



## **National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Bendigo and Region Branch Newsletter October 2021**

**Branch Meeting Monday 25 October, 5.30pm via Zoom**  
**Theme: Q&A - Heritage Issues in Bendigo & Region (40 mins)**

Peter Cox is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: National Trust

Time: Oct 25, 2021 05:30 PM Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4218761374?pwd=R1NmVkU3Z2pVUFVRU21kbFR3MzNEQT09>

Meeting ID: 421 876 1374

Passcode: g2utEq

**Important dates: Branch AGM Monday 22 November, 5.30pm.**

Details will be sent via email in mid-November.

### **In this issue:**

Outcomes from Branch meeting held 27 September 2021 -

- Bendigo Gas Works
- Graeme Robertson Cast Iron Collection
- Miners Cottage
- Council's 10 Year Financial Plan
- Optus Tower
- Council's Heritage Advisory Committee
- Newsletter

Letters & advocacy

Allan Doney Collection

Lost Bendigo – YouTube

Branch submission to Council's 10 Year Financial Plan

Specimen Cottage

Branch contact details

Cultural recognition

**Bendigo Gas Works** - follow up on an article in the August newsletter which contained links to the council website on the history, works and master plan for the site. It was decided to write to council about the vacant block of land beside the Gas Works on Weeroona Ave, ask why the whole site was not fully rehabilitated and request that the branch be able to take regular public tours of the site to create awareness of the importance of the site.

**Graeme Robertson Cast Iron Collection** - A short summary was provided about the Collection. The branch has been creating awareness of the Collection for many years which has been located in Bendigo since 2002 but never exhibited. The NT Melbourne office and the council have now decided to undertake a significant assessment of the Collection. If you have information about the Collection or on Cast Iron in Bendigo or Victoria you are asked to contact Annette Shiell, [Annette.Shiell@natrust.com.au](mailto:Annette.Shiell@natrust.com.au) The Cast Iron Event previously advertised has been postponed due to Covid restrictions.

**Miners Cottage** - 45 Abbott St Bendigo. Council has now decided to issue a permit to demolish. To highlight the importance of Miners Cottages in the social history of Bendigo and the region it was decided to write to the Bendigo Art Gallery asking it to have an exhibition on Miners Cottages based on The Ironbark Heritage Study.

**Council's 10 Year Financial Plan** - The branch has submitted a submission to include the Bendigo School of Mines buildings as the location of a new major attraction for Bendigo featuring history, science, engineering, chemistry, geology, art and design exhibitions as it has done during its history since 1854.

**Council's Heritage Advisory Committee** - Discussion took place about nominations for members and supporters were encouraged to nominate.

**Optus Tower** - Forest St. Any future mobile infrastructure needs to be placed on existing structures and the council will be informed of the branch view.

**Newsletter** - contributions are required by 1st of each month.

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## Letters & advocacy

**Bendigo Gasworks** - Letter from the branch to Council:

"The Bendigo Gas Works was featured in the NT August branch newsletter and some feedback was received from members which I now take up with you.

- It was noted on the Master Plan that the south end of the Works site, which is vacant land, was not rehabilitated. Will the state government take responsibility for this rehabilitation or will the council be responsible for these works? Our understanding is that the state government agreed to rehabilitating the whole site.
- There were many tools and artifacts around the site which were gathered up by the council some years ago. It was as if the workers had just left the site as these tools were left leaning up against the walls and furnaces. Where are these tools and other artifacts located now?
- Who owns the vacant land that sits just south of the gasometer outside of the Gas Works site on Weeroona Ave? Has it been considered to incorporate this parcel of land into the site?
- There was some deconstruction of the facility during recent works. When will reinstatement take place?

- There was a Collection of about 100 gas stoves on the site. Are they still on site and how are they being maintained?

Over many years the branch has conducted tours of the Gas Works site with tours always being booked out. There is a lot of interest on how gas was produced from coal and what went on at the site. It employed many workers and gave Bendigo new infrastructure.

The branch realises that it will take some time to fully activate the site but would like to work with council to maintain a profile so that locals and visitors become more aware of its importance in the growth of Bendigo. To this end the branch would like to conduct regular tours of the site.

To work towards something feasible the National Trust will be holding its annual Heritage Festival again in April 2022 and would like to feature some tours. Would this be a goal that the branch and council could work towards?"

[View a copy of the endorsed preliminary design redevelopment option.](#)



A National Trust tour of the Bendigo Gas Works in 2018 when three tours were booked out. Image supplied.

