



# **The Fyansford Common**





**The Fyansford Common, a large scenic reserve located in the heart of Fyansford, bounded on three sides by the Moorabool River and to the north by the main Fyansford road, is a verdant, magnificent centrepiece of this historic township.**

**Located barely 3 kilometres from Geelong, on the main route to the western district, this large recreational facility favoured by walkers, joggers, dog handlers, bird-watchers and casual cyclists pulses with natural wildlife.**

**The location has considerable historical significance - for Australia's first indigenous inhabitants, early settlers and local farming / industrial workers. More recently it has become, with the development of large residential estates, home to an ever-growing community of contemporary commuters.**





**Fyansford common is a great place to start your walk / cycle / skateboard circuit (clockwise or anticlockwise) with a lunch stopover at the Fyansford pub almost mandatory for some.**

**My recommendation for 'beginners' is to start at the carpark, proceed down the west side of the river, crossover at Queens Park bridge and return along the east bank of river; following the walk with a picnic lunch under the trees in the common (pavilion and toilets available).**









Images courtesy Corangamite CMA





Courtesy Geelong Visual Diary



A walk bridge that crosses the Barwon river

Courtesy City of Greater Geelong

**The following article is based on a 1988 document by Mr. N. Gugger**  
(Source: [The Gugger Documents](#)) or [A Shire of Bannockburn historical document](#)).



## **FYANSFORD GRAZING LEASE**

At the turn of the twentieth century, residents of Fyansford took out a grazing lease of approximately fifty acres from Crown Lands situated South and South East of the Fyansford Hotel. The reason being that if a family had a place to graze a couple of cows it would be a big financial help in raising their family with milk, cream and butter.



As the township enlarged, permission was granted to residents West of the Moorabool River at a weekly rate to also graze cows there. Their arrangements worked smoothly for many years - until such time when part of the land was purchased by the Australian Portland Cement works.



Fyansford 1915

More families moved into the area and were employed at the Paper mill, Cement Works and Quarries so more homes were built. This necessitated boundaries, also a quota of cattle had to be imposed, causing some ill feeling. Some residents, who thought they were harshly treated, complained to the Crown Lands Department who then investigated the Committee of Management rules and regulations. The Crown Lands Department informed the complainants that the grazing lease was being run efficiently as noxious weeds were controlled, fencing kept in repair and top dressing as required.



In the year 1929, permission was requested and granted from the Crown Lands Department for approximately one acre of land, for the purpose of planting Lambertiana Cyprus trees. The area was fenced and trees planted; a Member of Parliament was present at the planting, plus all locals, who planted trees. Afterwards a delicious afternoon tea, supplied by the resident ladies, was enjoyed by all.

Some Norfolk Island Pines were planted in the main street, the following week; the strike not being very successful but the Lambertiana Cyprus trees were 100% successful and are today lovely huge trees.



By Clive Rose FynsfordCa 1920s

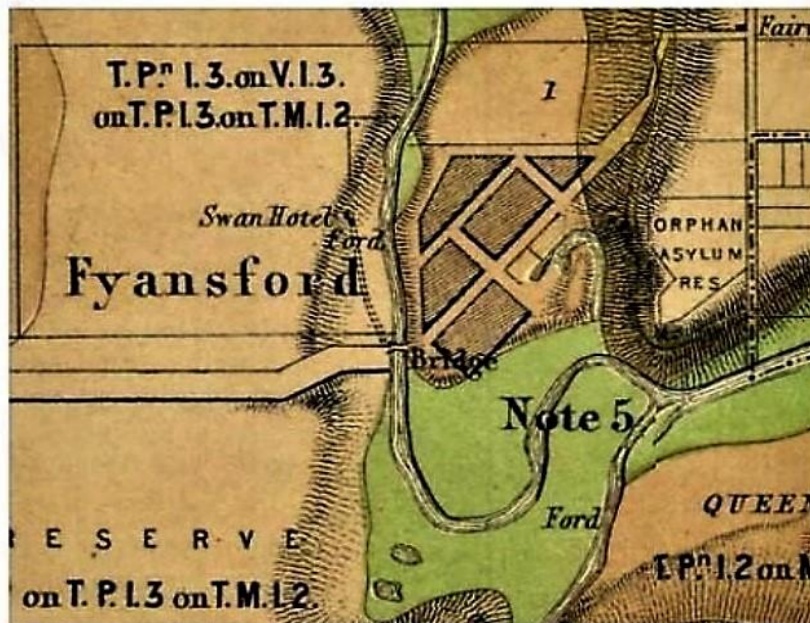
During the Second World War, the Committee loaned several hundred dollars, interest free, for the duration of the war, for the war effort.

