Benalla Light Opera Company and the Benalla Drama Club.

From late1979 BLOC started rehearsing in Hut 64 at BARC. They signed a lease with Benalla Council and were charged a monthly rent.

During 1983 The Light Opera Company and the Benalla Drama Club were involved in planning and refurbishing the Benalla Town Hall to make it available again to the Benalla Public as a venue.

On 3rd May 1984 a joint meeting of the Benalla Light Opera Company and the Benalla Drama Club was held in Light Opera Company's Club Room Hut 64 BARC. Present were

BLOC: Lois Smith, Ian McDonald, John Ellis, Michael Brennan, Bob Ashley, Marie Andrews, Greg Ferrier, Del Dube, Marg Symons, Pat Jones, Mary Moore, Wendy Hyland, Prim Williamson

BDC: Sue Johnson, Damien Batten, Kath O'Hara, Judy Craig, Kerryn Dobson, Ian Cumming, Yvonne Grant, Peter Pennington, Di Meyers

Discussion took place as to how the Companies could amalgamate. Ian McDonald said that 2 years ago when amalgamation was first proposed BLOC was against the merger but after talking to STAG (Shepparton Theatre Arts Group) the Company had changed its mind. It was suggested that both Musical and Drama performances be kept up each year.

A motion was put to the meeting that BDC & BLOC amalgamate as from 1st January 1985. An interim committee consisting of 3 members of both committees be formed with the power to plan and administer the successful integration of both groups for the 1st elected period. Another meeting will be held in September to vote formally on the amalgamation

In 1985 Benalla Light Opera Company & Benalla Drama Club amalgamated and became Benalla Theatre Company

In 1986 after both companies combined, BTC outgrew Hut 64 and negotiated with Council to rent Hut 16. This was the hospital building used in the old migrant centre. The front section of the building was leased to Apex. BTC was able to house Props, Sets, Lights and Costumes and have a rehearsal space all under one roof for the first time.

In late 1996 the Council advised BTC that they had sold the land Hut 16 was on to TAFE and TAFE were going to build a facility on the site. BTC negotiated with Council to move to the old Mess Hut and use the BARC Theatre as a rehearsal space.

In 2001 Council advised BTC they were in negotiation with Cooinda to sell them the land that the Mess Hall and Theatre were on. Negotiations with Council were again commenced and with the Council's help we were allocated space in a warehouse at Nish Court to house our sets and properties while negotiations continued.

Cr Geoff Oliver asked to meet some BTC committee members at the BARC complex. Cr Oliver met with Jim Tullberg, Danny Claridge and John Ellis to show them Hut 63 & Hut 64. Eventually Huts 63 & 64 were offered to BTC as a permanent home. Because of the state of both buildings Council approved the transfer of ownership of Huts 63 & 64 to BTC provided that all costs incurred in refurbishing the huts were at the sole expense of BTC.

Council formally offered BTC the ownership of the buildings with the understanding that if the land was ever required for other purposes BTC would bear the cost of removal of the buildings.

Since taking ownership of our new home at Huts 63 & 64 in 2002 Benalla Theatre Company has self-funded:

Restumping of both buildings. Re wiring both buildings. Re flooring the costume and supper room of Hut 64 with the help of the Rotary Club of Benalla. Stabilised the ceilings in the costume room and supper room in hut 64. Had the asbestos roofs of both buildings removed and re roofed both

buildings Provided heating and cooling to Hut 64. Painted Hut 64 throughout internally Extended Hut 64 to accommodate rehearsal space equal to the floor space

of the Town Hall and BPACC. Provided hot water facilities to Hut 64. Re plastered and painted the front room in Hut 63 to meet Heritage Listed

requirements.

All the work done over the years by BTC was carried out by qualified tradesmen with BTC providing much of the labour to help keep costs at a minimum. Money was raised by BTC through raffles, social nights, donations from other Benalla community organisations, Community Grants from Council and FRRR.

This was all done while still providing Musical & Drama productions each year for the citizens of Benalla.

From 1962 the productions were: 1962 **The Pirates Of Penzance** (Benalla Town Hall) 1963 **The Sorcerer** (Benalla Town Hall) Producer & Musical Director Len Hall,

Choreographer Adrienne Leitch 1964 **White Horse Inn** (Benalla Town Hall)

1964 **The Long Drop** Benalla Drama Group in association with The Benalla Light Opera Company. (Benalla Town Hall, July) Director Harold Baigent, Musical Director Len Hall, Choreographer Adrienne Leitch.

1965 **The Gondoliers** (Benalla Town Hall)

1966 No Production held

. 1967 **Carousel** (Benalla Town Hall)

. 1968 **Brigadoon** (Benalla Town Hall)

. 1969 **The Mikado** (Benalla Town Hall)

. 1969 **South Pacific** (Benalla Town Hall)

. 1970 **Oklahoma** (Benalla Town Hall)

Director Cy Holden, Musical Director Sid Cummings Choreographer Annette Colloretti

Producer Eve Godley, Musical Director Neil McPherson, Choreographer Adrienne Leitch

Producer Brian Crossley, Co Producer Adrienne Leitch, Musical Director Neil McPherson, Producer Grahame McGuffie, Musical Director Lois Oppy, Choreographer Adrienne Leitch

1971 **The Music Man** – June (Benalla Town Hall) Producer Elizabeth Long, Musical Director Raymond Long,

Choreographer Adrienne Leitch **The Lisbon Story**- October (Benalla Town Hall)

& October 23rd (Wangaratta Town Hall) Producer Max Bartlet,

. 1972 **The Merry Widow** (Benalla Town Hall)

. 1973 **Hello Dolly** (Benalla Town Hall)

Musical Director Brian Greed, Choreographer Adrienne Leitch Producer Bill De Goode, Musical Director Brian Greed, Choreographer Erin Levy Producer Eve Godley,

Musical Director Janet Coles Choreographer Alan Stone

. 1974 **Calamity Jane** (Benalla Town Hall)– Director & Choreographer Alan Stone, Musical Director Janet Cole

. 1975 **The Boyfriend** – rehearsal started late March but show cancelled in June due to lack of director.

1976 **Gondoliers** (Benalla Tech School Hall) Producer Vin Foster,

Musical Director Don Laity, Choreographer Annette Colloretti

. 1977 **The Pyjama Game** (Benalla Tech School Hall)

. 1978 **Charlie Girl** (Benalla Tech School Hall)

. 1979 **Oklahoma** (Benalla Tech School Hall)

. 1980 **Music Hall** (Benalla Tech School Hall)

. 1981 **Music Hall** (Benalla Tech School Hall)

. 1982 **Trial By Jury** – performed in the Presbyterian Sunday School Hall

. 1983 **Pirates Of Penzance** – (St Joseph's Hall) Director Peter Haymes Musical Director Ian Godsill

. 1984 **Patience** –(in the re-opened Benalla Town Hall)

. 1985 Benalla Light Opera Company and Benalla Drama Group amalgamated to form BENALLA THEATRE COMPANY

. 1985 **The Canary Cage** (Benalla Town Hall) Director Shirley Dawson **Dr Snaggers MD** (Benalla Town Hall) Director Charmaine Lane **How Could You Uncle Algernon** (Benalla Town Hall

. 1986 **Salad Days** (Benalla Town Hall) Director Alan Stone Musical Director Elaine Heywood

. 1987 **The Sentimental Bloke** (Benalla Town Hall) Director Alan Stone Musical Director Elaine Heywood **Ladies In Retirement** (Benalla Town Hall) Director Shirley Dawson

. 1988 **2000 Not Out** (Benalla Town Hall) Director Alan Stone Musical Director Elaine Heywood **A Quiet Wedding** (BARC Theatre) Director Shirley Dawson **Sir Jaspers Revenge** (Benalla Town Hall)

. 1989 **The Wizard Of Oz** (Benalla Town Hall) **Bonaventure** (Benalla Town Hall)

. 1990 **The Music Man** (Benalla Town Hall) **Dinkum Assorted** (Benalla Town Hall)

. 1991 **Night Must Fall** (Benalla Town Hall) **OnOurSelection**(BenallaTownHall)

. 1992 **Anything Goes** (Benalla Town Hall)

Directed by Alan Stone Musical Director Elaine Heywood Director Shirley Dawson Director Brian Clough Musical Director Elaine Heywood Director Alan Stone Director Danni Edwards DirectorBrianClough Director Brian Clough Musical Director Elaine Heywood

. 1993 **George Washington Slept Here** (Benalla Town Hall) Director Benita Berkholz

. 1994 **Taranatara, Tarantara** (Benalla Town Hall) Director Brian Clough Musical Director Elaine Heywood **Fools Paradise** (Benalla Town Hall) Director Diana Meyers **Cinderella** (Pantomime) (Benalla Town Hall)