### **Optus Tower Causing Concern**

Thank you, Peter, for the newsletter.

Optus must have a sense of humour if they believe it is "low impact"!!

It is clearly visible from nearly all of the heritage buildings and streets in the precinct.

Andrew and Rhianwyn from McKenzie Quarters have been instrumental in chasing up what is happening. The greatest concern is that I was told by a contractor that they were considering this site as the permanent site, albeit shifting the tower to the opposite corner, which is no less visually disastrous!

Mark Lees

### **Branch letter to Council, sent on 8 October 2021**

“I have had a number of telephone calls from neighbours and National Trust members concerned that an Optus tower has been located on a property off Forest Street.

While understanding that it is a temporary structure and that most of us use mobile telephone technology, I would have thought that there would be some heritage permit requirements for the structure to be built. How long does temporary mean?

The branch has a view that there are currently enough structures around the CBD to accommodate the need for more technology apparatus to be located on existing structures. Could you provide information/reference on how this tower was allowed to be constructed and what research was undertaken to allow the tower to be constructed in a heritage area?

It is important that heritage areas are protected from such structures and that Council investigate all avenues that are open to it to retain its heritage character.”



The temporary tower off Forest Street. Image supplied.

### **Planning Involvement Becoming More Difficult (from the August newsletter).**

By being involved in planning applications the branch is finding that the process has changed and it is now more difficult to gain information about heritage properties to mount a case for retention. In the case of a demolition application of a Miners Cottage at 45 Abbott St Bendigo:

- There has been no heritage report undertaken on the history of the property so it is not known when it was built, who lived there or its place in history.
- There has been no structural condition report provided on the property.
- In the past all interested parties could view the property file which provided valuable information. Access to the file is no longer available.
- Compliance of the Building Code has been raised as a difficulty when it is known that many 19<sup>th</sup> century homes had limited foundations.
- For the matter to be debated at a Council meeting there must be at least six objections.





Miners Cottage at 45 Abbott St Bendigo. Image supplied

### **From Joe & Sharon Daily**

In the Bendigo Branch August newsletter, mention was made of the branch being involved in a planning application at 45 Abbott Street Bendigo and it listed a number of difficulties that now arise because of changes to council process. We, Sharon & Joseph Daily were also involved as objectors to the proposal due to our ongoing interest in the fate of miners cottages in Bendigo.

It was the first time we have seen Council deal with a demolition proposal rather than an extension to a heritage home or subdivision of a heritage place. For us it was an eye opener as to the precarious nature of many of our mining settlement homes in the face of persistent developer lobbying via demolition enquiries which are a formal pre-application service made available by Council. Several such enquiries were made -apparently there is no limit- until the desired result was achieved at Abbott Street.

What we were able to glean, despite a reluctance by Council to share documentation with us, was that the original heritage advisor knocked back demolition on the grounds "The dwelling appears to be in reasonable condition and in spite of alterations remains contributory to the heritage values of the place". Yet despite further commentary that "the building has heritage significance and makes a valuable contribution to the precinct/streetscape" the developer was also advised "However if you decide to pursue demolition you must apply for a planning permit to demolish the building. Your application must include a structural assessment and a heritage assessment prepared by a qualified professional to demonstrate that it cannot and should not be retained".

Moving on from then, on August 15 2019, to recently, with a different heritage advisor and another demolition request, the developer made no concession that the miners cottage had any historic value and provided neither assessments requested, however an internal inspection of the home was arranged. The heritage advisor took on both the role of assessor of heritage value and of the home's structural integrity. There was no detailed report made available, publicly, on this, but the decision was made to allow demolition. Bendigo Council is a signatory to the Burra Charter Process in "planning for and managing a place of cultural significance". The first step is

