

# Statement of recommendation from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria

Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms

121 Scott Street, Warracknabeal, Yarriambiack Shire

Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and

Jupagulk Country



## Executive Director recommendation

Under section 37 of the *Heritage Act 2017* ('the Act') I recommend to the Heritage Council of Victoria (Heritage Council) that the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, located at 121 Scott Street, Warracknabeal, Yarriambiack Shire is of State-level cultural heritage significance and should be included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) in the categories of Registered Place and Registered Object Integral to a Registered Place.

In accordance with section 38 of the Act I include in this recommendation categories of works or activities which may be carried out in relation to the place and objects integral without the need for a permit under Part 5 of the Act.

I suggest that the Heritage Council determine that:

- the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, 121 Scott Street, Warracknabeal, Yarriambiack Shire, is of State-level cultural heritage significance and is to be included in the VHR in accordance with section 49(1)(a) of the Act
- that the objects are integral to understanding the cultural heritage significance of the place under section 49(1)(e) of the Act.
- that the proposed categories of works or activities which may be carried out in relation to the place and objects integral for which a permit under the Act is not required will not harm the cultural heritage significance of the place under section 49(3) of the Act.



**STEVEN AVERY**  
Executive Director, Heritage Victoria

**Date of recommendation: 17/07/2023**



## The process from here

### **1. The Heritage Council publishes the Executive Director's recommendation (section 41)**

The Heritage Council will publish the Executive Director's recommendation on its website for a period of 60 days.

### **2. Making a submission to the Heritage Council (sections 44 and 45)**

Within the 60-day publication period, any person or body may make a written submission to the Heritage Council. This submission can support the recommendation, or object to the recommendation and a hearing can be requested in relation to the submission. Information about making a submission and submission forms are available on the Heritage Council's website.

### **3. Heritage Council determination (sections 46 and 49)**

The Heritage Council is an independent statutory body. It is responsible for making the final determination to include or not include the place or object in the VHR or amend a place or object already in the VHR.

If no submissions are received the Heritage Council must make a determination within 40 days of the publication closing date.

If submissions are received, the Heritage Council may decide to hold a hearing in relation to the submission. The Heritage Council must conduct a hearing if the submission is made by a person or body with a real or substantial interest in the place or object. If a hearing does take place, the Heritage Council must make a determination within 90 days after the completion of the hearing.

### **4. Obligations of owners of places and objects (sections 42 and 43)**

The owner of a place or object which is the subject of a recommendation to the Heritage Council has certain obligations under the Act. These relate to advising the Executive Director in writing of any works or activities that are being carried out, proposed or planned for the place or object.

The owner also has an obligation to provide a copy of this statement of recommendation to any potential purchasers of the place or object before entering into a contract.

### **5. Further information**

The relevant sections of the Act are provided at Appendix 1.



## Description

The following is a description of the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms and objects at the time of the site inspection by Heritage Victoria in October 2022.

The Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms are located on the traditional land of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk people.

## The Place

The Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms is a single storey brick building constructed in 1928 with a pitched corrugated iron roof. It has a central front door flanked by two sash windows each respectively set in cream masonry trapezoid surrounds. A metal awning projects over the width of the footpath from which a sign with the words REST ROOMS hangs. A brick parapet extends above the awning and the words LADIES REST ROOMS are set above the front door. The parapet has two trapezoid perforations topped by a band of white masonry.

The front door opens directly onto a small sitting room which spans the width of the building. At the rear of the sitting room is a two-thirds height fixed timber partition. The main room is reached through a door in this partition. A matching partition on wheels sits in the main room. It can be moved across this internal door for additional privacy when the front door is open. Behind the central lounge room there is a space divided by another two-thirds height fixed timber partition with modern vinyl floor covering. To the south of the partition is an open modern kitchen and original fireplace. To the north there is a private baby change area. The back door leads onto a covered area with three toilet cubicles with timber doors facing south. Beyond this there is a small garden with some landscaping and ground cover of loose white pebbles.

## Objects integral

The following objects are located at the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms and are original to the place or were installed or in use in its early years of operation:

1. Moveable privacy screen (matching the central and rear partition walls)
2. All Welcome - Silver Coin Donation (sign)
3. Boys Admitted up to the Age of Six years (sign)
4. No Responsibility for Parcels (sign)
5. Framed life members honour roll (Tarrant to Woodward)
6. Life members honour board (commencing 1940)
7. Collection of five visitors books from 1928–2023
8. Collection of eight books with lists of members from 1947–1980
9. Three small books with Records of pram and pushcart rentals from 1941–1977
10. Book recording the Presidents and Secretaries from 1926–2005
11. Signed petition to the shire from 109 women of the district (1944).

## Description images



2021, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, northern elevation.

There is a modern public toilet block on the left hand side of the photo. A modern water tower is also visible.

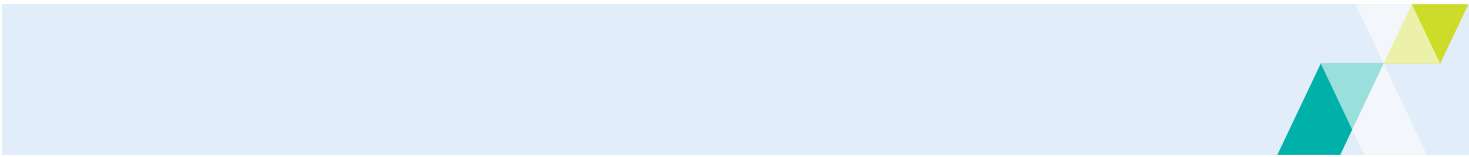
Source: The Wimmera Book



2022, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, view south along Scott Street



2022, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, western elevation



2022, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, sitting room inside the front door



2022, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, view out front door from main lounge room. Movable screen shown on RHS



2022, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, view of main lounge area and moveable screen



2022, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, view into baby change area



2022, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, kitchen sink area



2022, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, fireplace in kitchen



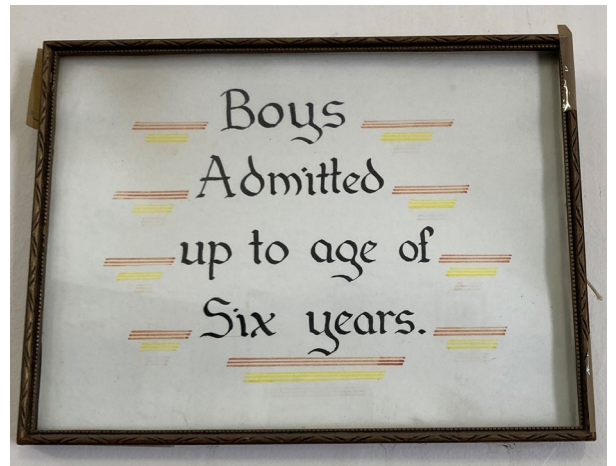
2022, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms,



2022, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, back door & covered area



2022, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, Welcome sign, front sitting room



2022, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, Boys sign, front sitting room

# History

## The Women's Rest Rooms Movement

During the 1920s and 1930s, an unknown number (perhaps over 200) of Women's Rest Rooms were set up across Australia, very few of which survive to this day. The Women's Rest Rooms movement started in Australia after the First World War (1914-18). During the war, large numbers of women joined the Red Cross, gaining skills in organising and fundraising for a range of activities. This experience of mobilisation and camaraderie gave many the confidence to pursue new roles in the public realm after the war, serving their communities in addition to fulfilling their family duties.

The 1920s saw the emergence of groups such as the Country Women's Association (CWA) in Australia, based on the principles of the Women's Institutes in Canada (late 1890s) and Britain (1913). The CWA and other similar groups across Australia were dedicated to the welfare of women and children in rural communities. The CWA motto summed up their purpose: 'Honour to God, Loyalty to the Throne and Empire, Service to the Country through Country Women for Country Women by Country Women'. The idea of 'Women's Rest Rooms' possibly came from similar facilities for wounded soldiers set up during the war. In Melbourne, there was a 'YMCA Rest Room', 'Sailors and Soldiers Rest Rooms' and 'Union Jack Rest Rooms'. Here soldiers met one another, relaxed in a quasi-domestic space and were served tea and refreshments by women volunteers (no alcohol was served).

After the war, the establishment of Women's Rest Rooms was a central goal of emerging rural women's groups. In 1919 the Victorian Country Party's Women's Section declared 'that rest rooms should be established in all country towns'.<sup>1</sup> Rest Rooms addressed two problems: the lack of women's public toilets and a safe indoor space for women on 'shopping days'.