. 1995 **South Pacific** (Benalla Town Hall) Director Di Meyers Musical Director Elaine Heywood **Little Red Riding Hood** (Pantomime) (Benalla Town Hall) **The Wild Flowering Of Chasity** (Commercial Hotel) Director Di Meyers Musical Director Elaine Heywood

1996 **Calamity Jane** (Benalla Town Hall) Director Steve James

A Touch Of Silk (Benalla Town Hall) Director Gwenda McCarten

. 1997 **Viva Mexico** (Benalla Town Hall) Directed by Alan Stone Musical Director Elaine Heywood **The Old Woman Who Lived In A Shoe** (Pantomime)

. 1998 **Murder At The Music Hall** (Benalla Town Hall) Directed by Alan Stone Musical Director Elaine Heywood **The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate: Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society Murder Mystery** (Benalla Town Hall) Director The Cast

. 1999 **The Wizard Of Oz** (Benalla Town Hall) **Jigsaws** (Benalla Town Hall)

. 2000 **The Boyfriend**

. 2001 **The Sentimental Bloke Mother Goose (Pantomine)**

. 2002 **Me and My Girl**

. 2003 **Barry Manilow's Copacabana**

. 2004 **Robin The Hood Little Boy Blue** (Pantomine)

. 2005 **Pirates Of Penzance** (BPACC)

. 2005 **The Old Bull & Bush Music Hall**

. 2006 **Annie Get Your Gun** (BPACC)

. 2007 **Smokey Joes Café** (BPACC)

. 2008 **State Fair** (BPACC)

. 2009 **Leader Of The Pack** (BPACC)

. 2010 **State Fair** (BPACC)

. 2011 **Oklahoma** (BPACC)

Directed by Alan Stone Musical Director Elaine Heywood Directed by Lorraine Monshing Directed by Syd Watson Musical Director Elaine Heywood Directed by Alan Stone Musical Director Elaine Heywood

Directed by Lorraine Kubeil Musical Director Elaine Heywood Directed by Steve James Musical Director Elaine Heywood Directed by Lorraine Kubeil Musical Director Elaine Heywood

Director Lorraine Kubeil & Molly Craig Musical Director Elaine Heywood Directed by Alan Stone

Musical Director Molly Craig Director Molly Craig Musical Director Elaine Heywood Director Molly Craig

Musical Director Elaine Heywood Director Molly Craig Musical Director Elaine Heywood Director Anne-Marie Greenway Musical Director Elaine Heywood Director Molly Craig

Director Molly Craig

Musical Director Elaine Heywood 2012 **Nunsense the Mega Musical** (BPACC) Director Molly Craig

. 2013 **Guys and Dolls** (BPACC)

. 2014 **The Pajama Game** (BPACC)

. 2015 **The Boy from OZ** (BPACC)

. 2016 **Breaking Up Is Hard To Do** (BPACC)

Musical Director Elaine Heywood Director Molly Craig Musical Director Elaine Heywood Director Molly Craig

Musical Director Elaine Heywood Director Molly Craig Musical Director Elaine Heywood Director Molly Craig

Musical Director Elaine Heywood

. 2017 **Anything Goes** (BPACC) Director Molly Craig Musical Director Elaine Heywood

APPENDIX E Mark Blyss Yoga Building 65

Mark Blyss began teaching his yoga classes in the Barc hut Studio 65 in April 2008.
He then sub leased the building from the Benalla Belly Dancing group Navarti.
They had been leasing the Hut from the Benalla City Council since 1997.

Mark Blyss took over the lease in December 2011.
Building 65 continues to be used as a yoga, meditation and well being studio, providing a number of classes each week.

APPENDIX F

VHR CITATION 2018

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp including associated buildings and a range of on-ground and below-ground infrastructure.

History Summary

The Benalla Migrant Camp was established in September 1949 on land previously used by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) as an Elementary Flying Training School (1941-1944), making use of the accommodation and facilities which remained. The camp was part of a bold immigration programme launched to increase the population, and hence the labour force, of Australia. Reception and training centres were established to provide accommodation and training and between 1945 and 1965 more than two million migrants came to Australia as a result of an international promotional campaign. The largest Australian migrant reception centre was the Bonegilla Migrant Centre which was the first camp to be used for this purpose when opened in 1947. Victorian holding centres were established at country locations at Benalla, Mildura, Rushworth, Sale West and Somers. The Benalla Migrant Camp operated as a holding centre and provided accommodation as well as a kindergarten, school, hall, hospital, shops and a gymnasium and primarily housed unsupported women who had limited access to jobs. A number of migrants stayed longer than those at other camps. Some residents worked at the centre itself, in administration, the kitchen or hospital, or as cleaners, while others found domestic work in Benalla itself or worked at the nearby Latoof and Callil clothing factory and Renold Chain Company factory. By 1958 Benalla (renamed the Benalla Migrant Accommodation Centre) and Bonegilla were two of only six government operated centres remaining in Australia. During its 18 years of operation an estimated 60,000 migrants were accommodated. After its closure in 1967 the airfield continued to be used for civil aviation purposes, principally for recreational gliding and ballooning. Many structures were demolished in the 1980s before the former City of Benalla acquired ownership of both the airfield and the remaining structures in 1992.

Description Summary

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is located on land which previously formed part of the World War II RAAF Base at 1 & 57 Samaria Rd, Benalla. The land contains nine P1-type huts, two toilet blocks, concrete gate posts at the intersection of Barc Avenue with Samaria Road, a remnant below-ground cistern, Barc Avenue itself together with kerb and channel and several unused electricity reticulation poles, and concrete surface drainage channels beside most of the huts. The huts were constructed using a standard P1-type design with timber frames, gabled ends, horizontal corrugated iron wall cladding, and corrugated iron or asbestos cement roof cladding. Five out of the eleven buildings have apparently been moved within the former RAAF base and varying degrees of maintenance, modifications and minor additions have occurred to those eleven buildings over time. This site is part of the traditional land of the Yorta Yorta Nations.

How is it significant?

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is of historical and social significance to the State of Victoria. It satisfies the following criterion for inclusion in the Victorian Heritage Register:

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 G

Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions.

Why is it significant?

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is significant at the State level for the following reasons:

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is of historical significance for its association with post-World War II non-British migration. It is an example of one of only a small number of surviving centres which had been part of a network of camps that were established and used to accommodate migrants throughout Victoria and Australia. Benalla was Victoria's longest-lasting holding centre and played a distinctive role in settling vulnerable groups of non-British migrants into Australia in the post-war years.

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is rare as one of only a small number of examples of a post-World War II holding centre for non-British migrants.

The Former Benalla Migrant Camp is of social significance for its connection with former residents and their families and for its ability to interpret the experiences of post-World War II non-British migrants to the broader

HISTORY

Elementary Flying Training School, Benalla

A landing ground was established on this site in 1928 by Benalla based members of the Port Melbourne Flying Club. Until 1939 it served as a civilian aviation emergency landing ground on the Sydney to Melbourne route and it is reported that about two hundred planes landed there in that period.

In 1939 Britain, with Canada, Australia and New Zealand, established the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS) to rapidly train air crews for the British Bomber Command. The scheme operated from 1939 to 1945 and the Royal Australian Air Force initially committed to training 28,000 air crew over a three year period. This included navigators, wireless operators, air gunners and pilots and equated to training about 900 air crew every four weeks.

To achieve this the RAAF embarked on a rapid and extensive program. Five initial training schools were established in Australia, the first located at Somers in Victoria, and a network of twenty-eight EATS schools were established in eastern Australia by the end of 1941. Each of these schools specialised in specific skill sets

required of air crew members and included twelve Elementary Flying Training Schools (EFTS) for training pilots to fly light aircraft. After initial training, these pilots progressed to Service Flying Training Schools, the first of which was established at Point Cook, Victoria. In Victoria, EFTS school were established at Essendon (no 3) and Benalla (no 11). Other schools included three Wireless Air Gunners Schools (the first and only one in Victoria was established at the RAAF Base in Ballarat) and Bombing and Gunnery Schools such as that established at Sale, Victoria.

The EFTS at Benalla was proposed by the Minister for Air, Mr McEwan, and was officially opened on 26 June 1941. The existing civil aviation landing ground was doubled in size at this time to accommodate the RAAF unit. Buildings and services were of a standard type adopted by the RAAF, with the common P-Type Hut design adopted to cover all military personnel requirements. This basic module was used and modified to produce facilities such as mess halls, guard huts, canteens, medical aid posts, dental surgeries, recreation huts, classrooms and offices. These facilities at Benalla are shown on an annotated site plan, a copy of which is held at the Benalla Rural Council. This plan shows a collection of more than one hundred structures, a number of hangars, a sports oval and parade ground. The base was provided with electric light, power and hot and cold water and a network of roads and the capital cost of the project was £85,000.

The EATS programme effectively ended in October 1944, and was formally suspended in March 1945. At this time nearly 3,000 pilots had been trained at Benalla as part of the EATS programme. The following year the base became a RAAF Care and Maintenance Unit and in late 1948 all aircraft were transferred to a similar RAAF facility at Tocumwal, NSW.