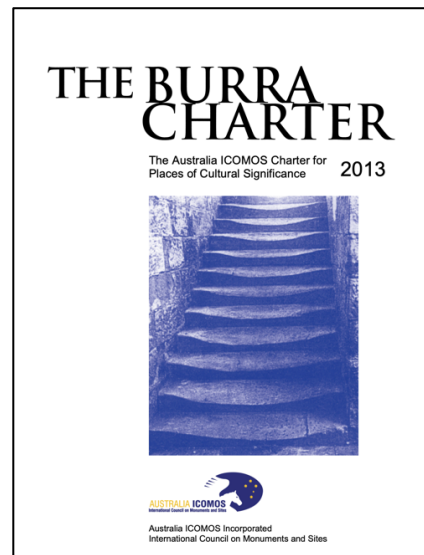
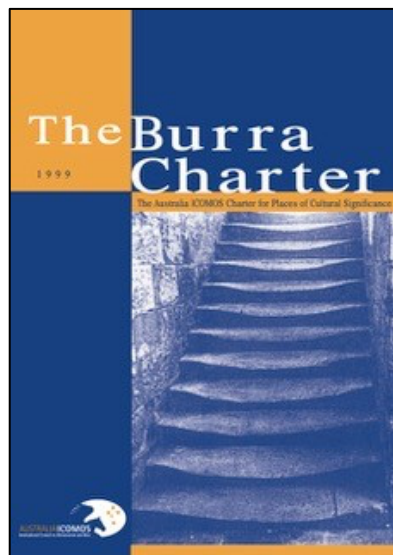
to “Understand The Place”. This requires studies of a miners cottage, in this case, which should “include analysis of physical, documentary, oral and other evidence”. If a disturbance of some kind was proposed of a likely heritage place by a developer it is the responsibility of Council, as guardians of heritage for the community, to insist on some form of assessment by an advisor with appropriate skills. Further, “the individual significance of the building, as well as the contribution the place makes to a precinct” is a matter for consideration when Demolition is proposed as part of Bendigo Council design guidelines.

Yet, what we witnessed at 45 Abbott Street was the abandonment of a critical first step in understanding. In the Ironbark Heritage Report attempts were made to fulfil this basic consideration for all homes. Not those in imminent danger of demolition, as this home has become, but all the homes were given the respect of brief, sometimes deeper historic investigation. A monumental task but showing appropriate concern for heritage.

What we saw was absolutely “no attempt to find out who lived there or its place in history” as it was well put in the August newsletter. Further to this, in final discussions we had with a Council Officer where we had asked whether there was any Council plan to follow Clause 22.06 of the planning heritage policy “which requires archival recording of sites by a heritage professional where demolition is supported as appropriate” the response was “In regards to 45 Abbott Street, the City considers the condition of the miners cottage is not a high enough standard for it to be appropriate to require archival recording prior to demolition”. Why would condition have anything to do with a matter of historical documentation?

Planning involvement by the community in heritage matters dealt with by Bendigo Council has indeed become more difficult. “For matters to be debated at a Council meeting there must be at least six objections”. Objections need not be difficult to submit, can be made online and provide the only current way to bring about some accountability for heritage homes in danger.

<https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/heritage/conserving-our-heritage/burra-charter>



Left: The Burra Charter, 2009, ICOMOS, The International Council of Monuments and Sites. Charter for Places of Cultural Significance.

Right: The Burra Charter, 2013, ICOMOS, The International Council of Monuments and Sites. Charter for Places of Cultural Significance.

## **Branch letter to Council on the need to inform the community on the importance of Miners Cottages, sent on 4 October 2021.**

“A number of members have been involved in the demolition application of a Miners Cottage at 45 Abbott St Bendigo. Unfortunately, it is to be demolished without a history of the site being written.

Miners Cottages play a vital role in the social history of Bendigo and their story is told exceptionally well in the publications of the Ironbark Heritage Study. It is also said that the great Australian dream of owning your own home started with the Bendigo Bank and the local miners dating back to the 1850s.

There is a great story to be told with many other publications, photographs, artifacts and of course the Miners Cottages themselves that remain in our streets throughout Bendigo. To this end the branch encourages the Bendigo Art Gallery to put on an exhibition featuring this very important story. Many families could become involved with stories of their ancestors, their artifacts and perhaps with Open Days at cottages. The branch would be keen to become involved in such an exhibition.”

### **Allan Doney Collection**

Many Bendigo and District Trust members will know about the Allan Doney photographic collection. Purchased by the National Trust (Vic) in 1980, it has over 13,000 black and white negatives and about 2,500 photographic prints.

Allan Doney was a prolific amateur photographer in Bendigo between the mid 1950s to 1970. Using the critical aspects of great photography, light and composition, he created a delightful time-capsule of Bendigo and the surrounding small towns, mine sites and farms. Doney, more importantly, also left us images that can be studied for their significant content in a time of great change to some central Victorian natural and built environments.