In the early 1900s, it was common for farming families to travel into regional towns every few weeks for a shopping day to buy provisions, visit the bank and the like. After conducting their business, men could socialise in the pub with their male friends and use toilets in the hotel or at garages. But there were no public toilets for women – a phenomenon across the British world. The first public toilet for women in Melbourne was not built until 1902 (Sydney, 1910, and Brisbane, 1912).<sup>2</sup> At that time, public bars along with their toilets were the domain of men, as it was unlawful for women to drink in pubs in Australia until 1965. Certain hotels had a 'ladies lounge', but even so, the prospect of women performing a 'private' function in public or male dominated spaces challenged prevailing cultural ideas of decency.

Women's Rest Rooms provided rural women with much needed toilets and a space to care for babies and young children. They also offered a quiet place for women to chat with friends 'whilst waiting for [their] menfolk to conduct their business in the town', rather than being 'obliged to stand about the streets' or sit in a shop until the family was ready to go home.<sup>3</sup> Rooms were typically membership based and access was granted by a small annual fee. They remained unlocked during the day to allow easy access. There was little of value in the rooms, rather their value lay in being a cosy and social space. Facilities varied from place to place but could include:

- Toilets
- Baby change areas
- Spaces for young children to play
- Stoves for preparing infants food
- Hot water
- Drinking water
- Cups of tea
- Open fires (in winter)
- A cool space (in summer)
- A gifts table with produce and cakes
- Pram hire
- A visitors book.

<sup>1</sup> 'Country Towns', *Countryman*, 7 June 1929, p.10.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew May, *Public Toilets*, eMelbourne: The City Past And Present; Women's History Network, *A matter of convenience...or lack thereof: Ladies lavatories in twentieth-century Brisbane*.

<sup>3</sup> 'Country Towns', *Countryman*, 7 June 1929, p.10. Also see 'Camperdown Rest Rooms', *Camperdown Chronicle*, 15 March 1930, p.4.



## The Development of Women's Rest Rooms

Women's Rest Rooms started to open in the early 1920s. In Victoria, one of the first was set up in 1922 in Leongatha by the Victorian Farmers' Union. After the establishment of the CWA in NSW in 1922, CWA Rooms were established at Inverell (1924) and Barellan (1924); the latter being included in the NSW State Heritage Register in 2011. Other states followed, including Bundaberg, QLD (1924) and Donnybrook, WA (1925). By 1953 there were an estimated 182 Rest Rooms in NSW, the state with the largest number of these facilities.<sup>4</sup>

In Victoria, prior to the establishment of the CWA in that state in 1928, Women's Rest Rooms were set up by community organisations, including the Victorian Farmers' Union, town progress associations and local groups – such as the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms Committee. In these early years, such facilities were sometimes called 'Ladies Rest Rooms' rather than 'Women's Rest Rooms'. In 1932, one commentator reported 15 or possibly 17 rooms in Victoria. Twenty years later there were an estimated 119.<sup>5</sup> The CWA was the largest developer of these facilities, either adapting existing buildings or building new ones.

This list provides a sample Women's Rest Rooms established in Victoria from 1922. Many are no longer extant and/or no longer function as Women's Rest Rooms (see Comparisons section for extant places).

### *Women's Rest Rooms in Victoria (Prior to the establishment of the CWA of Victoria)*

1. 1922, Leongatha, Victoria Farmers' Union.<sup>6</sup>
2. 1924, Geelong, Victoria Farmers' Union, Ladies' Rest Rooms.<sup>7</sup>
3. 1927, Hamilton, Hamilton Progress Association, Ladies' Rest Rooms.<sup>8</sup>
4. 1927, Cobden, Local committee.<sup>9</sup>
5. 1928, Warracknabeal, Country Progressive Party Women's Section, then Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms Committee (opened August 1928)

### *Women's Rest Rooms in Victoria (Prior to the establishment of the CWA of Victoria)*

6. 1928, Terang, CWA (first CWA Women's Rest Room in Victoria, opened August 1928)
7. 1929, Mildura, CWA.<sup>10</sup>
8. <1927, Geelong, affiliation unknown, Malop Street, opposite Winter and Taylor's.<sup>11</sup> (There were a number of Women's Rest Rooms in Geelong)
9. 1929, Sale, CWA, located at the old Methodist parsonage.<sup>12</sup>
10. 1927, Camperdown, affiliation unknown. Rented premises.<sup>13</sup>
11. <1929, Werrimul, affiliation unknown.<sup>14</sup>
12. 1930, Merbein, Merbein Women's Welfare Club
13. <1930, Benalla, CWA.<sup>15</sup>
14. <1931, Myrtleford, CWA
15. 1932, Rutherglen, CWA, Main Street.<sup>16</sup>
16. 1933, Ouyen, CWA, Pickering Street, formerly in Cramenton Hall.<sup>17</sup>
17. 1933, Korrumburra, CWA.<sup>18</sup>
18. 1935, Pyramid Hill, CWA<sup>19</sup>
19. 1938, Nhill, CWA, Victoria Street.

<sup>4</sup> Australian Women's Archives Project. Australian Women's Register, Country Women's Association of New South Wales.

<sup>5</sup> 'Country Women's Association', *Rutherglen and Chiltern Valley Advertiser*, 26 August 1932, p.3. See also 'Country Women', *The Daily Express, Wagga Wagga*, 8 Dec 1923, p.7. The 1952 figure comes from Brenda Stevens-Chambers, *The Feisty Phoenix: The Real Story of the Country Women's Association of Victoria 1928-2008. 80th Anniversary History*, Country Women's Association of Victoria, Toorak, 2008, p. 122.

<sup>6</sup> 'Women's Rest Rooms', *Gippsland Farmers' Journal*, 23 Nov 1922, p.2

<sup>7</sup> 'Local Topics', *Geelong Advertiser*, 7 Jun 1924, p.7.

<sup>8</sup> 'Hamilton's Rest Rooms', *Table Talk*, 3 March 1927, p.50.

<sup>9</sup> 'Cobden Rest Rooms', *Camperdown Chronicle*, 27 Sep 1927, p.4.

<sup>10</sup> 'Country Women's Association: Rest Rooms Opened Yesterday', *Sunraysia Daily*, 5 October 1929, p.1.

<sup>11</sup> 'Women's Rest Room', *Geelong Advertiser*, 16 February 1929, p.3.

<sup>12</sup> 'Country Women's Association', *Gippsland Times*, 16 December 1929, p.6.

<sup>13</sup> 'Camperdown Rest Rooms', *Camperdown Chronicle*, 15 March 1930, p.4.

<sup>14</sup> 'Country Women's Organisations', *Weekly Times*, 12 Oct 1929, p.26.

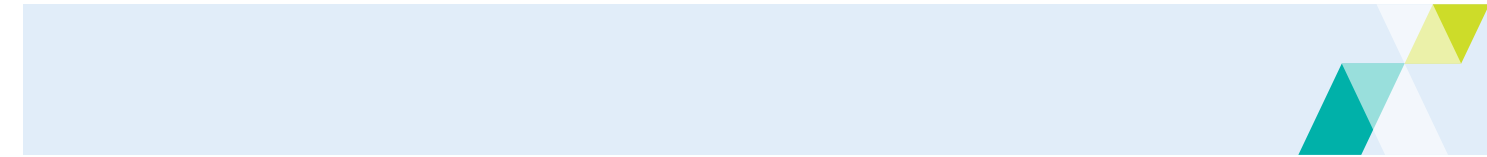
<sup>15</sup> 'Country Women's Association', *Benalla Standard*, 10 October 1930, p.5.

<sup>16</sup> 'Country Women's Association', *Rutherglen and Chiltern Valley Advertiser*, 26 August 1932, p.3.

<sup>17</sup> 'Women's Rest Room', *Ouyen Mail*, 1 May 1933, p.2.

<sup>18</sup> 'Country Women's Associations', *Australasian*, 27 May 1933, p.13.

<sup>19</sup> 'Country Women's Associations', *Australasian*, 27 Jul 1935, p.13.