Post-War Migration to Australia and Accommodation Centres

In the immediate post-war years the Department of Immigration was established in Australia and a bold immigration programme was launched to increase the population, and hence the labour force, of the country. Between 1945 and 1965 more than two million migrants came to Australia as a result of an international promotional campaign to encourage migration to Australia. A large number of migrants arrived as part of an assisted passage scheme which targeted migrants from Britain but expanded to provide assistance to migrants from a variety of European countries. Others were displaced persons who had fled their countries during the war. In return these migrants were required to stay in Australia for at least two years and work in allocated jobs. Reception and training centres were established to provide accommodation and training for newly arrived non-British migrants in Australia. Many of these were set up at former military camps where accommodation and facilities already existed. Contracted to work in allocated employment, migrants were initially housed in these centres while awaiting employment instructions. While at these centres, migrants received medical checks, and attended courses in English language and the Australian way of life.

By 1951 three reception centres and an additional twenty holding centres were in operation in Australia, briefly housing more than 40,000 non-British new arrivals. The holding centres were, in effect, short term camps with residents remaining there for between four to six months. Over half the holding centres were near country towns in inland NSW and Victoria and most of these opened in 1949.

Over time the type of migrant began to change, with increasing numbers of families, non-working dependents and single mothers requiring accommodation. Existing reception centres could not accommodate the number of new arrivals and newly designated holding centres were opened to provide short term accommodation for women and children.
The largest Australian migrant reception centre was the Bonegilla Migrant Centre which was the first camp to be used for this purpose when opened in 1947. This former army campsite was selected for its distance away from the metropolitan areas of Sydney and Melbourne in an attempt to avoid accommodation and employment competition and the formation of racial groups in the cities. The centre was also close to rural employment. Similarly Victorian holding centres were established at country locations at Benalla, Mildura, Rushworth, Sale West and Somers. Over time several hostels were also established in the industrial or less developed outer suburbs of Melbourne, for example at Altona, Broadmeadows, Holmesglen, Maribyrnong, Nunawading and Preston.

Benalla Migrant Hostel

The Benalla Migrant Camp operated as a temporary holding centre from September 1949. At the time of opening there was a large surge in numbers of new arrivals due to the increased availability of ships for transporting migrants from Europe in late 1948. When the facility closed in December 1967, an estimated 60,000 migrants had been accommodated at this camp. In comparison the Bonegilla Migrant Camp housed about 320,000 immigrants between 1947 and 1971.

The first years at the Benalla Migrant Centre were the busiest, with a peak occupancy of 1063 migrants in 1951. The number of migrant arrivals decreased markedly when the displaced persons scheme drew to an end in 1952 and a number of holding centres closed. Throughout the 1950s the resident population at Benalla remained at about 400 with an average of 200 people moving in and out each year and by the mid-1960s the occupancy did not exceed 250 with an annual turnover of about 240.

The Migrant Camp at Benalla provided accommodation as well as a kindergarten, school, hall, hospital, shops and a gymnasium and primarily housed unsupported mothers who had limited access to jobs. A number of migrants stayed longer than those at other camps. Some residents worked at the centre itself, in administration, the kitchen or hospital, or as cleaners, while others found domestic work in Benalla itself or worked at the nearby Latoof and Callil clothing factory. Some migrants formed close bonds with the local Benalla community.
By 1958 there were only six government operated centres remaining in Australia. Two were located in Victoria - at Benalla (renamed the Benalla Migrant Accommodation Centre in 1958) and Bonegilla. From this time the Benalla Camp provided accommodation for migrant workers in the district, and their families and women and children with no male support. By 1967 there were only 135 residents at Benalla Migrant Camp and it was closed that year. Bonegilla remained in operation until 1971.

After the migrant hostel closed in 1967 the airfields continued to be used for civil aviation purposes, principally for recreational gliding and ballooning. Many structures were demolished in the 1980s before the Council

acquired ownership of both the airfields and the remaining structures in 1992. Short term leases have been given to various community groups for designated buildings.

KEY REFERENCES USED TO PREPARE ASSESSMENT

B Pennay, 'Benalla Migrant Camp: A Difficult Heritage', Draft 2015

D Kemp, 'Heritage Assessment: the former Benalla Migrant Accommodation Centre', Report to the Council of Rural City of Benalla 2014

Context Pty Ltd, 'Victoria's Post 1940s Migration Heritage Study', 2011

P Miller, 'A Little Marvel in Timber and Tin - the Military P1 Hut of the Second World War', Paper delivered at the
14th National Engineering Heritage Conference 2007

Trevor Budge & Associates, 'City of Benalla Conservation Study', 1992

Various newspapers including:

Shepparton Advertiser, 27 September 1940, p 1; 10 August 1945, p 8

Benalla Ensign, 18 April 1941, p 2; 29 August 1941, p 1; 28 September 1950, p 2

The Land (Sydney), 2 December 1949, p 40

The Argus, 21 April 1941, p 4; 28 January 1950, p 3

Good Neighbour (ACT), 1 September 1967, p 8

APPENDIX G NON STATUTORY CLASSIFICATIONS

Non -Statutory Classifications

National Trust Classification

The former No.11 Elementary Flying Training School is considered to be important at the State level as one of only two such facilities established in Victoria (the other being at Essendon) as part of the WW2 Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS). This scheme was devised to build up the Empire's air power sufficiently to overwhelm Germany's Luftwaffe, and it demonstrates cultural values in Australia's strategic thinking, in the defence of the Empire, and in Australia's contribution to the war in Europe and the Pacific.

RAAF Benalla compares with a total of 12 similar schools established throughout Australia (the first was at Parafield, SA, established late in 1939). They were the result of the EATS agreement signed on 17 December 1939 between Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, which was recognised at the time as a document unique in military history. Southern Rhodesia was a later contributor.

The Benalla EFTS played an important part in the EATS plan which purported to have an Australian input of 432 trainees and an output of 306 pilots every four weeks of the war. It thus serves to commemorate the many RAAF personnel who were trained here and their contribution to the war effort, and especially those who gave their lives in serving this country during the 1939-45 conflict. The former EFTS is of historic significance in all these respects, while its subsequent role as the Benalla Migrant Accommodation Centre is of social importance for its part in housing migrant families, including many from the Baltic States, some of whom were to settle in the Benalla district.

Classified: 03/02/1997

HERMES Number 67499

4.3 Victoria War Heritage Inventory

Statement of Significance

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Veterans Description for Public Use

The former No.11 RAAF Elementary Flying Training School, on Samaria and Kilfeera Roads in Benalla, compares with a total of twelve similar schools established throughout Australia (the first was at Parafield, SA, established late in 1939). They were the result of the EATS agreement signed on December 17th 1939 between Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, which was recognised at the time as a document unique in military history. Southern Rhodesia was a later contributor.

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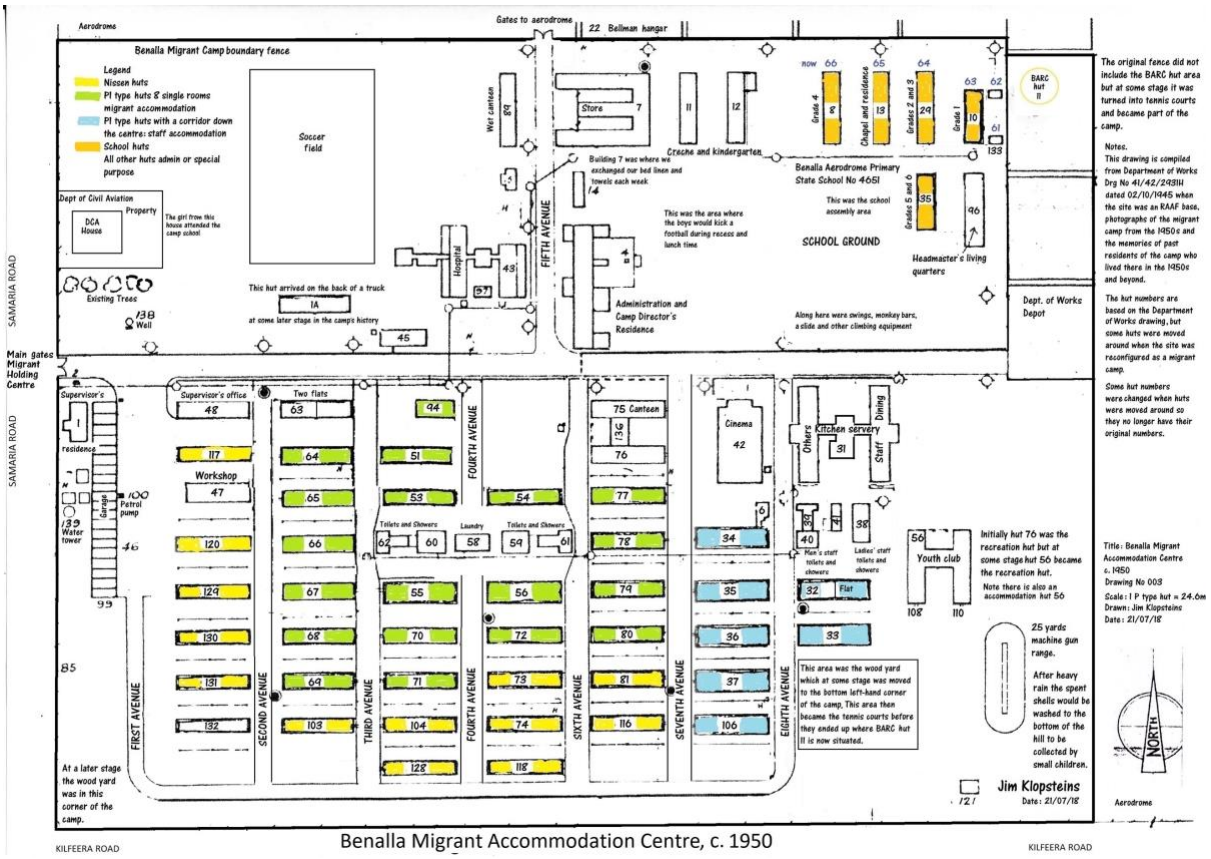
HERMES Number 125972

