



## MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE

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### Mount Alexander Shire Thematic Heritage Study Introduction & Recommendations (vol. 1)

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Background

This Thematic Heritage Study has been prepared for the Shire of Mount Alexander by RBA Architects and Conservation Consultants. It consists of two sections:

- Volume 1 – Introduction & Recommendations. This volume outlines the process by which the thematic history was prepared as well as recommending some areas for further investigation and places of potential significance.
- Volume 2 – A Thematic History of the Shire according to nine themes and concluding with a Statement of Significance.

The need for the preparation of an all-encompassing, Shire-wide thematic history had been identified as a key priority in the local *Heritage Strategy 2012-2016*.<sup>1</sup> A thematic history has previously been prepared for sections of Mount Alexander Shire, within the heritage studies of the former shires of Metcalfe and Newstead. In addition, although many places are protected by heritage overlays further assessment was needed according to the *Heritage Strategy* as follows:

### **Protecting & Managing**

There are over 1000 places in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay however these are unevenly spread across the Shire. There is a heavy concentration of places in Maldon and fewer identified places in other parts of the Shire. Many buildings in Castlemaine and Maldon are protected under precinct Heritage Overlays. There are also a large number of public buildings, private residences and trees, particularly in Maldon.<sup>2</sup>

### **Purpose of a Thematic History**

The key purpose of the Thematic History is to provide a basis for the selection and assessment of the culturally significant places, objects and events in the Shire in a broad, mostly post-contact, historical context. It is not a chronological historical account of all the events that have occurred and every institution that has existed in the Shire area, however it does relate to those examples which have contributed in a notable way to the development of the Shire.

The Thematic History identifies the key themes which are pivotal to understanding the evolution of the Shire and what distinguishes it. It is in part a study of the physical development of/change to the landscape and focuses on aspects such as settlement patterns and land uses that have been crucial to its development.

Using a thematic framework differs from traditional approaches to history as it allows a focus on key historical and cultural processes, rather than topics or a chronological treatment. It aims to identify the key human activities that have shaped our environment (Thom Blake, 1996).<sup>3</sup>

The thematic approach provides the basis for understanding places that have already been identified as having heritage significance (and are protected by a heritage overlay), as well as the types of places that could be included in the future – that is, would reflect the full range of themes identified in it. Places can include buildings, structures, landscapes, gardens, archaeological sites and precincts.

The use of themes has played a key role in broadening the identification and protection of heritage places and objects to ensure that they are an accurate reflection of a community's history. Themes can also be used to ensure comprehensiveness in the representation of places in heritage registers and objects in museum collections.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, a purpose of the Thematic History is to give a sense of the ongoing activity and the connections between themes, which is particularly relevant to the continuing cultural traditions of the Aboriginal communities represented within the Shire's boundaries.

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<sup>1</sup> Mount Alexander Shire Heritage Advisory Committee with Context P/L, *Heritage Strategy 2012-2016*, 2012, p10

<sup>2</sup> Mount Alexander Shire Heritage Advisory Committee with Context P/L, *Heritage Strategy 2012-2016*, 2012, p3

<sup>3</sup> Reproduced in *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes*, p5

<sup>4</sup> *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes*, p5

Thematic histories are meant to be concise and according to the standard brief should be less than 20,000 words. Due to the breadth and complexity of thematic material covered in the Mount Alexander Shire Thematic History the word count has been increased to over three times the standard size. Inter-relationships are drawn without too much repetition.

## 1.2 Brief

The brief required the following tasks to be undertaken

According to the brief, it was expected that research for the Thematic Environmental History would:

- collate existing documentation as appropriate for a post contact study; provide information on the location and applicable themes of places of potential cultural significance;
- provide a balance of information and discussion across all the appropriate themes applicable to Mount Alexander Shire Council; provide a context for the comparative assessment of places of cultural significance;
- provide a balance of information and discussion across all the appropriate themes applicable to Mount Alexander Shire Council; relate appropriately to the Historical Society and Heritage Advisory Committee; and
- provide a public information session and a briefing to the Heritage Advisory Committee and Council as required in consultation with the project manager.

On further discussion with Council officers, some changes to the brief were agreed upon that would include the preparation of an introductory report and large scale posters summarising the nine identified themes (to be displayed in local libraries etc.). This work was to be substituted for a more detailed survey of the potential heritage places, though some recommendations have been made in that regard (refer to section 4 of this report).

