



Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

INCLUSION IN THE NATIONAL HERITAGE LIST OF ABBOTSFORD CONVENT (VIC)

I, Josh Frydenberg, Minister for the Environment and Energy, having considered in relation to the place and the National Heritage values described in the Schedule of this instrument:

- (a) the Australian Heritage Council's assessment whether the place meets any of the National Heritage criteria; and
- (b) the comments given to the Council under sections 324JG and 324JH of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*; and

being satisfied that the place described in the Schedule has the National Heritage values specified in the Schedule, pursuant to section 324JJ of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, include the place and the specified National Heritage values in the National Heritage List.

Dated 25/8/2017

[signed]
Josh Frydenberg
Minister for the Environment and Energy

SCHEDULE

VICTORIA
Yarra City

NAME: Abbotsford Convent

BOUNDARY:

Approximately 14.5ha, corner of St Heliers Street and Clarke Street, Abbotsford, being an area bounded by a line commencing at the intersection of the southern alignment of the eastern road reserve boundary of Clarke Street with the northern bank of the Yarra River (approximate MGA point Zone 55 324075mE 5814033mN),

- then northerly via that alignment and the eastern road reserve boundary of Clarke Street to its intersection with the southern boundary of Land Parcel 1/PS735404 (approximate MGA point 324097mE 5814210mN),
- then easterly and northerly via the southern and eastern boundaries of Land Parcel 1/PS735404 to the intersection with MGA northing 5814243mN (approximate MGA point 324148mE 5814243mN),
- then via the following MGA points consecutively: 324146mE 5814243mN, 324147mE 5814255mN, 324138mE 5814255mN, 324138mE 5814262mN and 324134mE 5814262mN,
- then northerly directly to the intersection of the southern road reserve boundary of St Heliers Street with MGA easting 324138mE (approximate MGA point 324138mE 5814299mN),
- then south easterly via the southern road reserve boundary of St Heliers Street to its intersection with MGA easting 324285mE (approximate MGA point 324285mE 5814245mN),
- then northerly directly to the south eastern corner of Land Parcel Crown Allotment 2330/2796 (approximate MGA point 324289mE 5814259mN),
- then north easterly and north westerly via the eastern and north eastern boundaries of Crown Allotment 2330/2796 to the intersection with the southern boundary of Land Parcel Crown Allotment 2467/2796 (approximate MGA point 324303mE 5814328mN),
- then easterly and north easterly via the southern and eastern boundaries of Crown Allotment 2467/2796 and north easterly via the north eastern alignment of the eastern boundary of Crown Allotment 2467/2796 to its intersection with the south western bank of the Yarra River (approximate MGA point 324333mE 5814360mN),
- then south easterly, south westerly and north westerly via the south western, north western and northern bank of the Yarra River to the commencement point.

	Criterion	Values
(a)	the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history.	<p>The Abbotsford Convent place has outstanding historic value because of the site's strong capacity to demonstrate the course and pattern of welfare provision in Australia from the mid - nineteenth century to the mid - twentieth century.</p> <p>The history of welfare provision in Australia mirrors the course and pattern of social change in Australia. These changes inform our understanding of ourselves as Australians in the communities and broader society we live in. The development of social institutions in Australia also has a defining impact on Australian life and reflects the collective effort made by Australians to support each other in our communities and wider society.</p> <p>The significant role and influence of religious institutions in the development of Australia's welfare system is particularly evident at Abbotsford Convent. The models of care demonstrated at the Abbotsford Convent mostly reflect patterns of welfare provision developed prior to the establishment of a secular, government system of defined benefits.</p>

(a)
Abbotsford
cont.

Criterion

Values

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, secular or religious institutions were a primary way of delivering services to people facing poverty or other forms of difficulty or disadvantage. Compared with modern standards and from a contemporary perspective, conditions in nineteenth century institutions were harsh and cruel. Care institutions were also used to house Indigenous children involuntarily removed from their families by government policies.

Abbotsford Convent, established in one of the then poorest districts of Melbourne, initially offered a refuge for women, responding in part to a noticeable increase in social and community stress which was impacting on families and women in particular. An orphanage was also established. Over time the Convent expanded to include an early industrial school, a reformatory school for young offenders, a women's refuge and a catholic day school. These places were all located within the wider ecclesiastical setting made up of the Convent 'mother' house, the Chapel and the garden with its recreation and contemplative areas. These facilities were established and operated by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd Order; an order established to help women and girls facing social hardship and exclusion.