As the years passed and times became more prosperous, due to daily deliveries of milk and increased grazing rental, local interest waned in grazing cattle so it was decided, in 1981, that the Fynsford Grazing Lease would end. Today the area is being controlled by the Shire of Corio. Over the years some of the office bearers were:- Wilks, Spencer-Clarke, Synot, Harvey, Gugger, Rumpf, DeGoldi, McMillan and McNaughton.

MR. NORMAN GUGGER, FYANSFORD



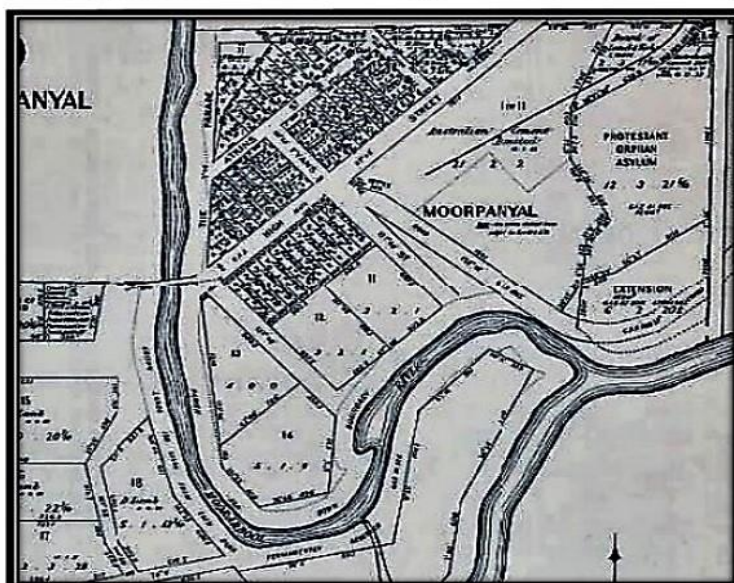




1861 (published 1863), detail, Geological Survey Map of Victoria.  
Source: Public Record Office Victoria



The map shows the location of many important buildings at Fyansford in the pre-1890 era including the hotels, the orphanage which became the Australian Cement Limited recreation headquarters.