## 1.3 Study Area

The study area comprises the full extent of the Shire of Mount Alexander, which is located centrally within the State of Victoria.



Map of Mount Alexander Shire  
(Source: Land Victoria, interactive map)

## 1.4 Earlier Reports

This current study builds on earlier heritage studies that were undertaken from the late-1970s, which were among the first heritage studies commissioned in the State. These heritage studies related to townships and former municipalities, as well as mining:

- Chewton Conservation Study, Loder and Bayly, 1977
- Maldon Conservation Study, Jacobs Lewis and Vines, 1977
- City of Castlemaine Architectural & Historical Study, Perrot Lyon Mathieson, June 1979
- Metcalfe Heritage Study, Wendy Jacobs Architects and Planners, Karen Twigg Historian 1994
- Heritage Study of the Shire of Newstead, Wendy Jacobs Architects and Planners, 2004 (Revised 2012)

In addition:

- Historic mining sites in the Castlemaine/Fryers Creek Mining Divisions, David Bannear, 1993
- Historic Mining sites in the Maldon Mining Division, D. Bannear, 1993
- Historic Mining sites in the Castlemaine Mining Division 1993 , D Bannear
- Historic Mining sites in the Chewton Mining Division 1993 , D Bannear
- Trees and Gardens from the Goldmining Era - A Study of the Maldon Landscape, Royal Botanical Gardens, 1981

## 1.5 Study Team

The consultant team for this project was comprised primarily of Anthony Hemingway (architectural historian), Erin Williams (heritage consultant) and Roger Beeston (director, architect) of RBA Architects + Conservation Consultants.

## 1.6 Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful for the assistance provided by the following individuals and organisations.

- Mount Alexander Staff – Sarah Austin, Daniel Borton, Christine Halstead, Rachael Haynes, Sera-Jane Peters, Phillip Schier
- The Mount Alexander Thematic History Reference Group
- Castlemaine Historical Society Inc.
- Harcourt Valley Heritage & Tourist Centre Inc.
- Maldon Museum and Archives Association Inc.
- Newstead & District Historical Society
- Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation

## 2 METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 General

The Thematic History was prepared in accordance with the following relevant documents:

- *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes*, Heritage Victoria, 2010
- Model Consultants Brief for Heritage Studies (Appendix 4 - Guidelines for Thematic Environmental Histories), Heritage Victoria, 2010
- The *Burra Charter 2013 (The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013)*. The terminology used in the Thematic History is consistent with the Burra Charter.

The preparation of the Thematic History has included the following:

- A broad survey of the Shire,
- Historical research and analysis,
- Consultation.

### 2.2 Survey Work

A few days were spent surveying the Shire in order to gain a general impression of the range of heritage places that exist and to record examples for reference and use as illustrations in the Thematic History document.

All major and minor towns were visited, as well as most former settlement areas/localities. Within townships, many streets were inspected, while the main roads were used to travel between townships. The Heritage Overlay Maps and Schedule from the *Mount Alexander Planning Scheme* were used as a guide, and particular effort was made to visit places listed on the schedule.

### 2.3 Research

Given the prescribed general and concise nature of a thematic history, research inevitably relied mainly upon secondary sources. Sources can be generally grouped under the following categories:

- The existing heritage studies relevant to the Shire,
- Published local histories,
- Brochures and papers compiled by local historians and historical groups,
- Council publications,
- Typological studies,
- Online databases (particularly the Victorian Heritage Database) and websites.

Primary sources were typically only used when information was not available in secondary sources, or to clarify information provided in a secondary source. The primary sources referred to included various newspapers, the Victoria Government Gazette, township and parish plans, historical photographs, and maps.

There were several constraints with regards to research, including:

- The lack of citations/documentation for many places of local significance. This was a constraint especially in relation to agricultural outbuildings, which are often hidden from view and difficult to identify in terms of their purpose, and as a result limited information on this building type could be provided.
- Some parts of the Shire, and some themes, were more comprehensively documented by local histories than others. Areas and topics lacking in information included the north-west part of the Shire (e.g. Baringhup), short-lived settlements (e.g. those during the gold rush), and agriculture.
- With regards to the available local histories, many were written with varying approaches (as is often the case) and some lacked referencing, and therefore it was necessary to be circumspect about their usage.