This wave of construction during the 1920s and 1930s was informed by new understandings of public health, women's health and changing attitudes to decency. This era saw improvements in the control of communicable diseases, the establishment of baby health centres and the construction of sewerage systems in regional towns. At the Cobden Rest Rooms in 1928, a local doctor gave a health lecture covering topics such as influenza and venereal disease.<sup>20</sup> In Benalla, some discussion was given to the use of the Rest Rooms for 'baby health centre work'.<sup>21</sup> Women's Rest Rooms were seen as progressive because they recognised and supported women's primary role as wives and mothers. They allowed women to carve out a respectable private space within the public civic landscape and have access to appropriate conveniences that safeguarded their decency. Rest Rooms were also good for baby health, providing clean nappy change areas and food warming facilities. Rural women found friendship and purpose in Rest Rooms which helped break the isolation of life on remote farms. As the use of cars increased in the 1920s, so did tourism within Victoria, and Rest Rooms provided much needed facilities for women travellers. From the mid-twentieth century, however, rural city councils began constructing public toilet blocks for men and women, and it is possible that these became preferred rest stops for families. Along with declining rural populations and the movement of women into the paid workforce, the membership of Rest Rooms in Australia fell. The Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms has defied this trend. In 2023 these rooms remain open, are owned and operated by an active local committee and are well patronised.

## Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms

In May 1926 a committee meeting of the women's section of the Country Progressive Party Women's Section discussed establishing a rest room for women and children.<sup>22</sup> In September of that year a committee formed, and planning began. The *Warracknabeal Herald* reported the reasons for its establishment:

*That such an institution is urgently needed not only in Warracknabeal, but in every country town is wholeheartedly admitted... For many years some place where tired mothers with their children, and ladies generally, could retire for an hour's rest and comfort has been required.*<sup>23</sup>

In Warracknabeal there were already a few rest rooms in hotels and the three garages in the town, but women did not use these facilities. There was a view that it was not 'appropriate that ladies and youngsters' visited these places 'when the need arose'.<sup>24</sup> The Ladies Rest Room Committee proceeded to gain support for the planned Rooms from the community, including the local health officer. By 1927 the Committee had raised £450 and decided to purchase their own land and build a new brick building. A block of land became available on Scott Street with a twenty-year lease, and the committee decided on this site. The Borung Shire subleased this land which was eventually bought outright by the committee in 1947.

On 2 March 1928, tenders were called, and builders Andrew Taylor and Sons was awarded the contract. On 10 August 1928 the Ladies Rest Rooms was officially opened. The front room comprised an office and a cloakroom, the large interior room had an open fire. There was a mother's room with fireplace, sink and hand basin, and the three toilet cubicles at the rear had washbasins and mirrors. The final cost of the facility was £700 pounds, raised from communities across the district. It should be noted a town sewerage system was installed in Warracknabeal in 1939, so it is likely that the original toilets involved the collection of 'night soil'.<sup>25</sup>

The Rest Rooms were membership based. Women paid an annual fee and were given a badge with the letters 'WDRR' (Warracknabeal and District Rest Rooms) which enabled entry. News of this fine purpose-built facility spread across regional Victoria.<sup>26</sup> In 1930 a bound visitors book was placed in the rooms, a tradition which continues to this day. In 1931 a caretaker was appointed to clean the rooms and open them each day, and in 1932 a verandah was added to the front of the building. During the 1930s, the committee met with the Shire council to discuss the use of the restrooms as a baby health centre and pram hire service commenced. A framed list of rules was placed near the front door: no drinking, no smoking, and no boys over the age of six. During the 1930s, there were between 46 and 52 members. Numbers increased during the war years.

<sup>20</sup> 'Cobden Rest Rooms', *Camperdown Chronicle*, 1 May 1928, p.1.

<sup>21</sup> 'Women's Rest Room', *Ouyen Mail*, 17 September 1930, p.2.


<sup>22</sup> The Country Progressive Party was a splinter group from the Victorian Country Party from 1926 to 1930 when it reunited with the main party.

<sup>23</sup> Editorial, *Warracknabeal Herald*, 14 September 1926, quoted in Graeme Massey, *Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms: 1928-2018 : celebrating 90 years of service to Warracknabeal and surrounding districts*, Warracknabeal, North West Press, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Graeme Massey, *Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms*.

<sup>25</sup> 'Wimmera News', *Portland Guardian*, 26 Oct 1939, p.4.

<sup>26</sup> See *Camperdown Chronicle*, August 1928.



During the Second World War (1939-45) the rooms became an important community hub, and women raised funds for the Red Cross. In 1946 membership had reached 255, and in 1948 it peaked at 787, declining in the 1950s. In 1950, the back fence was moved an additional depth of 10 feet to take in land that was purchased in 1947. The exterior of the rooms was painted in 1956, and in 1967 the front verandah with timber posts were replaced with a modern cantilevered awning. During the 1970s late night shopping was introduced and women were rostered on to keep the rooms open longer hours. The 1970s also saw a drop in membership numbers to the mid-100s, and in 1987 a new tourist information centre and male/female toilet block opened on the vacant land to the north of the rooms.

During the 1990s, the Warracknabeal rooms started to attract media attention as one of the last remaining Women's Rest Rooms in Victoria. Not only did the place have an intact exterior, but it had been retained 'as it was' by the Committee. There were feature articles in the *Age* (24 October 1990) and the *Weekly Times* (9 March 1994). By this stage, any woman – not just members – could enter with a coin donation. In 2004 the 75th anniversary of the rooms was noted in the *Weekly Times* (19 May 2004). Its 90th anniversary in 2018 was again noted by the *Weekly Times* and celebrated in a book.<sup>27</sup> In 2023, the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms remains owned and run by a small, dedicated committee. There is still a visitors book, a coin donation box and there is no radio or television to disturb the quiet atmosphere. These days, men are allowed to enter the rooms if they have a good reason (such as changing a baby), but most are mindful that this is a rare surviving 'women's space'.

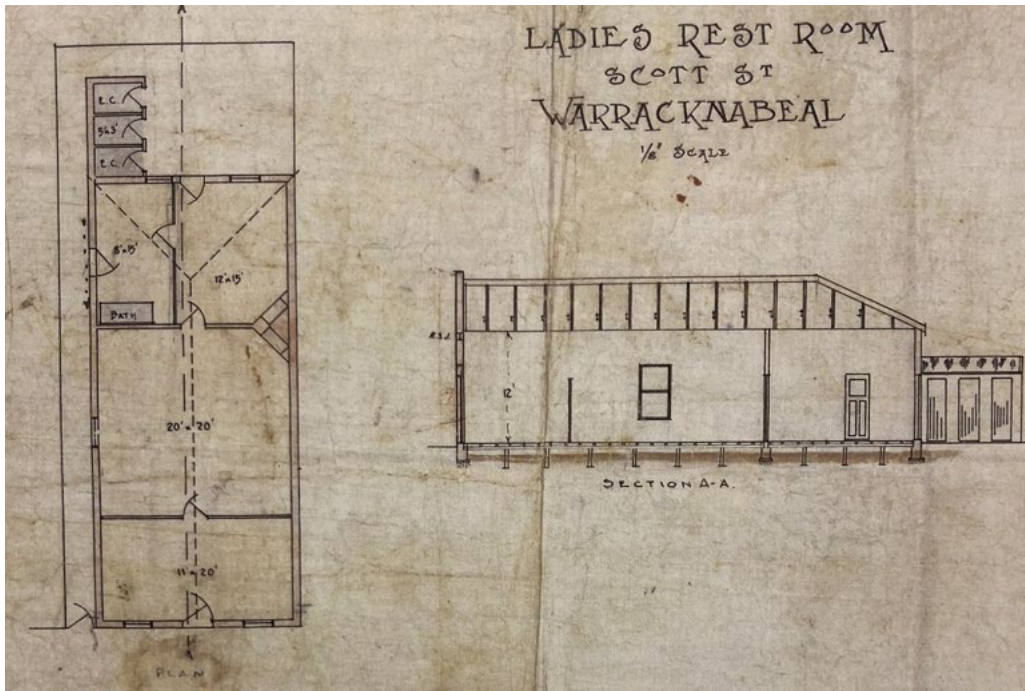
Entries in the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms visitors book suggest that 'Rest Rooms' are familiar to older visitors, but unknown to younger visitors. This is not surprising given the lack of surviving places in Victoria and other states. Public comments include:

- 'Incredible, I have never seen this type of rest room' – Jean, 21/9/2018
- 'Thank you :) First time I've seen something like this' – 6/8/2019
- 'Fantastic space, reminds me of Myers & Millers in 1950s' – 21/9/2018
- 'What a wonderful job you all do to maintain these rooms' – Sue, 22/7/2019
- 'This is such a special place to stop on our way to Adelaide' – Joan and Jennifer, 25/9/2023
- 'Have been coming here for 40 years since my first baby' – Maureen', 25/9/2023
- 'Fascinating I never knew about places like this. Thank you' – 25/7/2019
- 'This place reminds me of my youth. What a fabulous little spot' – 16/7/2019
- 'Fantastic to be able to change my baby in a clean and safe space!! Thank you' – Rae, Daisy and Granny 20/7/2022
- 'Thank you very much for letting us use this brilliant room for feeding!' – Juliet and Jude, 24/7/2022
- 'Wish our respective towns had one!!' – 10/8/2022.