APPENDIX H PLAN OF SITE DURING THE MIGRANT CAMP OCCUPATION

Prepared by Jim Klopsteins



Benalla Migrant Accommodation Centre, c. 1950

APPENDIX I

IMAGINING SCHOOL AT BENALLA'S MIGRANT CAMP

Professor Bruce Pennay, 2018.

For people with personal memories of Victorian State Primary Schools in the 1950s there is nothing remarkable about the look of the school room recently uncovered in a heritage survey of buildings at the former Benalla Migrant Centre. The chalkboard, coat pegs, even the light fittings may provide sufficient memory prompts for former state school pupils to recall interactions with teachers and fellow pupils. Perhaps they will remember reading, writing or arithmetic lessons Perhaps they will remember encouragement to save with the school branch of the Commonwealth Bank or to join the Gould League of Bird Lovers. Perhaps they will remember special school functions ─ concerts, fetes or celebrations of Empire/Commonwealth Day. Other school rooms elsewhere prompt such recollections and serve as 'warm parlours of the past'. [iv] What is remarkable about this particular school is the way it prompts not only personal memory, but also wider public reflection about the kind of schooling that occurred in this particular locale.[v]

[Insert 1: Benalla Migrant Camp entrance in the 1950s.
[Insert 2: The former school room at the camp, 2017.

The Benalla Aerodrome School, State School 4651, was opened in November 1949 with the Commonwealth Immigration Holding Centre. It was based in what had been instruction huts of a former RAAF training camp at an aerodrome on the edge of the small town. School inspectors reported that the buildings were adequate for instructional purposes. However, the surrounds initially were worrying. There were, at first, no defined school grounds ─ no fence, no playground. The school was adjacent to an open drainage trench. There was no school flagpole for 'loyal observances'. There seemed to be no opportunities to establish a garden.[vi] The needs of RAAF trainees were plainly different from the needs of school pupils. Physical improvements were to be made, but the steady stream of newly arrived non-English speaking pupils continued to present what inspectors liked to encourage teachers to think of as 'a challenge'. This was an ordinary school in an out-of-the-ordinary locale.

In 2016 the Heritage Council decided that the former Benalla Migrant Camp was significant to the state as one of only two comparatively substantial remnants in Victoria of a network of places used to accommodate assisted non-British new arrivals in the post-war years. This particular camp 'played a distinctive role in settling vulnerable groups'. The camp was of social significance 'for its connection with former residents and their families and for its ability to interpret the experience of [post-war] non-British migrants to the broader Victorian community'.[vii] As a state heritage-listed property, the buildings rather than the pupils have become a challenge ─ this time to place managers.

The heritage registered area of what remains of the camp includes a row of nine P1 huts. They are lightweight timber-framed and clad in corrugated metal. Four of them remain approximately where they were originally located. Today two of the huts are occupied by the Gliding Club of Victoria; one by Ballooning Victoria; one by

Broken River Potters; one is privately leased by a person conducting yoga classes; two by Benalla Theatre Company; one by Benalla Historical Society; half a hut by Benalla Broken River Painters Inc., and the other half by Benalla Migrant Camp Exhibition. Just beyond the registered area is a large Bellman Hangar, one of the four used by the RAAF, a clearly visible reminder of the war-time uses of the place. A heritage building survey found that one of the two huts occupied by the theatre company and used as a rehearsal and storage space has been extended and markedly changed, losing what the consultant refers to as its 'architectural significance'. To the rear of the other is the relatively unaltered school room. A second hut which served as a chapel and presbytery has also 'largely retained its integrity'.[viii]

In accord with the statement of significance, a draft Conservation Management Plan recommends that more space than the half-hut currently used for a photographic exhibition needs to be 'allocated to a better representation of the residential life of the migrant community'. It suggests that the place as a whole 'can provide a better understanding of migrant life through targeted exhibition spaces'. It recommends fabric interpretation which could 'recreate the life in the Camp from a child's perspective'. It nominates the school room and the former chapel as key relatively unaltered sites with which to begin migrant camp story-telling.

But that recommendation poses challenges for place managers. First, there is a physical challenge. There is no ready agreement as to where more space might be found for migrant camp stories in the cluster of huts. For instance, Benalla Theatre Company claims ownership of the school room. It is a strongly asserted claim based on the rights of a long-term leaseholder, dating back to arrangements made by the company's predecessor organisation with Benalla Council in 1979. Some Councillors, who wanted to support a local organisation which made a vigorous contribution to cultural life of the community, gave undertakings to the group that the building was its. Even though there was no clear legal transfer documentation, the Benalla Theatre Company, acting on the belief that the buildings belonged to it, raised and spent its own money on maintenance as basic as re-stumping and re-wiring as well as on internal re-development to meet its storage and rehearsal space needs.[ix] Further, the group's claim is backed simply and powerfully by possession.

Other groups occupying the huts have similar disputed ownership or long lease claims. If it reclaims space for the migrant camp story, Benalla Rural Council might appear to be withdrawing its long-term support from worthy community cultural groups. Council now has to make decisions about acting upon the proposed Conservation Management Plan, that is, about how far it wants to be involved in what Jay Winter calls the 'business of remembering'.[x]

This article frames discussion of this problem as a heritage place management case study. It points to the importance of local government decision-making on public memory places, related, in this instance, to how Australia represents migrant and refugee history in places. Within it, I raise a second and wider problem of making sense of schooling at the migrant camp. As John Tunbridge would urge, I look beyond the relic and ask what the school means to the state, the local community and former residents.[xi]

I see this article as making a contribution to the growing body of work on heritage-making generally and on migrant and refugee history in Australia.[xii] I follow Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge on public memory place-making at different scales of significance ─ nation/state, local, family/personal.[xiii] I acknowledge the leadership of, first, Jean Martin and, later, John Petersen in exploring the importance of immigration at a local community level.[xiv] I also draw on the work on community support for the newly arrived by Ann Mari Jordens, Kristy Kokegei and Jennifer Jones for less abrasive notions of what was called assimilation.[xv] In this I take a different direction from Andrew Markus and Margaret Taft who ignore local community involvement in assimilation.[xvi] By looking to the schooling of children, I extend the work on migrant hostels and the care extended to the vulnerable undertaken by Catherine Kevin and Karen Agutter, drawing particularly on their notion of 'constrained compassion'.[xvii] I admire the way Alexandra Dellios has examined some children's memories of the Benalla Migrant Camp. She captures something of the character of the place and uses their memory pieces as windows into the lives of their parents.[xviii] I extend her notion of grass-roots heritage-making to include local community engagement with or indifference to site husbandry. Local councils can be effective heritage place gatekeepers.

In unravelling meanings of the camp and the school within it, I revisit arguments I advanced in two publications about Benalla and two about Bonegilla.[xix] Those publications draw on similar sources to those used here. In addition, I have for this article revisited school records and held more real time and email discussions with some former school children and their partners. I attempt to ascertain contemporary observations and elicit present-day recall to establish something of the nature of schooling in this particular place. But, first, I explain why hitherto there have been difficulties in assessing and proclaiming the heritage value of Benalla Migrant Camp.