The Doney style was ‘documentary’ - he was said to have ‘recorded what happened in front of him’. In the time after WW2 and particularly throughout the 1960s, documentary photography was an expanding field in Australia. Allan may have been aware of a collective of photographers in Melbourne that advocated the use of ‘straight’ or unmanipulated photography as a means of expression. There is little evidence that he used heavy filters or elaborate lens selection to capture his subjects. Documentary photography, especially in the volume contained in this collection, forms a vital role as evidence regarding the rhythms of everyday life in a time of social change in Bendigo.

The significance of the collection is not limited to its photographic qualities. The content captured over a period of more than twenty years provides us today, and into the future, with many points of reference in regard to social issues. Many of the pictures demonstrate an artistic flair with dramatic use of back-light and powerful composition.

Broadly, the collection is also of research significance. The very nature of the streetscapes, building details, people and landscape images and their ability to be seen against similar modern equivalents lends them research value.

The collection forms an important source of information for local and Victorian history. Its significance lies beyond the social/historical and into the role the photographer played, with others, in a photography movement that championed a documentary style that literally focussed on what the subject had to say. When the National Trust (Vic) acquired the collection in 1980, the *Bendigo Advertiser* described Doney’s work as ‘a gift to the nation’.



**Volunteer project:**

Branch member, Euan McGillivray has volunteered with the Trust to report on the condition of the negatives and help enhance the catalogue of the collection. The Trust is also investigating ways to enable online access to this unique collection. Euan will bring his skills from working for many years as Senior Curator of Photography at Museums Victoria as well as Manager of Preservation Services at State Library of Victoria.



Allan Doney 1



Allan Doney 2



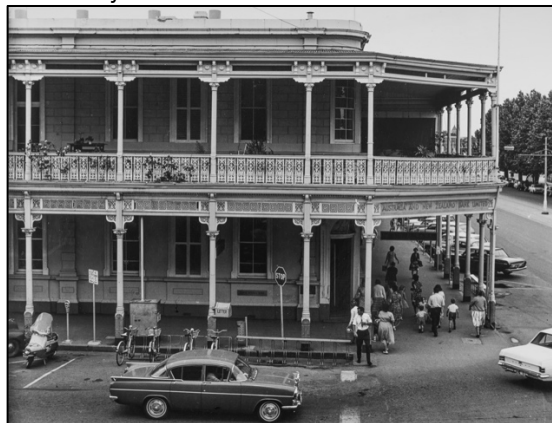
Allan Doney 3



Allan Doney 4



Allan Doney 5



Allan Doney 6

1. Eaglehawk, shopping strip with dog lazing in the sun.
2. View Street, Bendigo, busy street scape, when trams ran up the street and the Art Gallery looked different.
3. Pall Mall, Bendigo, Allan liked the mysterious light that mist created.
4. View Street, Bendigo, ANA Hall, was next to Capitol Theatre. Iron lacework in foreground provides relief to the solid Hall behind.
5. Mitchell Street, Bendigo, Allan composed using light, shapes and people to great effect.



6. Pall Mall and Williamson Street, Bendigo, Australia and New Zealand Bank, Allan loved the iron lacework in Bendigo and, with the local Trust Branch, fought hard to preserve

In 2002, the Bendigo and District National Trust Branch funded the publication of *Postwar Portrait: Photographs by Allan Doney 1900-1987*. The Branch has some copies for sale. It will make a wonderful Christmas present for anyone interested in Bendigo history, or documentary style photography.

To purchase a copy, contact Peter 0447473674. \$30 Soft cover, 148 pages of superb images.



### **Have you seen this video on YouTube?**

Mary Leversha follows Lost Bendigo on facebook and has forward this link on Eaglehawk, 1852-1902. There are many other videos on Bendigo in this series.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHgn8Nd8foU&t=28s>

## **Submission to the City of Greater Bendigo Financial Plan from National Trust of Australia (Vic) Bendigo & Region Branch**

### **10 Year Plan needs to add diversity to Bendigo's offerings - An attraction for the future.**

It has been over two years since Bendigo TAFE decided that three of their most historical buildings were excess to their needs and have now progressed to deciding that the buildings will become a Community Precinct. While the concept of a community precinct has not been defined, this submission discusses some options to gain the greatest benefit for TAFE, for Greater Bendigo and its citizens and for economic development for all. This set of buildings is of great significance to the past, present and future of cultural life in Bendigo. Since 1854 when the land was first set aside, throughout its 167year history, the buildings simply known as 'The School of Mines' are ready for a new phase as part of Bendigo's future.

