

Beltana State Heritage Area

Beltana was declared a State Heritage Area on 16 July 1987.

HISTORY

The land around Warioota Creek was first taken up by John Haines in 1855, and later (1867) amalgamated into the substantial holdings of the Beltana Pastoral Company of Thomas Elder and Samuel Stuckey. During 1866 Elder and Stuckey imported over 100 camels with Afghan drivers, which formed the basis of transport in the district and further north for decades.

The discovery of copper at Sliding Rock in 1870 prompted the construction of Martin's Eating House, later to be replaced by the Beltana Hotel, on the road to the mine at Warioota Creek. This location at the creek crossing had already been chosen as a site for a repeater station for the Overland Telegraph, which reached Beltana by 1871. The Beltana township was surveyed in 1873, and a purpose-built repeater station erected by 1875.

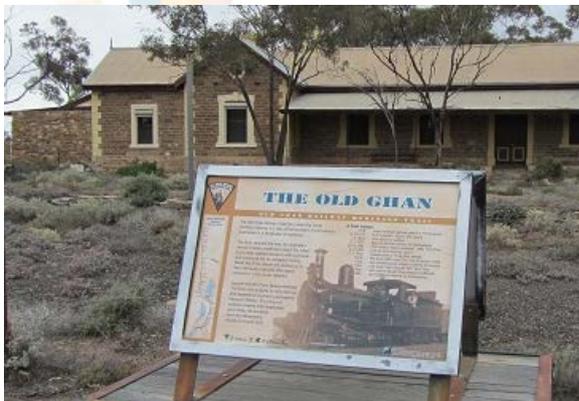
Beltana boomed with the arrival of the railway in 1881, and with an influx of mining families following the failure of the nearby Sliding Rock copper mine. By the mid-1880s the town had its own brewery, general store and a school. In the 1890s the Presbyterians established a mission at Beltana, with the Reverend John Flynn acting as the minister for a time in 1911. In 1919 the Australian Inland Mission opened a nursing home at Beltana. The town's population stabilised at about 150 and remained fairly constant until the 1920s. By the 1940s, 64 trains per week were passing through Beltana along the Marree-Oodnadatta-Alice Springs line.

The development of the coal-mining town of Leigh Creek during the 1940s and 50s and the realignment of first the railway (1956) and later the main road (1983) led to Beltana's decline as a major service, transport and communication centre for the region.

Surviving within the Beltana state heritage area are many buildings and places that illustrate the historical themes that dominate the town's past and contribute to its heritage significance. These include:

- telegraph repeater station (1875)
- railway station complex (1881)
- Beltana Hotel (1874)
- Royal Victoria Hotel (1878)
- police station and cells (1881)
- ruins of Buttfield's store (1887)
- Mitchell's manse (1894) – subsequently the A.I.M. nursing home
- Smith of Dunesk mission, formerly Doig's coach works
- school (1893)
- cemetery.

There are also about six cottages and some substantial ruins, such as fireplaces, wells and a baker's oven, scattered over the area. Significant water supply structures include the railway dam and a government well and concrete trough dating from 1917.



Further Information

For further information please contact the State Heritage Unit

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