Benalla Migrant Camp as difficult heritage

I have argued that Benalla received little public attention at the national level while it operated because it played only a humble part in Australia's post-war immigration scheme. Australia-wide, there were in 1949-1950 three large reception centres where non-British new arrivals were received, processed and dispatched to workplaces, generally within three or four weeks. There were also twenty much smaller holding centres scattered, almost invariably, throughout inland Australia in disused defence establishments. They opened successively in New South Wales and Victoria at Cowra, Uranquinty, Greta, Rushworth, Parkes, Somers, Benalla, West Sale, Scheyville and Mildura. The holding centres, which locals and residents called migrant camps, were, in effect, short-term camps for women and children until a migrant worker was able to make alternative accommodation arrangements for his family. Dependants might expect to be housed there for between four and six months. Holding centres were usually part short-lived: most closed when the flow of rapid intakes eased. Because they were for dependants not workers, they seemed to make little direct contribution to overall purpose of the immigration program. They attracted little attention at the national level, while they operated.

What is more, Benalla's was a peculiar holding centre. In 1949, the Australian government faced problems in coping with the arrival of a large number of supporting mothers with children among its post-war immigrants. At the time the women were most commonly dubbed 'widows' or 'unsupported mothers': they were 'dependant', 'encumbered with children' and had 'no breadwinner'. The supporting mothers had been admitted at the request of the International Refugee Organisation to help it empty the displaced person refugee camps in Europe.[xx] Harold

Holt, the Minister for Immigration, explained, 'It was fully realised that their employment and accommodation would present a problem, but rather than let them become a hard core of unwanteds in whatever country of Europe they managed to drift to, Australia agreed to accept them on humanitarian grounds.' [xxi] They were accepted as a humanitarian gesture, but within the large-scale immigration scheme intended to increase Australia's population and workforce. Accordingly each of the women admitted was assessed as fit to work. Moreover, the women were either of child-bearing age or had children.

Many of the supporting mothers were directed to the Benalla Holding Centre, where the former air force training camp was literally across the road from two newly built factories and a hospital which offered the women employment. Initially those arrangements, which RE Armstrong, head of the Assimilation Division, dubbed the 'Benalla experiment', seemed to be work 'reasonably well'.[xxii] At any one time supporting mothers and their children comprised about a third of the usual 400 residents at Benalla. With the more numerous transient families, they were housed and fed simply but satisfactorily. The women were directed to paid employment across the road or within the camp itself. The jobs helped them contribute to the costs of their accommodation and that of their children, for all residents were required to pay for their upkeep. Indeed, careful track was kept of their tariff payments.

The Benalla Holding Centre survived national reviews of migrant accommodation needs in 1953 and a more focused review in 1956, principally because of its role in 'providing accommodation for compassionate cases where there is no male breadwinner.' [xxiii] Such support for fractured families was not available elsewhere, so Benalla went on to become Australia's longest-lasting holding centre. It 'provided accommodation for migrants working in Benalla or who have had special problems in integration'.[xxiv] That meant, in effect, that those who remained long-term had been unable to become economically self-reliant beyond the camp. The story of this camp does not fit easily with three cheers versions of the success of post-war immigration.

Ironically, even though Benalla was Australia's long-lasting holding centre, receiving altogether about 60 000 people, it has, until recently, been one of the least remembered of the migrant accommodation centres. Former residents had rarely spoken publicly about their experiences of the place. Local citizens, librarians, museum curators and historians had, before 2013, not tried to collect, let alone interpret, town or resident memories or memorabilia. State heritage authorities had only given the battered hut remnants cursory attention. There was no plaque or memorial. The former Benalla Migrant Accommodation Centre had been publicly ignored. This contrasted with the promotion of public remembering at other similar holding centres where two prime interest groups – local townspeople and former camp residents had been active.[xxv]

Perhaps the most striking contrast is with Bonegilla, Australia's best remembered post-war reception centre, about 100km to the north. Former resident and local community advocacy for remembering Bonegilla has been much stronger than at Benalla. Bonegilla was bigger and had greater observable impacts on its immediate host community, Albury-Wodonga. The prosperous times which accompanied and followed the presence of Bonegilla favoured local memory-making. Benalla's economic fortunes, on the other hand, faltered with the closing of the camp. The factories which employed migrants at Benalla shut not long after the camp closed, when government

reduced its protectionist subsidies that had helped country town manufacturers. The migrant workers became no more than erstwhile contributors to industries which were all too quickly forgotten. This lack of local advocacy, I argue, was foremost in delaying and almost smothering public recognition of Benalla Migrant Camp.[xxvi]

This long-established forgetting was broken in 2013 when Sabine Smyth installed a photographic exhibition in half a hut at the Benalla Migrant Camp. That memorialisation gathered momentum when she nominated the place to the state heritage list. Former camp children joined her in objecting to Heritage Victoria's decision not to list the place. Their petition and carefully prepared and powerfully presented written and oral submissions convinced the panel reviewing the rejected nomination in 2016 of the place's social significance and heritage value. The remembering of the camp was given statutory effect at the insistence of former residents, many of whom had been pupils at Benalla Aerodrome School.[xxvii]

[Insert 3: Benalla camp children and their supporters at the public hearing into the heritage value of the place, February 2016.]

Benalla Aerodrome School

It helps in trying to ascertain the nature of schooling at Benalla Migrant Camp to look to how it was observed by contemporaries as well as to how it is recalled now by former pupils. There can sometimes be tensions between the recorded observations of contemporaries and present-day personal recall. A well-informed imagination will draw on both.

Contemporary observations of schooling and camp life

One of the keenest outside observers was Mabel (Bunty) King, an experienced and senior social worker stationed at Bonegilla, who was instructed to prepare a 'social survey' of the Benalla centre in 1951. King's report, based first on a two week long visit, was comprehensive and positive. Overall, King found that, at the Benalla Holding Centre, 'a successful attempt has been made to rehabilitate migrant widows'. The camp 'offers decent and humane living conditions and a possibility of attaining economic independence'. Morale was high. Although, King acknowledged life at the camp would be hard, 'as is that of the Australian widow', she recommended that more supporting mothers should be dispatched to Benalla.[xxviii]

King was pleased with the school. Classes were comparatively small, averaging 23 and thus allowing for 'plenty of individual attention'. The teachers she interviewed were satisfied with the progress of the children. The infants' teacher reported it took about three months for a non-English speaking pupil to speak and to understand English. But King found there were troubles with truancy, and some parents had to be told forcefully about compulsory education. Further, she observed disapprovingly that the children spoke German to each other. They continued to wear European- style clothing and played mainly European games on the playground.

King looked beyond the Centre school and also visited the Catholic school, St Josephs, and Benalla High School. She was impressed with St Josephs which had enrolled 28 of the camp's 181 primary school aged children. It provided the social mix of new arrivals with the longer-resident that she valued. The camp children who attended

St Josephs, she declared, were the 'most assimilated'. Indeed, the camp children and the town children were 'almost the same in dress, manners and speech'. The English they spoke was 'less idiomatic and slangy' than those attending the camp school. The classes at St Josephs were large, she noted, but the discipline was good and the staff efficient and understanding. Her visit to Benalla High School was more cursory, but she noted that the centre provided free buses for the children attending schools outside the centre and brought them home to camp for lunch.

In a second report, a month or so later, King expressed concern about the opportunities the town provided for assimilation. In Benalla she observed what she called 'small town insularity and insecurity'.[xxix] The newcomers would receive little encouragement or support from a struggling branch of the Good Neighbour Council, the local churches, the CWA or the Police Boys Club. Townspeople in charge of youth groups were not welcoming. They worried that the presence of children from the camp might deter those from the town, for camp kids were so much better at whatever they did, be it athletics or scripture class lessons. King worried that without frequent town connections the camp kids would retain their language, dress and customs.

School inspectors, too, were outside observers. Their reports outlined the principal physical and instructional challenges of the school. However, they, like King, were almost invariably positive. Teachers, even those in their first-year out, seemed to the inspectors to be intent on 'meeting the needs of migrant children'. The work done on speaking English was excellent. Teachers were 'eliminating foreign accents'. The geography taught focused appropriately on Australia. The social service activities undertaken were community engagement exercises which 'introduced children to their new life in Australia'. Their work in raising money for the hospital was even noted in the local newspaper. Overall the standards 'do credit to a school of normal Australian children'. Camp school children went on to achieve at Benalla High School, where some became prefects. They excelled at district sports day meetings. The singing was 'sweet and tuneful'. 'The school was happy'.[xxx]

The Director of the camp also issued positive reports on the school. He, too, was pleased with the way children were learning English. He praised the way the school made connections with the local community. He reported that he had arranged for the camp children to make contributions to the town's celebration of the Coronation in 1953 and, then, the all-important Royal Visit to Benalla in 1954. Beyond such festive occasions, important to introducing the non-British to a British Australia, he was pleased to report that the camp children took part regularly in the town's softball, table tennis and soccer competitions.[xxxi]

Department of Immigration publicists gave a glowing photographic report not of the school, but of the pre-school at the camp. This was one of several reports showing the Australian public the uncommon measures taken to help newly-arrived women into the workforce and to prepare the very young for life in Australia. The photographs were published under the headline 'They are assimilated while they play'.[xxxii]

Resident language instructors, appointed to teach English to the adults in the camp were not directly concerned with the schooling of children, but the memories of one instructor touch on the school huts and depict more broadly on the nature of the camp itself. Lois Carrington remembers clearly the physical setting. The school huts

were her workplace, too, for until 1951 language classes were held in the school building. So too, she remembers, were church services in rotation, until the Catholic Church supplied a resident chaplain and a hut became designated chapel and presbytery. The school was also the place of the camp library, composed Carrington remembers regretfully of the town's 'ancient discards'.[xxxiii]

Carrington's observations reach beyond the multi-functional school huts. For her, Benalla was 'one of the most difficult' centres at which she taught; a bleak place in which the buildings 'did not inspire by their beauty' and the view 'down the lines' between them was 'not very attractive'. She found imaginative escape in the radio, in reading and in lesson preparation. With Indian ink and broad nibbed pens, she carefully prepared posters and charts on cartridge paper to have 'brightly and usefully decorated' classrooms. As a creative language instructor, she made hand-puppets and within a curtained Punch and Judy stand presented a variety of puppet actors in conversations which embodied common sentence patterns and an increasingly wider vocabulary.