Early Bendigo thrived by forward looking citizens engaging with science, engineering, technology, chemistry, geology, art and design. By promoting education in these disciplines, and by applying the knowledge, Bendigo became wealthy and influential. These disciplines, still significant in today's world, could play a role in re-imagining the site as a major attraction for Bendigo and for visitors from around Australia. They might be seen in different words such as the science of climate change, the chemistry of diseases, inventions in workplaces and innovation in technology.

A Cultural/ Exhibition Centre which engages with First Nations and multicultural communities could feature such attractions from a variety of perspectives along with the region's history in developing engineering wonders in mining, a reliable water supply, energy and a city and region of world-renowned architectural significance.

#### **Community Vision:**

The City's community vision in the financial plan is: "Greater Bendigo celebrates our diverse community. We are welcoming, sustainable and prosperous. Walking hand-in-hand with the traditional custodians of this land. Building on our rich heritage for a bright and happy future."

The Financial Plan addresses the Community Vision by funding the priorities in the Council Plan. With the current population of 123,000 growing to 155,000 in 2036, additional growth requires additional investment in assets. Revenues over the next ten years will grow from \$223m to \$269m and this will be achieved by using a mixture of rates (within the rate cap), partnerships and Government funding. Interest rates are at a record low signalling the present is ripe for a new offering to attract locals and visitors towards a bright and happy future. (We all need a new attraction in our climate of pandemic. The planning process alone would involve an unprecedented wide range of people and provide a catalyst for community engagement and strengthening).

The project could also overcome the problem of storage of Council's own historical artifacts along with the many historical groups who have been requesting a venue for many years. The Council could build on its current wonderful and innovative Art Gallery, its award-winning gardens, play spaces and fledging airport to drive economic development by attracting people to its existing and a new venue.

The Plan states that shared facilities will be a priority and it has the perfect model to work from – The Ulumbarra Theatre, a school venue during school times with community use at other times. It will complement the \$59m expansion of the TAFE College and provide better use of existing infrastructure rather than new builds. The Plan states- The "New Capital Investment" line includes allocations for projects approved in the current 2021/2022 budget with \$4m-\$6m unallocated each year over the coming 4 years. While it would not be directly a Council owned

project, Council could encourage a strong partnership with TAFE and the State and Federal Governments to realise a regional, economic and cultural outcome.

### **Some History of the Site**

The first part of the present building was erected in 1864 as the Sandhurst Mechanics Institute, with a Free Library, reading room and lecture theatre. A School of Mines and Industries was built adjacent to the existing building in 1872. It was a plain brick building with the Vahland designed Italianate façade added in 1878. The entrance loggia led to a spiral staircase to the second floor where the School of Mines and Museum were located. The reading rooms and library were on the ground floor. In 1884 the polychrome brick building facing Hargreaves Street was erected to provide workshops and classrooms. The octagonal library at the rear of the building was added in 1887. At the time this was the largest such structure in the colony where the magnificent 'Sunlight' is still a feature. The Earl of Hopetoun opened additions to the building in 1890.



Bendigo School of Mines and Industries, Mechanics Institute and Free Library. Image Euan McGillivray 2021.

### **From Heritage Victoria:**

VHR H1505 Registered Place: Statement of Significance- The Bendigo School of Mines is historically significant as a centre of mining and metallurgical education which was important to the goldmining industry and the wealth of Victoria in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The range of buildings and other features on the site collectively demonstrate the evolution of technical and vocational education from the 1850s onwards... The Bendigo School of Mines is architecturally significant as a fine representative example of a technical education campus. It consists of buildings of different types and eras that were constructed for specific educational purposes.



Together they express both the practical requirements of technical education and its ongoing importance. The place includes a number of notable individual nineteenth century buildings designed by the distinguished German architect W.C. Vahland.

