

## RAILWAY HERITAGE of SOUTH AUSTRALIA

---

**Site Name** Tailem Bend Railway Station

---

### STATEMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

---

The historical significance of this item lies in its identification with one of the more significant railway yards on the South Australian network and the manner in which it reflects the increased significance of Tailem Bend in this network. Tailem Bend, already of some significance because it was on the main line between Adelaide and Melbourne, became of additional significance once the network was extended into the Murray Mallee region and it assumed the regional administrative role previously exercised from Murray Bridge. However, the item is particularly significant because of its architectural design and detailing and the use of Californian Bungalow features in a railway building. The distinctive design of the building and its location in the main street of the town means that it is also a landmark feature.

### Significant Interest

---

- **Historical** Tailem Bend was a stop on the main line between Adelaide and Melbourne which assumed increased significance when it became a major railway town after lines were built from there through the Murray Mallee region. The design and construction of the station reflect this enhanced status.
- **Architectural** This item is significant because of its particular design and detailing. It is particularly noteworthy because of its use of Californian Bungalow features which were then gaining popularity in domestic architecture. Though not a unique example of this style it is one of very few railway stations that demonstrate this.
- **Environmental** The design features of this item and its location in the main street mean that this item has landmark qualities.

### RECOMMENDATION

---

This item should be included on the Register of State Heritage Items.

We also recommend that the item should be included on the Register of the National Estate.

## Site Name Tailem Bend Railway Station

### ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANT INTEREST

---

#### HISTORICAL

**Date** Station Building 1914

**Additions** Signal Cabin 1925; Water Tower 1925

The line from Adelaide was opened to Tailem Bend on 1 May 1886. Beginning in Adelaide, it was constructed through the Adelaide Hills to Nairne and Murray Bridge to Tailem Bend and Bordertown.

The significance of the town was enhanced with the development of a network through the Murray Mallee. The first of the new lines from Tailem Bend was that to Pinnaroo which was opened on 14 September 1906. Another branch line was constructed to Wanbi and opened on 6 January 1913; this was extended to Paringa on 13 October 1913 and ultimately to Renmark on 31 January 1927 and Barmera on 1 August 1928. A line was opened from Karoonda to Waikerie on 23 December 1915 and another from Karoonda to Peebinga only five days later.

Tailem Bend became the focus of the Murray Mallee network and in 1926 at the time of the rationalisation of the railway operations that were promoted by the American Commissioner, W.A. Webb. Its significance was recognised when the major railway depot, then at Murray Bridge and which employed more than 300 men, was transferred to Tailem Bend.

The railway has become an important sector in the town which has remained the operational centre of this network. The closing of many services in the Murray Mallee and the introduction of more powerful locomotives, which do not require extra units to assist them over the Adelaide hills, has meant a scaling down of railway personnel in Tailem Bend in recent years.

#### ARCHITECTURAL

---

**Size** Single and double storied

**Wall Materials** Sandstone, painted, with rendered dressings

**Roof Form** Hipped and gabled

**Roof Material** Corrugated galvanised iron

**Window type** Large half-moon multi-paned windows

**Other features** Large eaves, wooden brackets under the second floor eaves. The ticket office remains intact.

The domestic scale and detailing was a feature of the earlier masonry railway stations in South Australia. This idea was continued with a new range of railway stations that were built during the early twentieth century, though in this instance the station reflected the Californian Bungalow style which had become increasingly popular for domestic architecture. Several stations featuring this style were built, though most differed from one another. The station building at Tailem Bend - except for the later signal box addition - is almost identical with that at Penola though with less flamboyant detail than those stations built at Wallaroo and Moonta.

The significance of this item is enhanced because it is still used for its original purpose and has undergone very little alteration.

---



## Site Name Tailem Bend Railway Station

---

### REFERENCES

Heritage Investigations, 'Heritage Survey Region 5', 1983  
Jennings, RI, W.A. Webb, *South Australian Railways Commissioner 1922-30; A political, economic and social biography*, Nesfield Press, North Plympton, 1973, pp. 124 -134  
SAPP 47-1955, pp. 46-7  
SAPP, Railway Commissioner's Report for June 1886, 1887

### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

---

#### CIRCUMSTANCES

The station building is associated with the main line between Adelaide and Melbourne. It is presently being used by Australian National as offices and a communication centre and the signal box still operates half of the yard. This function is scheduled to cease within the coming six months. It is anticipated that the track through the yard is to be upgraded to permit trains to pass at 140 km/h.

#### INTEGRITY

---

The integrity of this item is high. Alterations have been made to the waiting area to form additional office space, but this is of light-weight materials. An island station and two roads have been removed from the yard, along with nineteen signals in the southern yard.

#### ENVIRONMENT / PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

---

The item is a prominent structure on one side of the main street and associated with a large parking space.

**Site Name** Tailem Bend Railway Station

---

**Address** Railway Terrace, Tailem Bend - 120.5 kms on the Wolseley line

**Section** 491, 495, 490, 137

**Hundred** Seymour

**AMG Reference** 1:50,000 Ser, 6727-II, Wellington, 359400 (E), 6097400 (N)

**CT No** NUA

**Local Government Area** Meningie

**Owner(s)** Australian National

**State Heritage Status** None, although nominated on 12 March 1986

**Other Assessments** Nil

---

**Current Use** Offices

**Condition** Very good

**Interior** Very good

**Exterior** Very good

**Known Threats** Nil other than pending closure

**Conservation action identified** Identify a viable new use

**Associated item(s)** There is a goods platform and crane opposite with a metal shed, but this is not closely associated. The station presently retains a set of scales and several parcel trolleys. There is a water tower beyond the station building.

---

**Comments** The good condition of this item, its central location and the parking spaces that are available suggest that it could readily be adapted to a new use once it is no longer used for railway purposes. It could readily serve as professional offices with a minimum of alteration.

---

**Site Surveyor** Peter Donovan

**Date(s) of Survey** 24 October 1991

---



10437









10437