Carrington remembers constantly rubbing shoulders with her students. She is sympathetic to the women she encountered who apologised for not attending language classes: 'we come home, we wash ourselves, we wash the rooms, we wash the clothes, we wash the kids − we are too tired to come to your classes'. She found living at the camp uninspiring, but she explains it was far worse for the resident women, 'who couldn't turn to a radio, who couldn't read the town's castoffs anyway and who were weighed down by pregnancy in many cases'.

Similar observations relating to the nature of the camp can be found in the reports prepared by a succession of social workers telling of their management of individual residents with problems.[xxxiv] The social workers frequently tell, in their case studies, how their resident women clients were concerned about their children's schooling for it shaped the children's current well-being as well as their future. The women rejected suggestions that they might move from the camp because they feared such a move would disrupt schooling and break the child's connections with friends. They frequently expressed the hope that their children would take up a trade on leaving school.

The concerns and aspirations of the mothers were well rehearsed through special sets of interviews conducted in response to Department of Immigration directives to encourage long-stayers to leave the camp. In 1956 the Immigration Advisory Council undertook an investigation of why some migrants had taken up long-term residence in what were intended to be temporary Commonwealth funded hostels and centres. It found that across Australia there were cases of 'hard core impecunious migrants who are likely to be with us indefinitely unless some positive action is taken to assist them to become part of the community'. Tasman Heyes, the Secretary of the Department, explained further, 'The problem affects the rehabilitation of the women … [and] more particularly affects the upbringing and welfare of the children of these women who are being reared in an atmosphere which is neither healthy to themselves nor likely to assist towards their ultimate assimilation into the community'. A small committee was appointed to report on 'hard core problem cases', and the most obvious place to start was with Benalla.[xxxv]

Five years, then, after King's report, another social worker, Viva Murphy went to Benalla to conduct special interviews with the long-stayers. King had found 115 widows with 181 children; Murphy found 62 with 125 children. By 1956 many of them had been at Benalla for 'more than three years', nine families even reached back to the big intakes of 1949-51. Most of these long-stayers, Murphy determined, had 'lost initiative' and were 'fearful of leaving the protection of the camp'. The social workers tried to push for putative fathers to take up responsibility for the care of the women remaining in the centre. They looked to the local community and wider church community for help with outside accommodation. They recommended the women apply for naturalisation, as that could now make them eligible for a widows' pension and for public housing. They provided support for women considering adoption. Nevertheless, by the end 1956, 37 of the 62 identified problem family cases were left unresolved.[xxxvi]

Auditors worried about the economic drain of the long-stayers on Department resources, but another observer, Hazel Dobson, Bunty King's superior officer, insisted that the first consideration was the interests of the child. Separation of mother and child was rarely in a child's best interest. She stoutly insisted that social workers across all the centres found supporting mothers were almost invariably 'affectionate mothers.' She respected them for that. As evidence to support her case against institutionalisation she cited an instance from Benalla. There, when one woman changed her mind and decided to keep rather than relinquish her new-born to adoption, the other mothers rallied to support and encourage her. They 'showered her with little gifts from their own few belongings'.[xxxvii]

When the camp closed in 1967, RE Armstrong was still there, now as Assistant Secretary of Planning and Operations in the Department of Immigration. He could no longer resist the financial pressures to close Benalla, but explained that the department was 'doing all that it could to enable the [remaining 25 families] to take a normal role in the Australian community'.[xxxviii] It arranged for some to be re-housed in Melbourne and it had made contact with support agencies there to gather assistance for them. About six families were moved to public housing in Benalla and district. The migrant centre helped them by providing basic centre furnishings. Even more encouragingly, the Department was prepared for six months to bear rental costs over and above the usual centre tariff.[xxxix]

Within most of these reports there are implicit or explicit expressions of expectations of children. First, childhood ended abruptly at 16 years-of-age. By then children were expected to be in employment, though they could still be being educated if they had parental support. The tariff for residents who turned 16 jumped ten shillings (or a third again). Second, was the expectation that the eldest son or daughter was expected to contribute financially to the family and to help it to move from the camp. Third, there was an expectation that the eldest daughter would share the burdens of single-parent child care. Eldest daughters cared for younger siblings after school, until their mother returned from work.

There emerge from these contemporary reports and the administrative arrangements applying to the camp, three distinctive features of Benalla Aerodrome School. This was a special school with a special clientele; in some ways it resembled a boarding school; and it was strangely privileged.

The school register shows the common address of the parents of those enrolled, suggesting their similar social and economic circumstances. Indeed, the first 120 entries in the school register show all the parents were employed as 'domestic duties', that was, before the women got jobs. Then a few months later come the first of many subsequent entries of listed jobs as 'machinist' or 'kitchen hand'. The enrolment register also shows sudden influxes from other holding centres. Residents from other holding centres were transferred to Benalla from as far afield as Western Australia or Queensland as they closed.[xl] Perhaps the only child to attend who was not a migrant was the daughter of a resident Department of Civil Aviation officer.[xli]

The Benalla Aerodrome School had the personal intimacy of a boarding school. Teachers lived at the camp. The head teacher had a cottage and his wife taught sewing at the school. There were frequent pupil/teacher and parent/teacher out-of-class encounters. Moreover, some children were long-resident, even though there was a constant flow of transients. They attended, first, the pre-school, then, the primary school together. As noted of a similar establishment in another country, this enforced long-term proximity for families 'living in a protracted condition of … economic marginality' provided a stable, close village atmosphere which offered protection from an outside world.[xlii]

The Benalla Aerodrome School was privileged in that, like the school at Bonegilla, it received support from the camp amenities fund, which drew on canteen and cinema profits. The amenities fund supplied the school with a piano and with audio-visual equipment. It bought books for the school library, materials for handicrafts and decorative pot plants. The centre administration supplied a free bus for school activities as well as for those attending town schools. Even more support came after 1960 when, with Department of Immigration encouragement, the Children's Library and Craft Movement opened Creative Learning Centres at Benalla and Bonegilla. These centres were used to expand the after-school leisure activities of children grouped as 7 to 10 year-olds, 10 to 13 year-olds, and 13 to 16 year-olds. Within school hours, camp school classes, too, could access the Creative Learning Centre's facilities for cooking, pottery-making, visual art, handicrafts and woodwork.[xliii]

By way of contrast, other schools nation-wide found it hard to cope with the sudden influx of post-war migrants. Because Bonegilla was a reception centre, where newcomers were expected to remain only three or four weeks, the State did not to establish a school there, as it had at holding centres until 1952. As a result, between 1948 and 1952, parents who had secured two-year contract work at the Bonegilla Reception Centre had to try to enrol their children at nearby schools. Enrolments at Wodonga's primary schools doubled. There were insufficient classrooms and classes had to be held in church halls. Wodonga parents were alarmed at class sizes of 70.[xliv]

The smaller Mitta Junction school, less that 2km from the Bonegilla Reception Centre, could not cope with the rapid increase in numbers and had to suspend enrolments. The alarmed inspector kept careful record of the overwhelming proportions of migrant children. In 1951, 39 of the 50 children were 'New Australians'. He reported the difficulty teachers had in grading newcomers, who arrived with no record of previous schooling or their attainments. The teachers found themselves unprepared to deal with the huge influx of non-English speakers,

especially those who only attended for a short time. Many were there one week, gone the next. The only way to cope was to have the transient child 'sit next to Nelly'. Mitta Junction became 'a most difficult school'.[xlv]

Wodonga and Mitta Junction were not the only schools unprepared for the growing presence of migrant children. In 1978, immigration scholar, Jean Martin showed that Australia-wide departments of education were slow to respond to the needs of new arrivals. Teachers were unskilled in teaching English as a second language and had no special learning materials, as they tried to help their pupils 'to fit our school life and later into our community'.[xlvi] Martin notes that teachers were one of the first professional groups to agitate for more resources to help with migrant settlement, but their pleas went unheeded until the late 1960s.