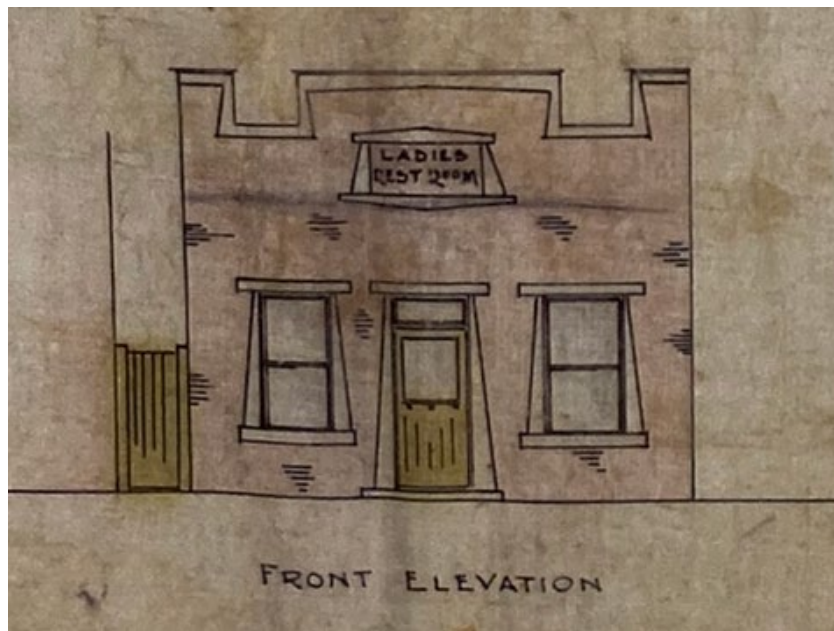
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<sup>27</sup> 'The Warracknabeal Ladies Restrooms are a 90-year tradition', *Weekly Times*, 13 September 2017; Graeme Massey, *Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms: 1928-2018 : celebrating 90 years of service to Warracknabeal and surrounding districts*, Warracknabeal, North West Press, 2018.

## Historical images



Undated plan c.1928, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, Source: Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms



Undated plan c.1928, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, Source: Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms



1967, Front façade with verandah, Source: Graeme Massey, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms



1976, Painting the side fence, Source: Graeme Massey, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms



## Selected bibliography

Andrew May, Public Toilets, eMelbourne: The City Past And Present.

Heritage Victoria, 'Flush' with history: Catering to No 1's and No 2's since 1859, 19 May 2021.

Jennifer Jones, 'Inside the CWA Rest Room', *History Australia*, 3:1, 2006, 09.1-09.12.

Graeme Massey, *Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms : 1928-2018 : celebrating 90 years of service to Warracknabeal and surrounding districts*, Warracknabeal, North West Press, 2018.

Brenda Stevens-Chambers, *The Feisty Phoenix: The Real Story of the Country Women's Association of Victoria 1928-2008. 80th Anniversary History*, Country Women's Association of Victoria, Toorak, 2008.

## Consultation and interviews

Eileen Sholl, President, and other Committee Members, Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms Committee, 7 October 2022.



## Further information

<b>Heritage Overlay</b>	The Town Centre, Scott Street is included in Shire of Yarriambiack HO68, but does not directly affect this place.
<b>Other Overlays</b>	There are no other overlays for the place and objects integral.
<b>Other Listings</b>	There are no other listings for the place and objects integral.
<b>Other Names</b>	There are no other widely known names for the place and objects integral.
<b>Date of construction/creation</b>	1928
<b>Architect/Builder/Designer/Maker</b>	Architect – Unknown Builder – Andrew Taylor and Sons
<b>Architectural style</b>	Interwar Period (c. 1919-1940)

## Traditional Owner Information

The place is located on the traditional land of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk people. Under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, the Registered Aboriginal Party for this land is the Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

## Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register

The place is not included in the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register, nor is the place within an area of Aboriginal Cultural Sensitivity.

## Integrity

The integrity of the place and objects integral is very good. The cultural heritage values of the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms can be easily read in the extant fabric.

(October 2022)

## Intactness

The intactness of the place and objects integral is very good.

(October 2022)

## Condition

The condition of the place and objects integral is very good.

(October 2022)

Note: The condition of a place or object does not influence the assessment of its cultural heritage significance. A place or object may be in very poor condition and still be of very high cultural heritage significance. Or a place or object may be in excellent condition but be of low cultural heritage significance.

## Statutory requirements under section 40

### Terms of the recommendation (section 40 (3)(a))

The Executive Director recommends that the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms is included in the VHR.

### Information to identify the place or object (section 40(3)(b))

**Number:** PROV H2445

**Category:** Registered Place and Registered Object Integral to a Registered Place.

**Name:** Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms

**Location:** 121 Scott Street Warracknabeal

**Municipality:** Yarriambiack Shire

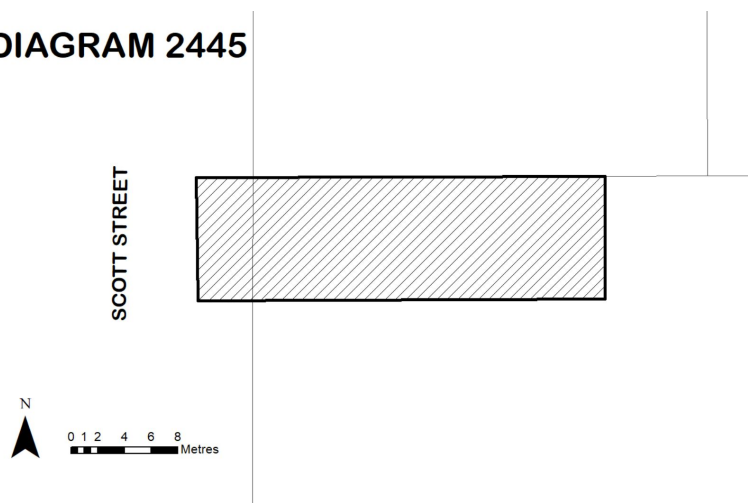
### Proposed extent of registration

The Executive Director recommends that the extent of registration for the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms be gazetted as:

All of the place shown hatched on Diagram 2445 encompassing all of Lot 1 on Title Plan 575748 , and part of the Scott Street road reserve extending from the building façade to the kerb, and all the registered objects integral to the place which are listed in the inventory held by the Executive Director, being

1. Moveable privacy screen (matching the central and rear partition walls)
2. All Welcome - Silver Coin Donation (sign)
3. Boys Admitted up to the Age of Six years (sign)
4. No Responsibility for Parcels (sign)
5. Framed life members honour roll (Tarrant to Woodward)
6. Life members honour board (commencing 1940)
7. Collection of five visitors books from 1928–2023
8. Collection of eight books with lists of members from 1947–1980
9. Three small books with Records of pram and pushcart rentals from 1941–1977
10. Book recording the Presidents and Secretaries from 1926–2005
11. Signed petition to the shire from 109 women of the district (1944).

**DIAGRAM 2445**





## Aerial Photo of the Place Showing Proposed extent of registration



Note: This aerial view provides a visual representation of the place. It is not a precise representation of the recommended extent of registration. Due to distortions associated with aerial photography some elements of the place may appear as though they are outside the extent of registration.

### Rationale for the extent of registration

The recommended extent of registration comprises all of the place, including the front projecting awning and footpath underneath it, and its objects integral.

The recommended extent of the registration is the same as the nominated extent of registration.

It should be noted that everything included in the proposed extent of registration including all of the land, all soft and hard landscape features, plantings, all buildings (exterior/s, interior/s and fixtures), and all objects integral to the understanding of the cultural heritage significance of the place listed in the written extent is proposed for inclusion in the VHR. A permit or permit exemption from Heritage Victoria is required for any works within the proposed extent of registration, apart from those identified in the categories of works or activities in this recommendation.

## Reasons for the recommendation, including an assessment of the State-level cultural heritage significance of the place and objects integral(section 40(3)(c))

Following is the Executive Director's assessment of Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms against the tests set out in *The Victorian Heritage Register Criteria and Thresholds Guidelines (2022)*. A place or object must be found by the Heritage Council to meet Step 2 of at least one criterion to meet the State level threshold for inclusion in the VHR.

