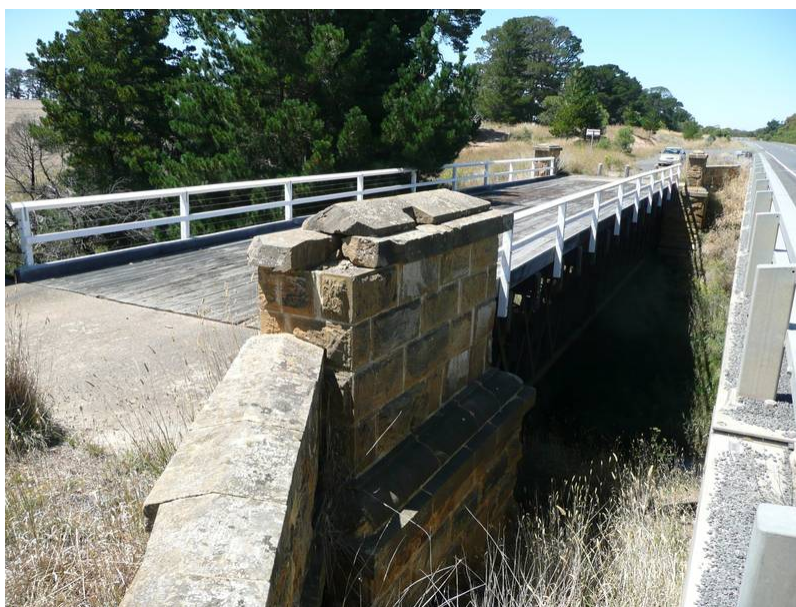


Victorian Heritage Database Report  
**MCMILLANS BRIDGE**

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**Location:**

OVER LITTLE WOODY YALLOCK RIVER, ROKEWOOD-SKIPTON ROAD WERNETH AND ROKEWOOD-SKIPTON ROAD ROKEWOOD, GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

**Heritage Status / Level of Significance:**

Registered

**Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number: H1847**

**Listing Authority: VHR**

**Heritage Overlay Number: HO91**

**Statement of Significance:**

What is significant?

McMillans Bridge is situated on the Little Woody Yalloack River crossing of the Rokewood-Skipton Road 6 kilometres west of Rokewood. It was originally built in 1856 by the Central Road Board to the design of Charles

Rowland, and incorporates 1888-9 modifications by the Shires of Leigh and Grenville to the design of Charles AC Wilson. It comprises two double-intersection wrought-iron deck-trusses which in 1889 were seated upon 1856 red sandstone abutments (originally constructed for a timber truss superstructure). The longitudinal timber deck is supported by timber cross beams laid across the tops of the iron trusses. The 29 metre single span wrought-iron lattice-girder trusses, connected by iron cross bracing, are of unusually light construction. The original deck width of 6.1 metres has been widened to 7.3 metres. The single-layer longitudinal timber deck is currently unsurfaced. It now has armco rails. The broad road reserve and open grassland terrain allow easy observation of the bridge's impressive stone-masonry and iron work.

McMillans Bridge is of historical, scientific (technical) and aesthetic significance to Victoria.

It is of historical significance for its 1856 abutments, which are among the very earliest surviving examples of Victorian bridge technology. It is associated with significant engineers: Charles Rowland; Charles AC Wilson, an unusually skilled and adventurous Shire Engineer; and Professor WC Kernot. The early date of the bridge is indicative of the route's importance in the pastoral pioneering of the Western District, and between Geelong and the Ararat and Streatham goldfields in the 1850s. It is an extremely rare surviving example of a bridge built by Victoria's short-lived Central Road Board. The 1888-9 wrought-iron superstructure represents another major era in Victoria's transport history, in which the main responsibility for maintaining Main Road infrastructure fell to the newly instituted rural municipalities which proliferated after 1870. Whereas the original main road bridge had been wholly designed and built by the State road authority, only 25% of the 1888 cost was met by the State. The new superstructure was locally funded, designed, and built. It was built at Geelong by Humble and Nicholson's important Vulcan Foundry. Its span length and deck width are notable among Victoria's metal truss and timber deck bridges.

It is of scientific (technical) significance as one of Victoria's earliest surviving examples of a composite road-bridge, combining an unusual mixture of sandstone masonry abutments, riveted wrought-iron lattice-truss girders, and a longitudinally planked timber deck. The 1856 abutments are very rare examples of superior goldrush masonry bridge abutments (as distinct from integrated masonry arches), constructed according to an old European tradition. Most extant rural examples of such stone masonry abutments for big composite road bridges post-date the freak state-wide floods of 1870, which forced a major reconsideration of rural bridge technology and encouraged more high-level structures. By contrast, the 1888 wrought-iron trusses, of notable span, drew heavily upon the scientific theory and testing facilities of Professor Kernot's Department of Engineering at the University of Melbourne, and are extremely light, efficient and advanced examples of current bridge technology. The bridge represents an important step in the local evolution of wrought-iron trusses for use in bridge construction: considerable economies were achieved, and iron bridge superstructures became more competitive with traditional hardwood alternatives.

It is of aesthetic significance particularly for the superb red sandstone masonry abutments which support the later neat wrought-iron superstructure elements. The abutments and wing walls feature coursed rusticated stone work, with finely worked string courses and an ornate stepped profile. The design of these substantial masonry abutments is quite distinct from that of other colonial Victorian masonry structures, and possibly reflects the style of Telford, Brunel and early nineteenth-century British engineers who influenced David Lennox and in turn his pupil, Charles Rowland. Although two 1859 sandstone arch bridges survive, sandstone was a far less common bridge-building material in Victoria than the more durable basalt or bluestone.

Heritage Study / Consultant	
Construction Date Range	1856 - 1889
Architect / Designer	
Municipality	GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE
Other names	

Hermes number	5985
Property number	

*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*