## 2.4 Consultation

The Thematic History has been developed through a consultative approach involving community members and groups, as well as Council staff. In April 2014 a public drop-in session was held to inform interested community members on the thematic history process - more than twenty people attended. Posters were displayed which provided explanatory information and outlined the proposed themes for the Thematic History, and the consultants and Council staff were available to answer questions and record information relating to specific themes.

### Project Reference Group

A Project Reference Group, comprising a group of representatives from stakeholder groups selected by invitation, was formed to provide advice and input at key stages of the project. The reference group reviewed two drafts of the Thematic History. The group provided feedback on the first draft at a meeting in July 2014 and via subsequent written comments. The second draft was released to the reference group in March 2015 and they provided further written feedback. All of the feedback and comments provided by the reference group were taken into consideration and addressed by the consultants and Council's project staff.

The reference group was comprised of the following organisations and their representatives:

- Castlemaine Historical Society Inc. - Alleyne Hockley
- Chewton Domain Society - Pat Healy & Alan Dry
- Harcourt Valley & Heritage Tourist Centre Inc. - George Milford
- Maldon Museum & Archives Association Inc. - Jan Warracke, also Mount Alexander Heritage Advisory Committee
- Newstead & District Historical Society - Derek Reid, also Mount Alexander Heritage Advisory Committee

### Council

Several Council staff members were involved in overseeing the Thematic History, and provided direction and specific information, in particular Daniel Borton (Senior Strategic Planner) and Sera-Jane Peters (Heritage Officer).

### Aboriginal Corporations

The Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation and the Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation were provided with copies of the draft Thematic History for comment. Feedback was subsequently provided by the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, with additional information from Vic Say.

## 3 THE THEMES

### 3.1 The Framework

The themes employed in the Mount Alexander Shire Thematic History followed the structure outlined in the *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes*. The preparation of this framework was overseen and endorsed by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council and the Heritage Council of Victoria. This framework superseded the more general *Australian Historic Themes*, which had been prepared in 2001 for the Australian Heritage Commission (forerunner to the Australian Heritage Council).

The structure outlined in the *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes* is a '... tool to assist in understanding the many complex layers of Victoria's history and how each of us is linked into past events and eras.' A structure of nine principal themes are defined in the Framework with subthemes addressing natural, historical and Aboriginal cultural heritage. The themes are designed to be inclusive and allow for both positive and negative interpretations.

The themes are not arranged in a hierarchy or chronological order. They are designed to be applied and interlinked regardless of place or period. They can be used flexibly for different periods, places and regions. This approach suggests a lively and dynamic history, giving a sense of ongoing activities over time rather than a static and vanished past.<sup>5</sup>

The framework allows for the adaption of the thematic structure depending upon the particular development in each municipality however as all nine themes were relevant to the Mount Alexander Shire, that is, they have shaped its post-contact development, this format was adopted with some variation.

### 3.2 Overview of the Themes

A nine themed structure was adopted similar to those outlined in *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes*. Whilst similar headings were employed in some instances, some were simplified, and others were adapted to the particular circumstances evident with the Mount Alexander Shire. The latter is most apparent in relation to themes four and five (refer to the following table).

	Themes employed in this Study	Themes outlined in the <i>Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes</i>	Comment
1	Living with the Environment	Shaping the Environment	This theme examines how the landscape, especially its four distinct geological zones, have defined particular land uses and so shaped development of the Shire. It also relates to the appreciation and protection of the environment.
2	Inhabiting the Land	Peopling Victoria's places and landscapes	This theme relates to the First Australians who inhabited the area, the exploration and colonisation of the area by Europeans, and the subsequent phases of migration and further settlement.
3	Transport and Communication	Connecting Victorians by transport and communications	This theme explores the place of the Shire within Victoria's transport and communication networks. Being centrally located within the State, it has played a prominent role in relation to both.
4	Agriculture & Utilising Natural Resources	Transforming and managing land and natural resources	This theme explores how agricultural uses of the land, rearing livestock and cropping, and the utilisation of its natural resources (including the pivotal role of gold mining), have transformed the landscape.