The Convent's working farm and large commercial laundry provided the Convent with an important source of revenue for its operation and institutional activities. Work in the farm and laundry formed elements of the rehabilitation, training and reform programs at the Convent. The construction of programs like these and the consequential treatment of girls and young children reflect the values of the time. In the nineteenth century women's lives were largely restricted to the home with little outside opportunities for work. Women's behaviour was also subject to strict and gendered codes of conduct. The particular needs of young children were also poorly understood. Over the course of the twentieth century practices changed from those characterised by control to a system based on children's rights. Benefits began to be provided by governments in more direct forms of assistance. By the 1960s and 1970s institutionalisation was abandoned and replaced by a community based system of service delivery.

Residential care institutions impacted on a significant number of Australians. Their experiences were acknowledged in the national Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples in 2008 and to the Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants in 2009. The harm of institutionalisation and the trauma often experienced by residents is acknowledged as being part of the heritage of this place.

Features expressing the overall national significance of the Abbotsford Convent include but are not limited to the whole Convent complex within the place boundary. All of the existing buildings and their layout prior to the Convent's closure in the 1970s are significant. The Convent gardens, courtyards and former Convent farm are also significant.

Features expressing specific aspects of the national significance of

Criterion

(a)
Abbotsford
cont.

Values

Abbotsford Convent include but are not limited to the following items:

In relation to the Convent Chapel, the Chapel's location near to the former Convent building, its function as a place of worship and the features demonstrating the management and control of girls in care are significant. Management and control measures include but are not limited to the evidence of separation of girls in the seating layout of the chapel and the separate entrances to the Chapel.

In relation to the former Convent building, features demonstrating the residential use and operation of this building as a convent and centre of care institution management are significant. The architectural style of the building reflecting its 'French order' heritage is significant. Items of particular significance in relation to the Convent building include but are not limited to the Provincial Superior's room, the Bishop's Parlour including its interior fireplace and distinctive interior room decoration, the Breakfast Parlour, the Salon with decorative frieze and other rooms reflecting the use of the building for the housing of resident novitiates and nuns (cells, dormitories, dining, recreation and work spaces) and other supportive functions including the kitchen. The significance of these additional items reside in their ability to demonstrate the function of the Convent and the living conditions and or experiences of residents in the Convent.

In relation to the remaining asylum buildings the built structures, internal rooms and outdoor spaces demonstrating the function of the asylum and the way of life and lived experiences of those resident at the Convent during the nineteenth century and early to mid-twentieth century are significant. Buildings of particular significance include but are not limited to Sacred Heart, the industrial school, the laundry (north and south), the stables, Rosina, St Mary's, St Euphrasia, Providence, Mercator and St Anne's. Items which demonstrate confinement and segregation of classes of residents like gates, window bars, the remnant original convent walls, fences and paths are significant. Places used for 'overseeing' residents and the features, like windows, which made this possible are also significant. The layout and size of interior rooms which reflect the living and working conditions of residents is significant. The 'front' gate entrance to the Convent off Clarke Street is also significant as the former formal entry point to the institution. The enclosed and gated Sacred Heart courtyard is also significant as a place demonstrating confinement.

Some specific interior rooms are also significance because they demonstrate the working and living conditions of residents of the Convent asylum. These rooms include but are not limited to the Rosina auditorium and theatre, the Rosina visiting parlour room, the Oratory, 'Granary' and the Sacred Heart infirmary.

In relation to the 'Monastic' gardens, their ability to demonstrate the living conditions and experiences of the sisters and girls in care is significant. Items of particular significance include but are not limited to the convent courtyard garden to the north of the Convent building (and enclosed by the Convent building) and the informal garden to the south of the convent, Rosina and Sacred Heart.

In relation to the 'Monastic' farm surrounding the former Convent complex the maintenance of a wide, open space reflecting the former use

(a)
Abbotsford

	Criterion	Values
cont.		of the river frontage area for the production of food (including the grazing of cows) for the Convent is significant.
(b)	the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history	<p>In relation to the laundry buildings, built features demonstrating the size and function of the laundry are significant.</p> <p>The Abbotsford Convent laundry is a rare surviving example of its type within Australia. The laundry's intact institutional and ecclesiastical setting is also outstanding because this setting informs the operation, function and purpose of the laundry. All of the laundry buildings are significant for their ability to demonstrate the nature of work and conditions in the laundry. The laundry reflects the social attitudes of the time and acts as a reference point in the evolution of child welfare and juvenile justice practices in Australia. The Convent laundry buildings are an important physical record for those Australians and their families known collectively as the Forgotten Australians.</p> <p>Features expressing this significance include all of the laundry buildings within the Convent complex and their layout and relationship with the other benevolent care facilities. The features which capture the institutional setting and supporting functions associated with these laundries are those items defined in the values statement for criterion (a).</p>