

Victorian Heritage Database Report  
**Former Telephone Exchange**

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**Location:**

50 Gheringhap Street, GEEELONG VIC 3220 - Property No 213848

**Heritage Status / Level of Significance:**

Individually Significant

**Heritage Overlay Numbers:** HO1640, HO946

**Listing Authority:** Greater Geelong City

**Precinct:**

Civic Centre Heritage Area

**Statement of Significance:**

C Listed - Local Significance

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE - HISTORIC PLACES DOCUMENT SHEET - GRC SHEET NO 153 -  
PLAQUE, GEEELONG POST OFFICE

This historic plaque marks the establishment of the first automatic telephone exchange in the Southern Hemisphere in Geelong, 6 July 1912.

## RECOMMENDATIONS: PROTECTIVE MEASURES

Geelong Regional Commission Register.

## REFERENCES

Inscription Reads:

"The first Automatic Telephone Exchange in the Southern Hemisphere was established in this building on 6th July 1912".

This commemoration plaque was unveiled by the Hon. Hubert Opperman OBE Minister for Shipping and transport, Federal Member for Corio on the 50th Anniversary 6th July 1962.

Another plaque in Gheringhap Street, reads

"The clock chimes in this Tower were subscribed for in the year 1910 by the citizens of Geelong & District to commemorate the illustrious reign of their late sovereign KING EDWARD who reigned 1901-1910.

Lang, W.R. - "Geelong Monuments and Plaques" No's 11 and 10a Geelong Historical Records Centre.

See also

RW Brownhill - History of Geelong and Corio bay, Wilke and Co, Melbourne, 1955. p. 583.

## Description

The former Telephone Exchange building, 50 Gheringhap Street, Geelong, takes up a substantial proportion of the site and is situated on the front boundary. There is a narrow side setback of approximately 2500 mm on the north side, together with steel gates and unpainted brick piers. On the south side is an early solid cream brick fence. The symmetrical, three storey, face cream brick, interwar rectilinear Stripped Classical styled building is characterised by a parapeted hipped roof form clad in terra cotta tiles, and the cement pressed ashlar block vestigial colonnade at the front, with projecting V-shaped steel framed windows that span the three storeys. Centrally located is a steel framed and glazed entrance doorway, with flanking steel grilles and a metal sculptural motif directly above the winged symbol of the Commonwealth Postmaster-Generals Department in 1939. Pressed cement block dado walls flank the vestigial colonnade, which also has fluted reveals, the inscribed title "Geelong Telephone Exchange" above, and a crowning recessed and moulded parapet. Flanking the pressed cement colonnade are broad cream brick corners with incised bands forming a geometric rustication. Above the cement dados are single steel framed windows with decorative steel grilles. At the front are also projecting cubic pedestals that support introduced standard lights. The side facades are also characterised by rectilinear vestigial colonnades with steel framed windows between. Apart from the easternmost vertical windows that rise from near ground level, the base of the colonnades are level with the upper reaches of the pressed cement dados on the front facade. Comparative Examples of other interwar rectilinear Stripped Classical buildings Former High Court of Australia, Melbourne, 192528 General Store building 11, Maribyrnong Defence site, Maribyrnong, 1935 Commonwealth Bank building, Rockhampton, Queensland, c.1929 Commonwealth Bank building, Wollongong, N.S.W., c.1929

Heritage Study / Consultant	Greater Geelong - Geelong City Urban Conservation Study, Volumes 2-5, Graeme Butler, 1991; Greater Geelong - Geelong City Urban Conservation Study Volume 1, Graeme Butler, 1993; Greater Geelong - Geelong City 'C' Citations Study, Dr David Rowe, 2002
Construction Date Range	
Architect / Designer	
Municipality	GREATER GEELONG CITY
Other names	
Hermes number	18907
Property number	213848

*This place/object may also be State heritage listed. Check the Victorian Heritage Database. For further details, contact the local Council or go to Planning Schemes Online*