### CRITERION A: Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.

#### Step 1 Test for Criterion A

No.	Test	Yes/No	Reason
A1)	Does the place/object have a clear association with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life in Victoria's cultural history?	Yes	The place and objects integral have a clear association with the Women's Rest Rooms movement of the early twentieth century which is a historical movement in Victoria's cultural history.
A2)	Is the event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life of historical importance, having made a strong or influential contribution to Victoria?	Yes	The Women's Rest Rooms movement are of historical importance having made a strong and influential contribution to Victoria. Initially developed in response to a lack of women's public toilets, baby change areas and suitable indoor places to wait for male family members conducting business, these facilities became community hubs for women and part of the social fabric of regional Victoria.
A3)	Is there evidence of the association to the event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life in Victoria's cultural history?	Yes	There is evidence of the association between the place and objects integral and the Women's Rest Rooms movement. The Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms was first proposed by the Country Progressive Party Women's Section in 1926 and is still serving its original intended function.

**If A1, A2 and A3 are all satisfied, then Criterion A is likely to be relevant (but not necessarily at the State level)**

Executive Director's Response:	Yes	Criterion A is likely to be relevant.
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#### Step 2 State-level test for Criterion A

No.	Test	Yes/No	Reason
SA1)	Does the place/object allow the clear association with the event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life of historical importance to be understood better than most other places or objects in Victoria with substantially the same association?	Yes	The place and objects integral allow the association with the Women's Rest Rooms movement to be better understood than most other similar places. The Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms are as possibly the last remaining operating Women's Rest Rooms in Victoria.

**If SA1 is satisfied, then Criterion A is likely to be relevant at the State level**

Executive Director's Response:	Yes	Criterion A is likely to be relevant at the State level.
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## CRITERION B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.

### Step 1 Test for Criterion B

No.	Test	Yes/No	Reason
B1)	Does the place/object have a clear association with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life of importance in Victoria's cultural history?	Yes	The place and objects integral have a clear association with the Women's Rest Rooms movement, which is of importance in Victoria's cultural history.
B2)	Is there evidence of the association to the historical phases etc identified at B1)?	Yes	There is evidence of the association between the place and objects integral and the Women's Rest Rooms movement.
B3)	Is there evidence that place/object is rare or uncommon, <u>or</u> has rare or uncommon features?	Yes	<p>B3(i) There is evidence that the place and objects integral are rare or uncommon. The Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms are possibly the last remaining operating Women's Rest Rooms in Victoria.</p> <p>B3(ii) There is evidence that the place and objects integral has rare or uncommon features. The Warracknabeal Rooms are unusually intact and have been preserved largely 'as they were' by generations of dedicated local women of the committee since 1928. Rare features include its collection of visitors books from the 1920s onwards.</p>

**If B1, B2 AND B3 are satisfied, then Criterion B is likely to be relevant (but not necessarily at the State level)**

Executive Director's Response:	Yes	Criterion B is likely to be relevant.
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### Step 2 State-level test for Criterion B

No.	Test	Yes/No	Reason
SB1)	Is the place/object rare or uncommon, being one of a small number of places/objects remaining that demonstrates the event, phase, etc identified at B1)?	Yes	The Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms are rare or uncommon being possibly the last remaining operating facility that demonstrates the Women's Rest Rooms movement of the early twentieth century. Demonstrating high levels of intactness, its objects integral, including signage and a rare collection of visitors books from the 1920s onwards, this place is unparalleled in Victoria as an extant Women's Rest Rooms.
SB2)	Is the place/object rare or uncommon, containing unusual features, and these features are of note and these features were not widely replicated in Victoria?	No	NA
SB3)	Is the existence of the class place/object that demonstrates the historical phases at B1) endangered to the point of rarity due to threats	No	NA

and pressures on such places/objects in Victoria?

If **any one** of SB1, SB2 OR SB3 is satisfied, then Criterion B is likely to be relevant at the State level

Executive Director's Response: Yes Criterion B is likely to be relevant at the State level.

### CRITERION C: Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.

#### Step 1 Test for Criterion C

No.	Test	Yes/No	Reason
C1)	Does physical fabric and/or documentary evidence and/or associated oral history or cultural narratives relating to the place/object indicate a likelihood that the place/object contains evidence of cultural heritage significance that is not currently visible and/or well understood or available from other sources?	No	No physical, documentary, or oral history evidence exists to provide a reasonable indication that physical evidence of research potential may be present that is not currently visible and/or well understood and available from other sources.
C2)	And, from what we know of the place/object, is the physical evidence likely to be of an integrity and/or condition that it could yield information through detailed investigation?	No	The integrity and condition of the place and objects integral may be good, but it is unlikely to yield information through investigation that is not currently visible and/or well understood or available from other sources (see C1).

If **both** C1 AND C2 are satisfied, then Criterion C is likely to be relevant (but not necessarily at the State level)

Executive Director's Response: No Criterion C is not likely to be relevant.

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

### Step 1 Test for Criterion D

No.	Test	Yes/No	Reason
D1)	Is the place/object one of a class of places/objects that has a clear association with an event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life in Victoria's history?	Yes	The Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms has a clear association with the Women's Rest Rooms movement which is a historical movement in Victoria's cultural history.
D2)	Is the event, phase, period, process, function, movement, custom or way of life of historical importance, having made a strong or influential contribution to Victoria?	Yes	The Women's Rest Rooms movement developed in response to a lack of women's public toilets, baby change areas and suitable indoor places to wait for male family members conducting business. It is of strong historical importance as it created community hubs for women and was part of the social fabric of regional Victoria.
D3)	Are the principal characteristics of the class evident in the physical fabric of the place/object?	Yes	The principal characteristics of the class are evident in the physical fabric of the place and objects integral.
<b>If D1, D2 AND D3 are satisfied, then Criterion D is likely to be relevant (but not necessarily at the State level)</b>			
Executive Director's Response:		Yes	Criterion D is not likely to be relevant.

### Step 2 State-level test for Criterion D

No.	Test	Yes/No	Reason
SD1)	Is the place/object a notable (fine, influential or pivotal) example of the class in Victoria?	NA	The Executive Director is of the view that, being the last known remaining Women's Rest Rooms in Victoria, its cultural heritage significance is better assessed under <b>Criterion A (Historical Significance)</b> and <b>Criterion B (Rarity)</b> .
<b>If SD1 is satisfied, then Criterion D is likely to be relevant at the State level</b>			
Executive Director's Response:		NA	NA



## CRITERION E: Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.

### Step 1 Test for Criterion E

No.	Test	Yes/No	Reason
E1)	Does the physical fabric of the place/object clearly exhibit particular aesthetic characteristics?	Yes	The physical fabric of the place, particularly the interior, clearly exhibits aesthetic characteristics particular to the period of its design and construction.

### If E1 is satisfied, then Criterion E is likely to be relevant (but not necessarily at the State level)

Executive Director's Response:	Yes	Criterion E is likely to be relevant.
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### Step 2 State-level test for Criterion E

No.	Test	Yes/No	Reason
SE1)	Are the aesthetic characteristics 'beyond the ordinary' or are outstanding as demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence from within the relevant discipline (architecture, art, design or equivalent); and/or</li> <li>Critical recognition of the aesthetic characteristics of the place/object within a relevant art, design, architectural or related discipline within Victoria; and/or</li> <li>Wide public acknowledgement of exceptional aesthetic qualities of the place/object in Victoria expressed in publications, print or digital media, painting, sculpture, songs, poetry, literature, or other media?</li> </ul>	No	There is no evidence that the aesthetic characteristics at the place and objects integral are 'beyond the ordinary' or are outstanding.

### If SE1 is satisfied, then Criterion E is likely to be relevant at the State level

Executive Director's Response:	No	Criterion E is not likely to be relevant at the State level.
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## CRITERION F: Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.