Other subsequent reports found positive features related to the schooling of migrant children. Economic historians provided an analysis of the 1981 Census showing that first and second generation children from a non-English speaking background benefited considerably from access to the Australian education system. They did as well as the Australian-born with respect to occupational achievement and access to post-secondary education. [xlvii] As the inspectors insisted, the standards set and reached in this school at Benalla Migrant Camp were not very different from any other. Many pupils may not have had the family support to complete a full secondary education, but they did find places in a range of callings. The school improved life chances.

Memories of camp life and schooling

Memories of migration and early settlement are prized as eyewitness accounts which help to humanise the history of immigration. Personal memories fire feelings which feed imagination and guide understanding of the experience of migration. However, those who deal with migration memories warn that personal memories are malleable, often shaped by subsequent family or individual fortunes, sometimes pushed by present day community concerns about social justice and migrant and refugee reception processes. Further, memories are particular and often messy. To lift them from personal nostalgia, readers impose or discern patterns. I have suggested that in general the stories built on memories of migrant camp living drift in similar directions: some dwell on the trials of migration and the inequities the newcomers faced; others make much of acts of kindness. The overall theme is usually of triumph over adversity: migration was a bitter-sweet experience; settlement was a challenge and achievement. Memories of migrant camp life are usually told in graphic sensory terms and almost invariably include descriptions of the spare fabric and the challenges of communal living. They also, I suggest, convey the importance of family, friends and fellow workers.[xlviii]

I have suggested that there seem to be three common features in the memories of children who arrived at Bonegilla. First, children know the world more sensuously than adults: they have eyes for the immediate detail. So their memories quicken appreciation of the physicality of the experience of migration. Second, for many the memory of the adventure of migrating merges into the even bigger adventure of growing up. For many the migration accommodation centres were holiday camps, where new friendships were easily made. Such memories fit within a discernible pattern of there being three esses in assimilation for the young ─ sun, sport and school. Third and more soberly, children are skilled eavesdroppers and they give first hand observations of the experiences of their parents. There is remembrance of a variety of feelings swirling within the family, such as wariness,

uncertainty and guarded optimism. While they marvel at their parents' endurance, children also remember the life lessons they picked up about trust from parents for whom survival depended on not trusting.[xlix] Because of early language difficulties, some pupils were a year older than their Australian-born class peers and remember being more worldly-wise. For instance, Michael Herbst recalls the experience of communal living at Bonegilla and the accounts he heard there of war and post-war Europe that meant he had 'different thoughts and skills' to his fellow students at Wodonga High School.[l]

Stories built on memories of Benalla Migrant Camp can be expected to follow similar lines. The chief difference is in the relative absence of local record of their presence. Indeed, as far as the local press was concerned, the residents of the camp and particularly the widows were always faceless and voiceless. Nevertheless, at the closing of the camp the Melbourne *Sun* elicited responses from three of the 'special resettlement problem cases' who were being moved reluctantly from the camp. Each in turn, Mrs J Omielczuk, Mrs A Slusarczyk and Mrs J Koslowska, told the journalist: 'This has been my only home and I do not think I can turn around and start a new home all over again'; 'We have had a good time here and this makes it very hard to leave'; 'I feel awful at having to break up a place that has been our only home for more than 15 years'. Their children, they said, were born there and 'knew no other home'; they had made many friends at the camp and in the school and 'they are going to find it very hard to leave'.[li] Given, voice, the mothers were, as the social workers observed, 'fearful of leaving the protection of the camp'.

Adult residents at Benalla may have left few verbal records, but their family photograph albums show something of their life before migration, the life-changing journey to Australia and their lives at Benalla. The photographs externalise their personal memories. Photographers, however, like smiles, so there are plenty of images of workplace camaraderie and happy occasions such as Christmas. Some act as visual reminders of time-marking church and school events in their children lives ─ christenings, first communions, class photographs and school concerts.[lii] Together the photographs seem, as observed of a similar place in another country, to be showing family life constituted 'as it should be'.[liii] They prompt recall of the experience of close living in a safe Benalla Migrant Camp. This place was a home, a protected village.

The panel assessing the heritage value of the Benalla Migrant Camp observed that at the inquiry the children had made 'particular note of the experiences and hardships of their parents, often in distinction to their own sense of safety and community that they felt, as children, during their time at the camp'. Children gleaned understandings of their family's economic circumstances. The young observed endurance rather than resilience: 'my mother was 'persuadable' or 'too trusting', or had 'hard deeply ingrained suspicions' of the rest of the world. Life was tough. They lived in relative poverty, made most obvious by the comparing their few possessions with those of town children. Memory of schooling awakens recall of the expense of blazers and shoes or the bike to get to a town school. And there remains the still defiant disclaimer, 'I never wanted to go to Joeys, anyway'.

School still exists in the mind's eye. The former pupils recall the heater, the teacher's table, the blackboard with displays of copperplate writing. The installation of a portrait of the Queen, one says, would prompt memory of dancing around the Maypole in a performance for the Royal visit and that awakens further sensory memory of

having to hold hands with a girl who had warts which turns to memory of the magical ways of getting rid of warts. The former pupils still hear the songs that introduced them to music and recall the books that introduced them to reading. There are memories of kind teachers and, beyond the school, supportive adults like 'Cackles', who had charge of a Girl Guides group.

Benalla camp kids have drawn memory maps of the camp and told stories of its surrounds. This is where we kicked a football. This is the swimming spot with leeches. This was the more dangerous waterfall swimming hole. They vividly recall the games they devised with few resources. One, Helen Topor, has written a book on the games which helped establish their togetherness.[liv] So much so that some wanted to demonstrate how they played Klimpi to the panel assessing heritage value of the place. That, better than anything else, showed what the camp meant to them

The children who share memories of Benalla were often not new arrivals: many were born and bred in Benalla. They were not adapting to a new land. They were not learning to be Australian. They were learning to be. It seems to me that their memories emphasise togetherness and belonging, posed frequently as differences between town and camp children. They played sport with town children, though always with a keen sense of being other. 'We could run faster, jump higher, cartwheel longer and spit further than any townie'. 'Our vigoro team was invincible'. 'We could roll barrels faster than anyone'. 'We stuck together. Nobody messed with us'.

Beyond the primary school was the secondary school. For camp school kids, this was what Les Murray, the poet, calls 'the deep end of the school yard'. For him, Bonegilla and Nelson Bay Holding Centre were 'The dry-land barbed wire ships from which some would never land'; places at which 'children had one last ambiguous summer holiday'. Ahead of them, beyond their migrant camp, was the fierce conformity of the secondary school and the epithets, 'Wog, reffo, Commo, Nazi, ─ things which can be forgotten, but must first be told'.[lv]

[Insert 4: Miss Cracknell with her class.]
[Insert 5: Coming of age at the camp.]
Sharing school with children who were not migrants sharpened senses of difference. There are memories of teenage taunts about dress, jibes about speech and unhappy recall of being labelled a 'Balt', or more commonly a 'Bolt' in the Benalla vernacular. One girl remembers town girls greeting camp kids at Benalla High School with fisticuffs, because they did not want them in their school. Benalla Aerodrome School sheltered the children as much as the camp sheltered their parents

Finding room for the migrant camp story

Since 2013 former residents have been publicly sharing their memories of the camp more vigorously. Memories of growing up at Benalla are mixed, but for the most part fond. The place had been kind. It was sad that although 'the place had experienced so much love and peace', it was now being neglected. The camp had, in their recollections, an overwhelming feeling of safety. Nobody remembers having keys to their huts. 'We had lots of aunts to tie shoelaces and ribbons; we had lots of playmates'. As children we 'did not see the shabby huts and sad

faces'; for us Benalla was 'the biggest playground in the world'. In memory at least, they were happy, it was nearly always summer and school holidays.[lvi]

In 2016 the state was ready to admit stories of the hitherto publicly ignored Benalla Migrant Camp experiment into its heritage-based narratives of post-war immigration. At the national and state scale, stories about how the community received vulnerable strangers from overseas would seem pertinent to 'where we are now and where we are headed as a society' [lvii] As a nation we need places to encourage thinking about migration experiences, particularly those of the vulnerable.

In 2018 the question remains on how far Benalla Rural Council is ready to own stories of Benalla's Migrant Camp. It can fulfil the statutory requirements to care for the fabric, without making any other effort to produce a visitable heritage place. The business of remembering, however, requires the preparation of a business case to explore such things as possible outcomes, potential markets and funding prospects. Council might explore the management of other similar heritage places, such as nearby Bonegilla, to determine the goals, costs and gains of developing a similar but complimentary commemorative place and cultural tourism venue.