<sup>5</sup> *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes*, p5

	<b>Themes employed in this Study</b>	<b>Themes outlined in the Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes</b>	<b>Comment</b>
5	Industry & Business	Building Victoria's industries and workforce	This theme examines how industry and business developed in the Shire. It includes manufacturing, processing, retail, entertainment, banking and tourism.
6	Building Townships	Building towns, cities and garden state	This theme focuses on the development of townships in the Shire and the characteristics that distinguish them from each other. They are categorised into types including gold rush, agricultural, and former settlements.
7	Governing	Governing Victorians	This theme focuses on the role of the State and local Governments in shaping the life of people in the Shire. In addition, it explores the role the Shire has played in regards to political activism and the heritage/conservation movement in Victoria.
8	Community Life	Building community life	This theme relates to the ways community life has been established/developed in the Shire. It includes religious, educational, and health institutions, public facilities, as well as societies and commemorative sites.
9	Cultural Life	Shaping cultural and creative life	This theme explores cultural expression in its many facets, namely through arts, sport, recreation and events. It highlights how the Shire has contributed in several instances to the broader cultural life of Victoria.

## 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 Introduction

This section outlines the recommendations for further work in regards to assessment of potential heritage places. These mainly derive from gaps evident after the completion of the Thematic History and as a result of the limited survey work. As previously indicated, the preparation of a thematic history is the basis for ensuing a broad range of heritage places and objects sites are identified and '... provides a broader context to understand and appreciate their significance.'<sup>6</sup>

### 4.2 Existing Schedule to the Heritage Overlay

#### Overview

Currently there are about 1250 places currently listed on the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme (at clause 43.01), about 10% of which are also included on the Victorian Heritage Register. Most places are individual places, including many individual trees in Maldon.

There are also some precincts, primarily in the centre of the major towns – Campbells Creek, Castlemaine, Fryerstown, Guildford, Maldon and Newstead. In addition, there are two large precincts related to gold mining sites:

- Maldon Historic Reserve (HO443), which covers land in the township and its vicinity,
- Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park (HO998), which covers an extensive area from Castlemaine (north) to Glenluce (south).

Many sites within the Shire have also been identified as having archaeological potential. About 900 sites are included in the Heritage Inventory, many are gold related and included within the aforementioned precincts HO443 and HO998.

#### Recommendations

Recommendation	Comment
Undertake a review of the places included in the early Castlemaine and Maldon studies and prepare citations.	Currently, many places included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay, typically those places identified in the 1970s heritage studies for Castlemaine and Maldon, do not have a corresponding citation outlining their significance in keeping with contemporary practice. <sup>7</sup> Whilst there is some information included in the 1970s studies, there are no statements of significance in the Castlemaine study and they are brief in the Maldon study. Places included in the schedule in the Newstead and Metcalfe areas however typically have more detailed citations in the more recent Newstead and Metcalfe heritage studies.
Review the schedule to identify individual places (particularly farms) with additional significant or contributory elements such as outbuildings, trees/gardens, fences and drystone walls, and update the schedule accordingly.	It is observed that there are listings in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay which do not clearly identify all of the individual components that contribute to the place's significance (this shortcoming may be related to the lack of detailed citations as discussed above).

<sup>6</sup> Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes, p3

<sup>7</sup> The standard format used for preparing statements of significance accords with that adopted by Heritage Victoria and includes three sections: 'what is significant?', 'how is it significant?', and 'why is it significant?'

Recommendation	Comment
Review the schedule to identify precinct listings with additional significant or contributory components including items such as plantings, outbuildings and fences, and update the schedule accordingly.	There are listings in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay which may not identify all of the individual components that contribute to the precinct's significance.
Review the naming of sites where limited identifying detail is provided. For example, list under the original occupant's name, the type (e.g. 'Miner's Cottage'), construction materials (timber, stone etc.), or the period of construction (19 <sup>th</sup> century/Victorian, Federation period etc.).	It is noted that within some localities, Maldon in particular, many houses are generically defined as 'residence', with limited identifying detail provided in the listing in the schedule.
Identify areas where there are major gaps in the listing of heritage places, and commission gap heritage studies as required.	Examples of areas where few or no heritage places have been identified include North Castlemaine, Wesley Hill and West Castlemaine. Some fine/substantial examples of the Federation period and good examples of the Interwar period survive in North Castlemaine, while there are Post WWII examples in West Castlemaine (behind gaol) and Wesley Hill.
Investigate the north-east corner of the Shire for potential heritage places (HO maps 8 and 9).	It is also noted that currently no heritage places have been identified in the north-east corner of the Shire, though this area is one of the most sparsely populated parts of the Shire and has few buildings.

