



Conservation management profile

Forestry - World War II Civil Alien Corps internee camps

- From the early 1940s the Forestry Department used Italian, Albanian, German and other internees of different nationalities to undertake silvicultural treatment, construct firelines and roads and other forestry works between 1942 – 1945.
- Typically, ruins of internee camps may include timber stumps, posts, rails, stone hearths, galley frames, concrete slabs, timber flooring and other debris.
- Unusual features may be associated with some internee camps, for example, the Italian camp at Stockyard Creek (Barakula State Forest) features the remains of a log border around a bocce rink.



The remains of the log border of a bocce rink at the Stockyard Creek Italian CAC internee camp at Barakula State Forest

History

During WWII many alleged “enemy aliens” were forced to labour on public works projects including forest management tasks at various locations in south-west Queensland. In 1939 the Commonwealth Government initiated a program to identify, arrest and intern people considered enemy aliens and a potential threat to Australia’s security and war effort. By 1941 this policy had led to more than 12,000 people being registered and monitored in Queensland.

The nationalities of those registered and interned in Queensland included German, Austrian, Italian, Albanian, Finnish, Rumanian, Hungarian and Japanese. Many of those interned in Queensland — including Italian prisoners of war from 1942 — were forced to work on defence and infrastructure projects as members of the Civil Alien Corps (CAC) established in early 1942 by the Allied Works Council.

Internees attached to the CAC in Queensland worked on road-building gangs across Queensland. Many hundreds of internees were coerced into labour gangs to work in several State Forests in south-west Queensland. The scarcity of available labour motivated the Forestry Department to use Italian, Albanian, German and other internees to undertake silvicultural treatment work and construct firelines and roads. In 1942 records indicate that 240 internees were camped at Western Creek (SF154) near Millmerran, another 100 at Coominglyah (SF28) west of Monto and 60 at Tandan (SF70) south of Inglewood.

Description

Very little remains of internee camps. Typically, ruins may include timber stumps, posts, rails, stone hearths, galley frames, concrete slabs, tent-rig timber pallet flooring and other debris. Some unusual features are associated with some internee camps. For example, the second Italian camp at Stockyard Creek (Barakula) features the remains of a log border around a bocce rink and hand-made bullock bocce balls have been found at this site.

Location

Internee camps can be observed in many places across Queensland. There are nine CAC internee camps known of the EPA estate recorded in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Historic Sites Database.

There are four CAC internee camps located at Barakula SF302 (Turkey Mountain, Hellhole Creek, Stockyard Creek and Durah Creek), two at Western Creek SF154 (Western Creek) and one each at Yelarbon SF81 (Nine Mile), Coominglyah SF28 (Coles Lookout) and Presho SF50 (Sandy Creek).



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Stockyards at the Sandy Creek CAC internee camp at Presho State Forest

Significance indicators

There are no internee camps listed in the Queensland Heritage Register.

Internee camps are likely to be important for one or more of the following reasons:

- for their association with a significant period in Australia's history, in particular the internment of persons during the second World War and the subsequent employment of internees for forestry and other public works;
- as evidence of the living conditions associated with camps; and
- for other reasons associated with the particular internee camp.

Threatening processes

- Fire
- Timber harvesting
- Scavenging

The main threats to the conservation of internee camps are disturbances such as fire, scavenging and inappropriate logging practices. Remnant structures are vulnerable to fire. The historic, physical and archaeological integrity of these places are seriously threatened by illegal scavenging. Scavengers often use metal detectors and their activities can cause great damage to historic places. The ruins and debris including bottles are the property of the State and are not to be removed or disturbed.



A thunderbox toilet marks the site of the Nine Mile CAC internee camp at Yelarbon State Forest

Management actions

- Implement the appropriate protective management guidelines and prescriptions detailed in Sections 6 and 7 of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) Cultural Heritage Manual.
- The position of significant internee camps should be accurately recorded using a GPS unit and marked on operational plans.
- Details of previously unrecorded sites encountered on the EPA estate are to be forwarded electronically to the registrar of the EPA Historic Sites Database, Cultural Heritage Branch, Brisbane. Site details to record should include the place name and type, location, Global Positioning System (GPS) Unit co-ordinates, condition, site plan and good quality digital or print images.
- Wherever possible, professional recording and documentation of historic places should be undertaken by qualified cultural heritage managers.
- All field staff and contractors should be trained in the identification of significant internee camps.
- It is the responsibility of all districts to maintain files and records of all activities relating to cultural heritage issues.

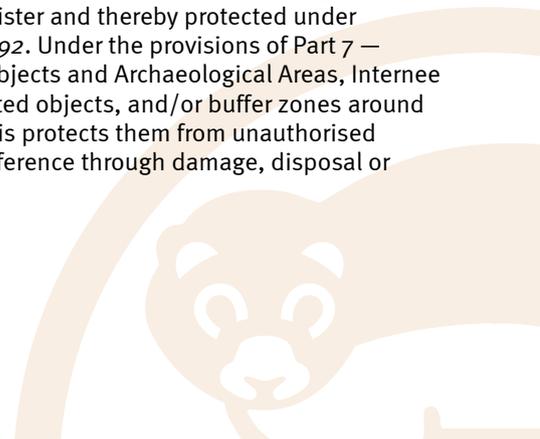


These fragile partial galley frames and hearths indicate the site of the Turkey Mountain CAC camp near Ballon forest station

Relevant legislation and protection

All internee camps located on the EPA estate are protected under provisions of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and *Queensland Forestry Act 1959*.

Significant internee camps may also be entered as a place of cultural heritage significance on the Queensland Heritage Register and thereby protected under provisions of the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*. Under the provisions of Part 7 — Discovery and Protection of Archaeological Objects and Archaeological Areas, Internee camps may also be declared as either protected objects, and/or buffer zones around them may be declared as protected areas. This protects them from unauthorised visitation and development activity and interference through damage, disposal or removal of materials.



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The Victory Break bridge at Ballon, named to commemorate the Allies victory in Europe in May 1945 which occurred at the time the internees were constructing the fire break and bridge

Information sources

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