Council will need to make a long-term analysis of what the camp means to the local community and the benefits of memorialising it. Within heritage traditions that prize fabric, standard P1 huts are not architecturally grand, inspiring or even interesting. Those at Benalla do not seem to contribute directly to narratives of the economic success of post-war migration. Instead they illustrated discrimination against the non-British. They evoke stories of social exclusion rather than inclusion at the local as well as the national levels, for immigration happened within neighbourhoods 'where migrants came into daily contact with the wider Australian community'. [lviii] Council might well ask if visitors would be enticed to stay another night in Benalla so that they could be challenged into thinking about how the national and the local community went about taking in vulnerable stranger families.

It seemed when I published a commissioned history of the camp in 2015 that Benalla Migrant Camp was an example of difficult heritage: difficult to hear with equanimity; difficult to tell, given the complexities of locating and using resident and local testimony; and difficult to locate firmly in the local townscape. I subsequently expressed confidence that the stories the Benalla Camp children tell will break the silence that had descended on the 'sad and tragic camp' and complicate representations of it with hope and love. They add exuberant slabs of colour to an otherwise drab and grim picture. [lix] If the Benalla Migrant Camp complicates congratulatory narratives of post-war immigration, then the Benalla Aerodrome School complicates them yet again. It was a school at which the children of the displaced and unsettled found belonging. It was where they found supportive togetherness. It was where the resilient began shaping their subsequent life chances. The school hut prompts visitors to view the camp as a place illustrative of how some of the socially handicapped and vulnerable were gentled, even if imperfectly, into post-war Australia.

The re-discovered and now representative school room is a personal/family memory prompt. The former pupils will push curators to re-dress it for public presentation with, for example, a portrait of the young Queen and a teacher's desk. They might reach back further to show a multifunctional space with in one corner a battered town

discard in the camp library; in another one of Carrington's pictures of 'a pair of gloves'; in a third corner, a Lutheran catechism. They might want to pipe in the sounds of children chanting a times-table, reciting the loyal oath, reading aloud, singing tunefully or laughing.

It is also a wider community memory prompt. Not all of us can re-imagine childhood as well as fiction writers like Trent Dalton, a child of parents from another holding centre. But we can all ask, within the ambience of Australia's only surviving migrant accommodation centre school, what it meant to be a migrant child, then going on to swallow not just Australia, but the universe.

[i] Marshall, 'Report on Visit to Australia by IRO Representative', 15 April 1949, National Australian Archives (NAA) CP815/1, 021, 134.

[ii] Holt, 'Employment of Displaced Persons – widows with children', NAA, D1917, D15/50.

[iii] Manuscript note, 1 November 1951, NAA A437, 1950/6/173.

[iv] Raphael Samuel, 'What is Social History', *History Today*, vol.35, 1985, pp. 34-38.

[v] I thank Benalla Migrant Camp Inc. for the photographs used here. I also thank the Benalla Camp children who volunteered memories and particularly Helen Topor for her help and comments.

[vi] Inspectors Reports, 1949-1950, Benalla Aerodrome School, PRO, VPRS, 4217/P0001.

[vii] Victorian Heritage Register H2358, http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/196487.

[viii] Heritage Concepts, 'Draft Conservation Management Plan, Benalla Migrant Camp', Benalla Rural Council, 2018.

[ix] Heritage Concepts, pp. 134-141.

[x] Jay Winter, 'Sites of Memory' in S Radstone and B Schwarz eds. *Memory histories, theories and debates*, Fordham University Press, 2010, pp, 312-324.

[xi] Bryony Onciul, Michelle Stefano, Stephanie Hawke, eds. *Engaging heritage, engaging communities*, Boydell and Brewer, Woodbridge, 2017, pp. 47-48.

[xii] Ruth Balint and Zora Simic, 'Histories of Migrants and Refugees in Australia', *Historical Studies*, vol. 49, no. 3, 2018, pp. 378-409.

[xiii] G Ashworth, B Graham and J Tunbridge, *A Geography of Heritage*, Arnold, London, 2000.

[xiv] J Martin, *Refugee Settlers*, ANU, Canberra, 1965; J Petersen, 'Though this be madness', *Public History Review*, vol.17, 2010.

[xv] A-M Jordens, *Redefining Australians*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney 1995; K Kokegi, 'Australian Immigration and Migrant Assimilation, 1945 to 1950, PhD these University of Adelaide, 2012;, J Jones, 'Voluntary Organisations and the Assimilation of Non-British Migrant Women', *Historical Studies* vol. 48, no.30, 2017, pp. 381-398.

[xvi] A Markus and M Taft, 'Post-war Immigration and Assimilation', *Historical Studies,* vol. 46, no.2, 2015, pp. 234-251.

[xvii] K Agutter and C Kevin (eds) Special issue, 'Women, Children and the Idealised Refugee Family', *The History of the Family*, vol. 22, no.4, 2017.

[xviii] A Dellios, 'Remembering Mum and Dad', *Immigrants & Minorities*, vol. 36, no.2, pp. 105-124.

[xix] Bruce Pennay *Benalla Migrant Camp, A difficult heritage,* Benalla 2015, revised 2017(a); 'Remembering Benalla', *The History of the Family*, vol. 22, no.4, 2017 (b), pp. 575-596; 'Wodonga's Bonegilla', *Victorian Historical Journal,* vol. 87, no.1, June 2016; *The Young at Bonegilla*, PAW, Wodonga, 2010.

[xx] Marshall, 'Report on Visit to Australia by IRO Representative', 15 April 1949, National Australian Archives (NAA) CP815/1, 021, 134.

[xxi] Holt, 'Employment of Displaced Persons – widows with children', NAA, D1917, D15/50.

[xxii] Manuscript note, 1 November 1951, NAA A437, 1950/6/173.

[xxiii] TT McElroy to Secretary, 2 April 1959, 'Closing Centres', NAA, A446, 1967/71173.

[xxiv] *Good Neighbour,* 1 December 1967.

[xxv] Pennay, 2015, p. 1

[xxvi] Pennay, 2016.

[xxvii] Pennay, 2017(a) p. 49.

[xxviii] M King, 'Report on Widows and Unmarried Mothers at Benalla', October–November 1951, NAA A445, 276/2/10.

[xxix] M King, 'Report from Benalla Holding Centre', 3 December 1951, NAA A437, 1950/6/173.

[xxx]Inspectors Reports, 1949-1962, Benalla Aerodrome School, PRO, VPRS, 4217/P0001.

[xxxi] 'Assimilation at BMC', NAA, A445, 112/1/10.

[xxxii] Publicity photographs, NAA, A12111, 1/1955/22/40-53; *Good Neighbour*, August 1958.

[xxxiii] Carrington, *A real situation*, Canberra, 1997, pp. 120–123

[xxxiv] 'Social Workers' Reports, Benalla', NAA, A437, 1950/6/173.

[xxxv] TT McElroy to Secretary, 2 April 1959, 'Closing Centres', NAA, A446, 1967/71173.

[xxxvi] 'IAC committee on hostels and centres, part 1', NAA, A466, 1962/65241.

[xxxvii] Dobson to Lamidey, 'Benalla Problem Cases', 10 May 1955, NAA A4437, 1950/6/173.

[xxxviii] John Murphy, '15 year stay ends in transit hostel', *Sun*, 10 May 1967, p. 9.

[xxxix] Pennay 2017(a), pp. 12-14.

[xl] Register, 1949-50, Benalla Aerodrome School, PRO, VPRS, 4217/P0001.

[xli] Jim Klopsteins.

[xlii] Nando Sigona 'Campzenship: Re-imagining the camp as a social and political space', *Citizenship Studies*, vol. 19, no. 10, pp. 1-5.

[xliii] Pennay, 2017(a), p. 37.

[xliv] *Border Morning Mail* 15 February 1951.

[xlv] Mitta Junction School, Inspector Reports, 1949-1960, PRO VPRS 9143/P0001.

[xlvi] J Martin, *The Migrant Presence*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1978, pp. 84-112.

[xlvii] Mark Wooden et al, *Australian Immigration: A survey of the issues,* Bureau of Immigration and Population Research, Canberra, 1994, pp. 168-172.

[xlviii] ennay, 2010.

[xlix] E Wynhausen, *On resilience*, MUP, Melbourne, 2009.

[l] Personal communication.

[li]John Murphy, p. 9.

[lii] Benalla Migrant Camp Photographic Exhibition.

[liii] Tamara West, 'Remembering displacement', *Memory Studies*, vol. 7, pp. 176-190.

[liv] Helen Topor, *Outdoor Games for Today's Kids*, Bytes 'n Colours, Canberra 2017.

[lv] Les Murray, 'Immigrant Voyage' from *Ethnic Radio: poems,* Angus & Robertson, Sydney 1977.

[lvi] Pennay, 2017(a), pp. 38-41.

[lvii] Australian Government, *Australian Heritage Strategy,* Canberra, 2015, p.7.

[lviii] Kokegei, p. 118.

[lix] Pennay 2017(a), p. 48.