### 4.3 Further Review Work

It is evident from undertaking the thematic history and the survey work that there are some gaps in the types of places represented in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay. The following two tables outline the main themes and sub-themes that are currently under-represented. Optimally, a review would be undertaken in the future to determine what examples should be recognised and protected.

The second table outlines instances where interpretation of a place's significance may be sufficient - examples include places where there may not have been any fabric associated with the site but the place is of considerable historical significance (e.g. those relating to activism) or the earlier/relevant fabric has been lost.

In particular, there is a relative lack of 20th century places included in the Schedule, especially housing stock. This is in part due to the fact that the early heritage study for Castlemaine was limited and although much of the township of Maldon is protected by heritage overlays, the existing documentation relates primarily to the 19th century building stock.

Note that those themes which currently have a medium to high level of representation in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay have not been included in the table.

**Table 1 - Gaps in heritage place representation**

Theme	Sub-theme	Detail and/or examples
Inhabiting the Land	Selection	Especially in the north-east and north-west of the Shire
Transport & Communications	Building Roadways	Bridges - timber, composite
	Railways	Timber bridges associated with the Castlemaine to Maryborough line

Theme	Sub-theme	Detail and/or examples
	Roadways during the 20th century	Concrete road bridges Timber pedestrian bridges Garages
Agriculture & Utilising Natural Resources	Grazing & Raising Livestock	Outbuildings, shearing sheds, sheep dips, dairies
Industry & Business	Processing Primary Produce	Examples of different operations where extant
	Manufacturing	Examples of various factories where extant
Building Townships	Phases of Construction	20 <sup>th</sup> century phases of township development. Housing (and to a lesser extent, commercial buildings) from the Federation, Interwar and Post-WWII periods.  Some fine/substantial examples of the Federation period survive, when a relatively limited amount of construction seems to have occurred across the Shire, especially in North Castlemaine. Good examples of the Interwar period can also be found in North Castlemaine, while Post WWII examples are in West Castlemaine (behind gaol) and Wesley Hill.
	Supplying Amenities	Infrastructure, if extant Early wells
	Street Planting	Campbells Creek, Castlemaine
	Public Gardens & Parks	Gates and memorials
Community Life	Non-Christian religious practices	Buildings, if extant
	Educating	20 <sup>th</sup> century examples
	Health & Welfare Services	(Former) hospitals Benevolent asylum Baby health care centres
	Establishing Public Halls	20 <sup>th</sup> century examples
	Creating Community Organisations	Buildings, if extant
Cultural Life	Sport Recreation & Leisure	Both 19 <sup>th</sup> and early/mid-20 <sup>th</sup> century pavilions (e.g. bowling, croquet), clubrooms etc.

**Table 2 - Themes where interpretation may be sufficient**

Theme	Sub-theme	Detail and/or examples
Living with the Environment	Appreciating and Protecting the Natural Environment	Interpretation of sites may be sufficient
Inhabiting the Land	Exploration & Surveying	Interpretation may be sufficient
	Gold Related Migration	Interpretation may be sufficient
	Later Settlement Schemes	Interpretation may be sufficient

Theme	Sub-theme	Detail and/or examples
Transport & Communications	Establishing Transport Services	Inns & coach services - interpretation may be sufficient
	New Infrastructure and Services	Interpretation may be sufficient
Agriculture & Utilising Natural Resources	Grazing & Raising Livestock	Some types - cattle/sheep yards, etc. - interpretation may be sufficient
	Timber Resources	Interpretation may be sufficient
	Cropping & Misc. Farming	Market gardens, etc. - interpretation may be sufficient
Industry & Business	Processing Primary Produce	Interpretation where examples do not survive
	Manufacturing	Interpretation where examples do not survive
Building Townships	Supplying Amenities	Interpretation where examples do not survive
Governing	Struggling for Political Rights	Interpretation may be sufficient
Community Life	Non-Christian religious practices	Interpretation where examples do not survive
	Creating Community Organisations	Interpretation where examples do not survive
Cultural Life	Nurturing a Vibrant Arts and Cultural Community	Interpretation may be sufficient
	Fairs and shows	Interpretation may be sufficient



