

H0902 BALLARAT RAILWAY COMPLEX

140 LYDIARD STREET NORTH BALLARAT CENTRAL AND 202 LYDIARD STREET NORTH AND NOLAN STREET SOLDIERS HILL AND SCOTT PARADE AND 60 CORBETT STREET BALLARAT EAST AND 75 HUMFFRAY STREET NORTH BAKERY HILL, BALLARAT CITY

PERMIT APPLICATION P39923

Why is the Ballarat Railway Complex of cultural heritage significance?

Ballarat Railway Complex is included in the Victorian Heritage Register under the provisions of the *Heritage Act 2017* for its historical, architectural, social and technological significance to the state of Victoria.

The station complex is one of the few nineteenth century railway stations in Australia which includes a train hall and clock tower, symbolising Ballarat's wealth and importance as a provincial centre.

The interlocking timber sector gates demonstrated a once-common method of controlling a road and rail corridor intersection. Originally controlled from the adjoining signal box to the west of the level crossing, since the early 2000s the gates have been remotely operated from Melbourne. The gates have been replaced and repaired many times, and in appearance they differ from those shown in nineteenth century photographs of the Lydiard Street North level crossing.

What was the permit application for?

On 10 July 2024 Heritage Victoria received a permit application from V/Line seeking approval to return elements of the Lydiard Street North level crossing including interlocking timber sector gates, tie rods, posts and stays which were removed to storage at the V/Line Wendouree Depot in late 2021, in accordance with permit P34464 issued on 7 October 2021. The permit application seeks approval to return the gates and supporting elements to the setting of the level crossing in a non-operational manner.

The permit application was advertised between 24 July 2024 and 6 August 2024.

What is the background to the permit application?

In May 2020, an out-of-control V/Line train travelled at speed through the Ballarat Railway Station without stopping and smashed through one of the pair of gates which

controlled the Lydiard Street North level crossing, destroying them, and one of the supporting cast iron posts. Lydiard Street North was immediately closed to vehicular traffic and the rail corridor continued to operate with the remaining set of interlocking timber sector gates closed across the roadway.

In May 2021 a permit application was received from V/Line seeking approval for the temporary removal of much of the surviving fabric of the gates and posts to off-site storage so that Lydiard Street North could reopen. Before this could occur, temporary boom gates were installed by V/Line at the crossing ahead of the removal of the remaining pair of interlocking timber sector gates so that the level crossing could resume full operation, controlling both vehicular and rail traffic. As the boom gates were able to be installed outside of the extent of registration for the Ballarat Railway Complex in the Victorian Heritage Register, approval was not required from Heritage Victoria.

Why has the permit been issued?

On 7 February 2025 the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria determined to issue a permit with conditions for the return of the interlocking timber sector gates, tie rods, stays and supporting posts to the setting of the level crossing as a static display, supported by conservation works and historic interpretation.

The determination to issue the permit in full acknowledges the operational framework that the rail operator must accord with to continue to operate a rail service to the highest operational safety standards as enshrined in Rail Safety National Law. In particular it has been accepted that V/Line cannot reinstate a form of crossing control which does not accord with present-day standards and methods.