**Conclusion:**

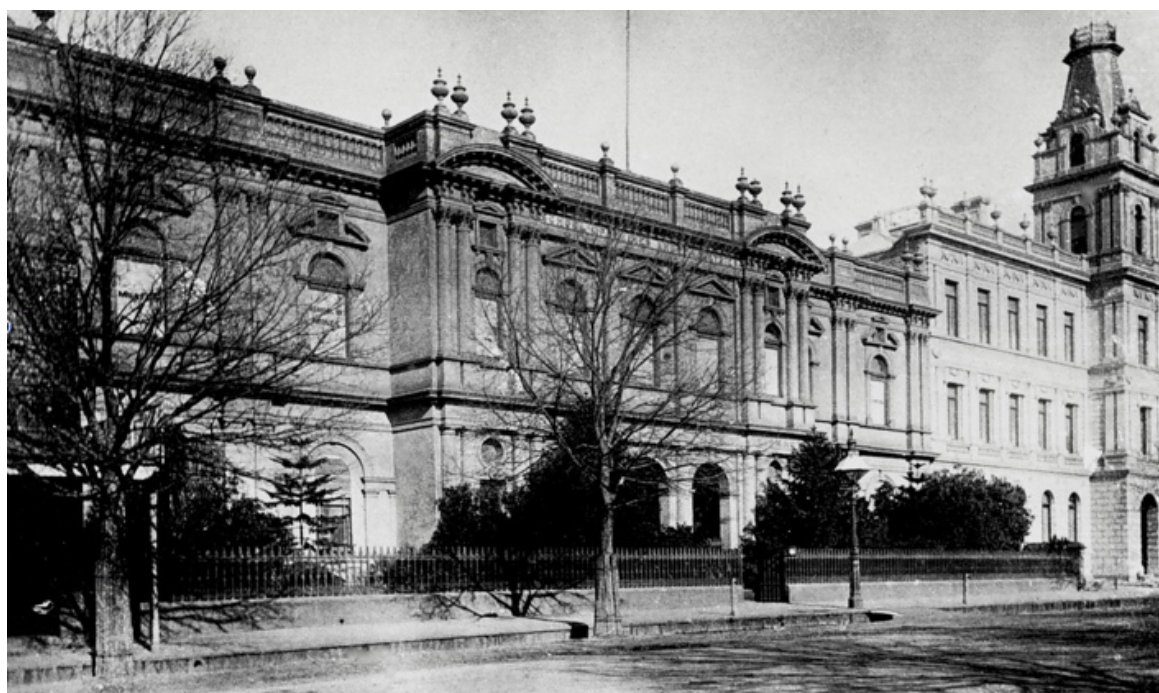
Magnificent buildings in the heart of the city, with a powerful educational history, don't become available often. This site is on a scale that could provide a centre-piece in the reimagining of Pall Mall. There is potential to develop a destination that Bendigo citizens are proud of, just like the Gallery, and one that visitors come to know and expect dynamic, innovative, educational experiences, just like the Gallery.

A place, with broad and diverse communities at its heart, that presents and interprets technology, science and culture which is relevant to everyday life, would, to quote President of the School of Mines and Bendigo Science Society, Dr Paul Howard MacGillivray in 1875, 'add pleasure, sharpen the senses and brighten the intellect.'

The Bendigo and Region Branch of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) believes that this project concept is worth considering in terms of the Council's 10 Year Financial Plan. The Branch also urges Council to consult with a wide range of organisations and the community to develop and implement an additional major attraction to Bendigo's offering.

Further views on this 'project for the future' are sought to promote discussion. You are encouraged to comment with ideas and a way forward to get these buildings preserved for future generations.

Please submit your views to [natrustbendigo@gmail.com](mailto:natrustbendigo@gmail.com)



McCrae Street frontage of the magnificent set of 19th Century buildings. The School of Mines Museum can be seen in the window at top left. Image: W.H. Robinson Studio, Bendigo, 1890, courtesy of Museums Victoria.



## Specimen Cottage - what is the future?

The State level historic and architectural cultural heritage significance of Specimen Cottage was recognised in 1982 by its inclusion in the Register of Government Buildings (VHR H1615). Built in 1856/61 it is Bendigo's oldest known remaining house and a fine example of the stonemason's craft. A Conservation Management Plan for the Cottage is due by the end of 2021. Some preliminary works are underway to investigate issues such as the sub floor and rising damp.



The National Trust has played an important role in preserving Specimen Cottage. Image: Euan McGillivray

**Contact details:**

**Your views are sought on the issues!**

The branch welcomes your ideas, contributions and photographs for the newsletter which is published bimonthly. You can keep up with the current advocacy issues at the Trust Advocate blog at <http://www.trustadvocate.org.au/> National Trust of Australia (Vic) Bendigo & Region Branch Email: [nattrustbendigo@gmail.com](mailto:nattrustbendigo@gmail.com) Telephone: President, Peter Cox 0447473674 Mail; C/- 57 Green St California Gully 3556.

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and recognize the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past, present and future.