### Step 1 Test for Criterion F

No.	Test	Yes/No	Reason
F1)	Does the place/object contain physical evidence that clearly demonstrates creative or technical achievement for the time in which it was created?	No	<p>The place and objects integral do not contain physical evidence that clearly demonstrates creative or technical achievement for the time in which they were created.</p> <p>There are no elements that demonstrate technical achievement (for example engineering or scientific) or creative achievement beyond what was typical for the time in which it was designed and constructed.</p>



<b>F2)</b>	Does the physical evidence demonstrate a high degree of integrity?	Yes	The physical evidence at the place and objects integral demonstrates a high degree of integrity.
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If **both** F1 and F2 are satisfied, then Criterion F is likely to be relevant (but not necessarily at the State level)

Executive Director's Response:	No	Criterion F is not likely to be relevant.
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### **CRITERION G: Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons**

#### Step 1 Test for Criterion G

No.	Test	Yes/No	Reason
<b>G1)</b>	Does the place/object demonstrate social value to a community or cultural group in the present day in the context of its cultural heritage significance? Evidence must be provided for all three facets of social value listed here:		
i)	Existence of a community or cultural group; <u>and</u>	Yes	There is evidence that the place has social value in the present day to the Warracknabeal community, particularly the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms Committee and women of the district.
ii)	Existence of a strong attachment of a community or cultural group to the place or object; <u>and</u>	Yes	There is evidence of a strong attachment of the Warracknabeal community, particularly local women, to the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms. This is evidenced by the dedication of the local committee which owns and runs the rest rooms, and the large number of women who have signed the visitors books over generations.
iii)	Existence of a time depth to that attachment.	Yes	There is evidence of the attachment to the idea of this place, dating to 1926, prior to the construction of the building. In September 1926 a committee was formed to establish the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, which opened in 1928. In 2023, the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms remains owned and run by a small, dedicated committee

If **all facets** of G1 are satisfied, then Criterion G is likely to be relevant (but not necessarily at the State level)

Executive Director's Response:	Yes	Criterion G is likely to be relevant.
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## Step 2 State-level test for Criterion G

No.	Test	Yes/No	Reason
<b>SG1)</b>	Is there evidence that the social value resonates across the broader Victorian community as part of a story that contributes to Victoria's identity?	No	<p>SG1(i) The social value of the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms is part of a story in Victoria that contributes to Victoria's identity. The Women's Rest Room Movement is part of the story of regional Victoria in the twentieth century and the participation of women in public life.</p> <p>SG1(ii) There is no evidence that the social value of the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms to the Warracknabeal community resonates across the broader Victorian community. Although a much-valued community asset, and of interest to visitors, the social value of the place is largely local.</p>

**If all facets of SG1 are satisfied, then Criterion G is likely to be relevant at the State level**

Executive Director's Response:	No	Criterion G is not likely to be relevant at the State level.
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## CRITERION H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

### Step 1 Test for Criterion H

No.	Test	Yes/No	Reason
<b>H1)</b>	Does the place/object have a direct association with a person, or group of persons who has made a strong or influential contribution in their field of endeavour?	Yes	<p>H1(i) There is a direct association between Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms and the 1) Country Progressive Party Women's Section, and the 2) Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms Committee.</p> <p>H1(ii) The Country Progressive Party Women's Section and Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms Committee has made a strong or influential contribution in their field of responding to the welfare of rural women.</p>
<b>H2)</b>	Is there evidence of the association between the place/object and the person(s)?	Yes	There is evidence of the association between the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms and the Country Progressive Party Women's Section and Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms Committee.
<b>H3)</b>	Does the association relate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• directly to achievements of the person(s); <u>and</u></li> <li>• to an enduring and/or close interaction between the person(s) and the place/object?</li> </ul>	Yes	H3(ii) The association relates to a close and enduring interaction between the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms Committee and the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms. The Committee still owns and manages the Rest Rooms in 2023.

**If all facets of H1, H2 AND H3 are satisfied, then Criterion H is likely to be relevant (but not necessarily at the State level)**

Executive Director's Response:	Yes	Criterion H is likely to be relevant.
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## Step 2 State-level test for Criterion H

No.	Test	Yes/No	Reason
SH1)	Are the life or works of the person/persons important to Victoria's history?	No	<p>The Country Progressive Party was an offshoot of the Victorian Country Party from 1926 to 1930. Its Women's Section was involved in organising activities related to the welfare of rural women. Although important in regional Victoria for 4 years, the 1) the life or works of the Country Progressive Party Women's Section cannot be said to be of importance in its own right to Victoria's broader history.</p> <p>The life or works of the 2) Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms Committee are of strong local importance. However, their influence is limited to the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms. The Committee's importance to Victoria's history is therefore limited.</p>
SH2)	Does this place/object allow the association between the person or group of persons and their importance in Victoria's history to be readily appreciated better than most other places or objects in Victoria?	Yes	<p>The place does allow the association between Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms Committee and their importance to be readily appreciated more than most other places or objects in Victoria. It is the sole Women's Rest Room owned and operated by the Committee.</p>

If SH1 and SH2 are satisfied, then Criterion H is likely to be relevant at the State level

**Executive Director's Response:** No Criterion H is not likely to be relevant at the State level.

# Objects Integral

## Definition

The definition of an 'object' can be found in the Heritage Council's *Policy: Objects Integral to a Registered Place*. It should be noted that fixtures (such as window frames or decorative masonry) automatically form part of the registered place and are therefore protected under the Act.

## Background

The objects integral located at the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms are original and early elements that demonstrate the history of the place.

## Description of objects integral

The objects integral located at the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms are:

1. Moveable privacy screen (matching the central and rear partition walls)
2. All Welcome - Silver Coin Donation (sign)
3. Boys Admitted up to the Age of Six years (sign)
4. No Responsibility for Parcels (sign)
5. Framed life members honour roll (Tarrant to Woodward)
6. Life members honour board (commencing 1940)
7. Collection of five visitors books from 1928–2023
8. Collection of eight books with lists of members from 1947–1980
9. Three small books with Records of pram and pushcart rentals from 1941–1977
10. Book recording the Presidents and Secretaries from 1926–2005
11. Signed petition to the shire from 109 women of the district (1944).

## Tests for the Inclusion of Objects Integral

The Heritage Council's *Policy: Objects Integral to a Registered Place* notes that for the purposes of the Act, an object will be considered integral to a place if it satisfied the following tests:

No.	Test	Yes/No	Reason
1.	Does the object/s form a key part of that place, being a component in its design, operation or use that contributes importantly to a richer and more complete understanding of its historical, cultural, technical, aesthetic and/or social meaning at a State level?	Yes	The objects integral are either original to the place or were installed or in use in its early years of operation. They contribute to a deeper understanding of the purpose and function of the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, the organisation, its ethos and the community that formed around it. The State-level significance of the place is greatly enriched by the presence of these objects.
2.	Can the contribution be substantiated through physical, documentary or oral evidence?	Yes	The contribution of the objects to a more complete understanding of the place can be substantiated by photographs, written documents and oral testimony of present-day community members.

## Executive Director's Response

The objects can be considered integral to the place

## Comparisons

There are no Women's Rest Rooms currently in the VHR. The Executive Director notes that Myer Melbourne (VHR H2100) once had a large Ladies Rest Room to accommodate women who shopped in town, but this is no longer extant.

The following place types were selected as comparators to the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms:

- Women-Only Places (in the VHR)
- Public Toilets for Women (in the VHR)
- CWA Rest Rooms (in Heritage Overlays)
- CWA Rest Rooms (not in Heritage Overlays)
- CWA Rooms

### Women-Only Places (in the VHR)

#### WOMEN'S DRESSING PAVILION

##### OLD POPLAR ROAD PARKVILLE, MELBOURNE CITY VHR H1585

The Women's Dressing Pavilion (1937) is historically significant as one of the first sporting facilities designed in Victoria for the use of women. It demonstrates the recognition in the first half of the twentieth century of women's ability and right to participate in competitive sport. The provision of such facilities was instrumental in the development of women's athletics in Australia.



*Women's Dressing Pavilion, Poplar Oval*

#### LYCEUM CLUB

##### 2-18 RIDGWAY PLACE MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

##### VHR H2417

The Lyceum Club (1957 onwards) is historically significant as the clubrooms of the largest private members club for women in Victoria. Since its formation as an organisation in 1912, this women's-only organisation has had a pioneering role in furthering the status of university educated women within male dominated professional spheres. Located near the 'establishment end' of Collins Street, the Lyceum's construction of its own purpose-built clubrooms in a modern and progressive style, catered to a growing membership after World War II. The building is rare in Victoria, and Australia, as a building designed for and by women, starting with the original 1957 Modernist design by Ellison Harvie. This tradition of continuous design input by women on the one project over decades, has few precedents.



*The Lyceum Club*

## Public Toilets for Women (in the VHR)

### UNDERGROUND PUBLIC TOILETS

#### RUSSELL STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

##### VHR H2108

The Russell Street Underground Public Toilets (1902) included the first public toilet for women in Victoria. In addition to this, it is the state's first underground public toilet in Victoria; the state's oldest extant public toilet, and Australia's oldest known surviving public toilet. It has historical significance for its association with issues of gender equality and with the political and social agenda of the first-wave feminists in Victoria. In 1994, this facility and closed only part of the above ground structure remains.



*Underground Public Toilets, Russell Street*

### UNDERGROUND PUBLIC TOILETS

#### ELIZABETH STREET MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE CITY

##### VHR H2111

This was the second underground public toilet for women in Victoria, and the third for men. It is historically significant for its association with the activities of the first-wave feminists. It demonstrates the early twentieth century era of sanitary, technological and social reform, and changing attitudes to public decency. It is associated with a major engineering achievement, the development of Melbourne's sewerage system, and the advances in approaches to public health. The place is of architectural significance as an early example of an unusual building type.



*Underground Public Toilets, Elizabeth Street*

## CWA Women's Rest Rooms (in Heritage Overlays)

### CWA REST ROOMS

#### MAIN STREET, DERRINALLUM, CORANGAMITE SHIRE

##### Contributory building in HO230 Derrinallum commercial Precinct

This small red clinker brick building (1930s-40s?) is located on the median strip of Main Street. It has an upper cream brick band below the eaves, brick corbelling to the eaves and a gable roof clad in terracotta tiles.

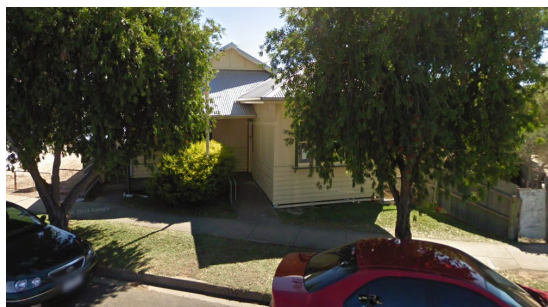


### CWA REST ROOMS

#### 48 VICTORIA STREET, NHILL, HINDMARSH SHIRE

##### No HO

The CWA Rest Rooms in Nhill were opened in 1938. The building remains and appears to be a private residence.



## CWA Women's Rest Rooms (not in Heritage Overlays)

### CWA REST ROOMS

#### 3 TOWONG ROAD, CORRYONG, TOWONG SHIRE

##### No HO

This building appears to have been constructed in the early 1950s (with planning from 1947) and replaced earlier CWA Rest Rooms. This property was sold in 2015.



### CWA REST ROOMS

#### 225 BROADWAY WYCHEPROOF, BULOKE SHIRE

##### No HO

In 1952 this interwar school building was relocated to this site as a CWA Rest Room. It was sold in 2005 and again in 2018.



## CWA Rooms

### CWA ROOMS

164 HENTY STREET, CASTERTON, GLENELG SHIRE

HO188

This appears to be a CWA Club Room, rather than a Rest Room. The house was built in the 1880s and purchased in 1964 by the CWA with an interest free loan. The property sold in 2018, when this photo was taken.



### CWA ROOMS

21 HOVELL STREET, YARRAWONGA, MOIRA SHIRE

No HO

This appears to be a CWA Club Room, rather than a Rest Room. It is unclear whether it was formerly a CWA Rest Room. It remains a community hub for women in the area.



## Summary of Comparisons

The above comparisons highlight the rarity and intactness of the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms. Research reveals that they are perhaps the only Women's Rest Rooms still operational in Victoria today. They retain an unusually high level of intactness and integrity to allow the historical movement to be clearly read through the place and objects integral. The Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms is unusual as a surviving women's-only space. Even the once famous Myer Ladies Lounge in the Melbourne CBD is no longer extant. The maintenance of the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms 'by women and for women' from the 1920s to today by generations of women is historically significant and rare in the State of Victoria. It has few comparators in a class which once numbered over an estimated 200. Its collection, an integral part of the place, is also thought to be unparalleled in its capacity to demonstrate the operation of a Women's Rest Rooms facility over decades.



## Summary of cultural heritage significance (section 40(4)(a))

The Executive Director recommends that the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms be included in the VHR in the category of Registered Place and Registered Object Integral to a Registered Place.

### Statement of significance

#### What is significant?

The Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms, a single storey brick building constructed in 1928 by Andrew Taylor and Sons and the following objects integral:

1. Moveable privacy screen (matching the central and rear partition walls)
2. All Welcome - Silver Coin Donation (sign)
3. Boys Admitted up to the Age of Six years (sign)
4. No Responsibility for Parcels (sign)
5. Framed life members honour roll (Tarrant to Woodward)
6. Life members honour board (commencing 1940)
7. Collection of five visitors books from 1928–2023
8. Collection of eight books with lists of members from 1947–1980
9. Three small books with Records of pram and pushcart rentals from 1941–1977
10. Book recording the Presidents and Secretaries from 1926–2005
11. Signed petition to the shire from 109 women of the district (1944)

#### How is it significant?

The Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms is of historical 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.

#### Why is it significant?

The Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms are historically significant for their capacity to demonstrate the Women's Rest Rooms movement of the early twentieth century. From the early 1920s, organisations such as the Country Women's Association (CWA) and Victorian Farmer's Union (VFU) established 'Rest Rooms' in rural towns across Victoria. Initially developed in response to a lack of women's public toilets, baby change areas and suitable indoor places to wait for male family members conducting business, these facilities became community hubs for women and part of the social fabric of regional Victoria. The Women's Rest Rooms movement was an important phase in Victoria's history which has all but disappeared. The Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms was first proposed by the Country Progressive Party Women's Section in 1926 and opened in 1928. The building survives to this day (2023) and is still serving its original intended function. It is a much loved place for generations of women in the Wimmera, and one of the few remaining Women's Rest Rooms still in use in Victoria and Australia. [Criterion A]

The Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms are historically significant for their rarity as possibly the last remaining operating Women's Rest Rooms in Victoria. From the 1920s over an estimated 200 were established in rural towns, but the popularity of the facilities declined from the 1970s. Warracknabeal Rooms are unusually intact and have been preserved largely 'as they were' by generations of dedicated local women of the committee since 1928. An integral part of the place, its collection is rare and includes objects include an early 'Boys Admitted up to the Age of Six Years' sign, records of pram and pushcart rentals, and a collection of visitors books from the 1920s onwards documenting women's experiences of the place over generations. The place and its collection are unparalleled in Victoria. [Criterion B]

# Recommended permit exemptions under section 38

## Introduction

A heritage permit is required for all works and activities undertaken in relation to VHR places and objects. Certain works and activities are exempt from a heritage permit, if the proposed works will not harm the cultural heritage significance of the heritage place or object.

## Permit Policy

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

## Permit Exemptions

### General Permit Exemptions

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the VHR. General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the *Heritage Act 2017*.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#)

### Specific Permit Exemptions

The works and activities below are not considered to cause harm to the cultural heritage significance of the Warracknabeal Ladies Rest Rooms subject to the guidelines and conditions which follow:

#### Exempt works and activities

##### *Kitchen area*

- Works to maintain or upgrade the kitchen area including like with like repair of kitchen sink unit, splash-back tiles, hot water unit, their removal and replacement where the scale, colour and form remain unchanged.

##### *Rear storage room*

- Removal and like for like repair and replacement of the existing towel dispenser.

##### *Toilet block*

- Works to maintain or upgrade the three existing toilets cubicles (interior and exterior) including removal and like for like repair and replacement of toilets, toilet roll holders, locks, hand towel dispensers, sinks and disability rails. This does not include painting the doors other than in the same colour, finish and product type.
- Removal and like for like repair and replacement of the roof of the toilet block.

##### *Rear outdoor area*

- Removal and like for like repair and replacement of existing hard landscaping.
- Removal and like for like repair and replacement of the lightweight shelter roof outside the back door.
- Removal and like for like repair and replacement of the fences at the boundaries of the property.

##### *Small back shed*

- Removal and like for like repair of the small back shed.





## Guidelines

1. Where there is an inconsistency between permit exemptions specific to the registered place or object ('specific exemptions') established in accordance with either section 49(3) or section 92(3) of the Act and general exemptions established in accordance with section 92(1) of the Act specific exemptions will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.
2. *In specific exemptions, words have the same meaning as in the Act, unless otherwise indicated. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and the Act, the Act will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.*
3. Nothing in specific exemptions obviates the responsibility of a proponent to obtain the consent of the owner of the registered place or object, or if the registered place or object is situated on Crown Land the land manager as defined in the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*, prior to undertaking works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions.
4. If a Cultural Heritage Management Plan in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* is required for works covered by specific exemptions, specific exemptions will apply only if the Cultural Heritage Management Plan has been approved prior to works or activities commencing. Where there is an inconsistency between specific exemptions and a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the relevant works and activities, Heritage Victoria must be contacted for advice on the appropriate approval pathway.
5. Specific exemptions do not constitute approvals, authorisations or exemptions under any other legislation, Local Government, State Government or Commonwealth Government requirements, including but not limited to the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth). Nothing in this declaration exempts owners or their agents from the responsibility to obtain relevant planning, building or environmental approvals from the responsible authority where applicable.
6. Care should be taken when working with heritage buildings and objects, as historic fabric may contain dangerous and poisonous materials (for example lead paint and asbestos). Appropriate personal protective equipment should be worn at all times. If you are unsure, seek advice from a qualified heritage architect, heritage consultant or local Council heritage advisor.
7. The presence of unsafe materials (for example asbestos, lead paint etc) at a registered place or object does not automatically exempt remedial works or activities in accordance with this category. Approvals under Part 5 of the Act must be obtained to undertake works or activities that are not expressly exempted by the below specific exemptions.
8. All works should be informed by a Conservation Management Plan prepared for the place or object. The Executive Director is not bound by any Conservation Management Plan, and permits still must be obtained for works suggested in any Conservation Management Plan.

## Conditions

1. All works or activities permitted under specific exemptions must be planned and carried out in a manner which prevents harm to the registered place or object. Harm includes moving, removing or damaging any part of the registered place or object that contributes to its cultural heritage significance.
2. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions original or previously hidden or inaccessible details of the registered place are revealed relating to its cultural heritage significance, including but not limited to historical archaeological remains, such as features, deposits or artefacts, then works must cease and Heritage Victoria notified as soon as possible.
3. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any Aboriginal cultural heritage is discovered or exposed at any time, all works must cease and the Secretary (as defined in the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*) must be contacted immediately to ascertain requirements under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.
4. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any munitions or other potentially explosive artefacts are discovered, Victoria Police is to be immediately alerted and the site is to be immediately cleared of all personnel.
5. If during the carrying out of works or activities in accordance with specific exemptions any suspected human remains are found the works or activities must cease. The remains must be left in place and protected from harm or damage. Victoria Police and the State Coroner's Office must be notified immediately. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that the remains are Aboriginal, the State Emergency Control Centre must be immediately notified on 1300 888 544, and, as required under s.17(3)(b) of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, all details about the location and nature of the human remains must be provided to the Secretary (as defined in the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*).

## Appendix 1

### Heritage Council determination (section 41)

The Heritage Council is an independent statutory body that will make a determination on this recommendation under section 49 of the Act. It will consider the recommendation after a period of 60 days from the date the notice of recommendation is published on its website under section 41.

### Making a submission to the Heritage Council (section 44)

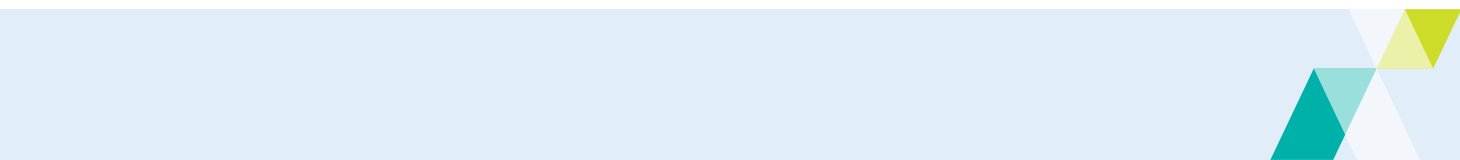
Within the period of 60 days, any person or body with a real and substantial interest in the place or object may make a submission to the Heritage Council regarding the recommendation and request a hearing in relation to that submission. Information about making a submission and submission forms are available on the Heritage Council's website.

### Consideration of submissions to the Heritage Council (section 46)

- (1) The Heritage Council must consider—
  - (a) any written submission made to it under section 44; and
  - (b) any further information provided to the Heritage Council in response to a request under section 45.
- (2) The Heritage Council must conduct a hearing in relation to a submission if—
  - (a) the submission includes a request for a hearing before the Heritage Council; and
  - (b) the submission is made by a person or body with a real or substantial interest in the place or object that is the subject of the submission.
- (3) Despite subsection (2), the Heritage Council may conduct a hearing in relation to a submission in any other circumstances the Heritage Council considers appropriate.

### Determinations of the Heritage Council (section 49)

- (1) After considering a recommendation that a place or object should or should not be included in the Heritage Register and any submissions in respect of the recommendation and conducting any hearing into the submissions, the Heritage Council may—
  - (a) determine that the place or part of the place, or object, is of State-level cultural heritage significance and is to be included in the Heritage Register; or
  - (b) determine that the place or part of the place, or object, is not of State-level cultural heritage significance and is not to be included in the Heritage Register; or
  - (c) in the case of a recommendation in respect of a place, determine that the place is not to be included in the Heritage Register but—
    - (i) refer the recommendation and any submissions to the relevant planning authority for consideration for an amendment to a planning scheme; or
    - (ii) determine that it is more appropriate for steps to be taken under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 or by any other means to protect or conserve the place; or
  - (d) in the case of a recommendation in respect of additional land which has been nominated to be included in the Heritage Register as part of a registered place in accordance with section 32, determine that the land be included in the Heritage Register if—
    - (i) the State-level cultural heritage significance of the place would be substantially less if the land or any part of the land which is or has been used in conjunction with the place were developed; or
    - (ii) the land surrounding the place is important to the protection or conservation of the place or contributes to the understanding of the place; or



- (e) determine that the object is integral to understanding the cultural heritage significance of a registered place or a place the Heritage Council has determined to be included in the Heritage Register.
- (2) The Heritage Council must make a determination under subsection (1)—
  - (a) within 40 days after the date on which written submissions may be made under section 44; or
  - (b) if any hearing is conducted into the written submissions, within 90 days after the completion of the hearing.
- (3) A determination that a place or part of a place, or object, should be included in the Heritage Register may include categories of works or activities which may be carried out in relation to the place or object for which a permit under this Act is not required, if the Heritage Council considers that the works or activities would not harm the cultural heritage significance of the place or object.
- (4) If the Heritage Council determines to include a place in the Heritage Register, with the consent of the owner of the place, the Heritage Council may determine to include in the Heritage Register additional land of the owner that is ancillary to the place.
- (5) If a member of the Heritage Council makes a submission under section 44 in respect of a recommendation, the member must not take part in the consideration or determination of the Heritage Council.
- (6) The Heritage Council must notify the Executive Director of any determination under this section as soon as practicable after the determination.

## **Obligations of owners of places and objects (section 42)**

- (1) The owner of a place or object to whom a statement of recommendation has been given must advise the Executive Director in writing of—
  - (a) any works or activities that are being carried out in relation to the place or object at the time the statement is given; and
  - (b) any application for a planning permit or a building permit, or for an amendment to that permit, that has been made in relation to the place but not determined at the time the statement is given; and
  - (c) any works or activities that are proposed to be carried out in relation to the place or object at the time the statement is given.
- (2) An advice under subsection (1) must be given within 10 days after the statement of recommendation is given under section 40.
- (3) The owner of a place to whom a statement of recommendation has been given must advise the Executive Director in writing of an application, permit or amendment if, before a determination under section 49 or 52 in respect of a place—
  - (a) an application for a planning permit or a building permit or for an amendment to that permit in relation to the place is made; or
  - (b) a planning permit or building permit or an amendment to that permit in relation to the place is granted.
- (4) An advice under subsection (3) must be given within 10 days after the making of the application or the grant of the permit or amendment.
- (5) The owner of a place or object to whom a statement of recommendation has been given must advise the Executive Director in writing of the following activities or proposals if, before a determination is made under section 49 or 52 in respect of a place or object—
  - (a) any activities are carried out in relation to the place or object that could harm the place or object;
  - (b) any activities are proposed to be carried out in relation to the place or object that could harm the place or object.
- (6) An advice under subsection (5) must be given within 10 days after the owner becomes aware of the activity or the proposal, as the case requires.



- (7) If, before a determination is made under section 49 or 52 in respect of a place or object, a proposal is made to dispose of the whole or any part of the place or object, the owner of the place or object must advise the Executive Director in writing of that proposal.
- (8) An advice under subsection (7) must be given at least 10 days before entering into the contract for the disposal of the place or object.
- (9) The owner of a place or object who proposes to dispose of the whole or any part of the place or object before a determination is made under section 49 or 52 in respect of the place or object must, before entering into a contract for that disposal, give a copy of the statement of proposed contract, is to acquire the place or object or part of the place or object.

### **Owners of places and objects must comply with obligations (section 43)**

An owner of a place or object to whom section 42 applies must comply with that section.

Penalty: In the case of a natural person, 120 penalty units;

In the case of a body corporate, 240 penalty units.