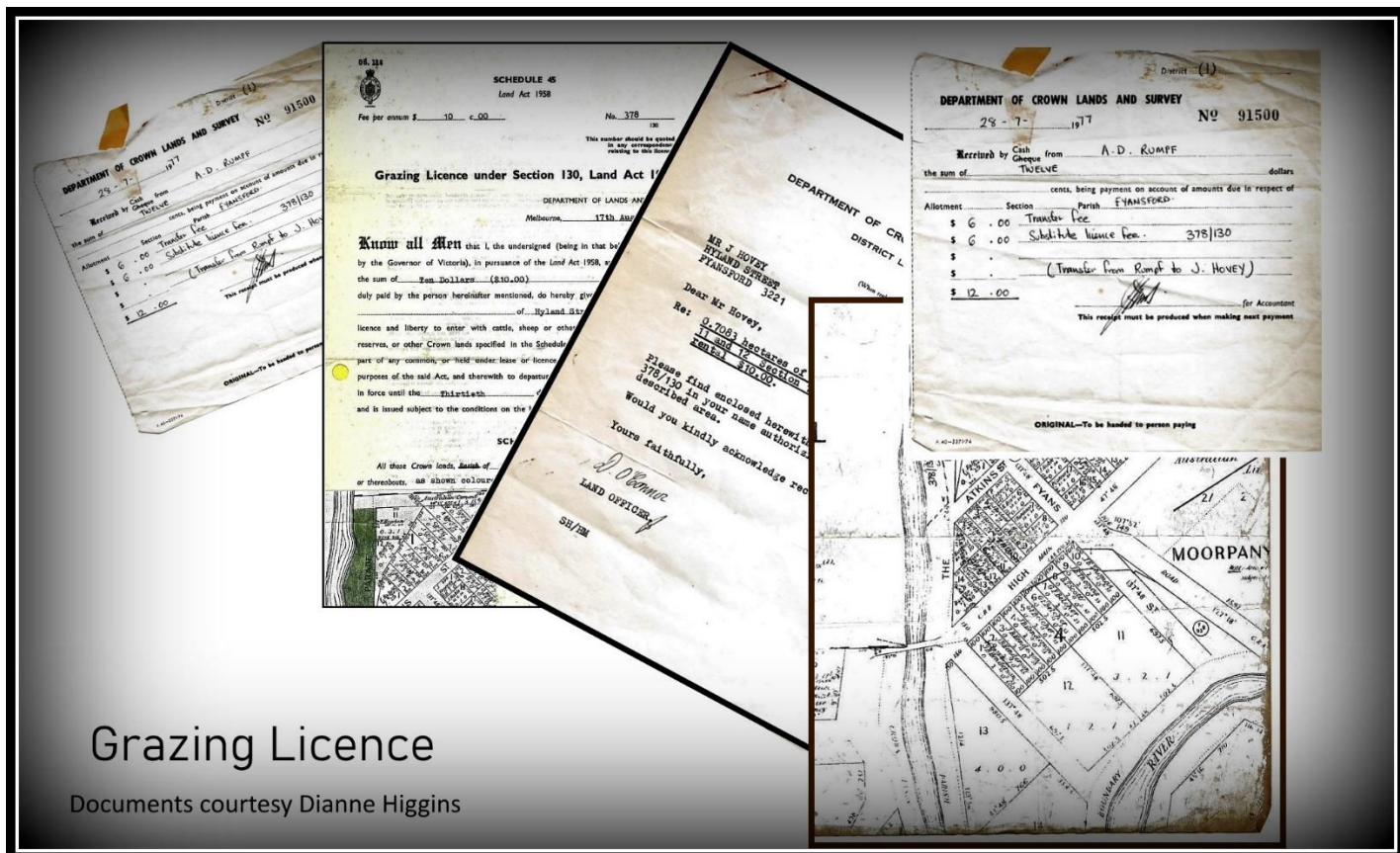






Courtesy JFimages



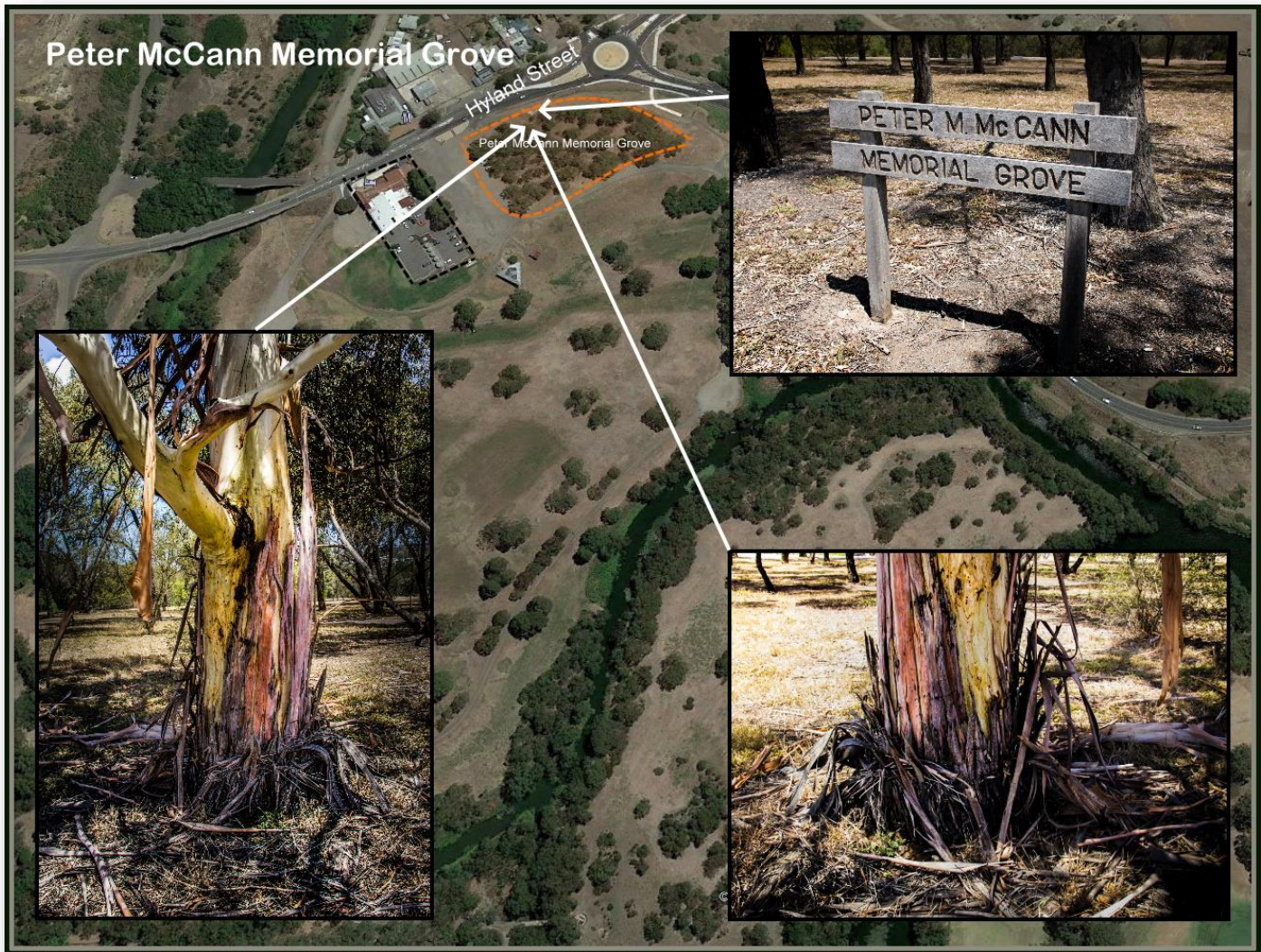


## Grazing Licence

Documents courtesy Dianne Higgins

These fascinating and relevant historic relics from not-so-long-ago  
 were given to Fyansford.com  
 by a sharing, caring local, Dianne Higgins.





**On the NE side of the common is a delightful cluster of native trees; one that immediately takes the walker with imagination back to earlier times – to the ‘sound’ of underfoot bark echoing your tread, the ‘smell’ of Australian woodlands, the ‘sight’ of peeling bark and sundried leaves and the unique ‘feel’ on an extra-hot day that is familiar to those who have trekked the wild country during summers past.**

**This is the Peter McCann Memorial Grove - in memory of an earlier pioneer; one who truly left his mark on Fyansford. It could well be said he changed the face of our community with the hilltop silos becoming an immediately recognisable tourist landmark; one that welcomed returning travellers letting them know they were ‘nearly home’.**



# GREATER GEELONG OUTER AREAS HERITAGE STUDY: STAGE 2

ADMINISTRATIVE SHEET

Existing Use/Type <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Landscape</div>		Key Dates Original 1840 Major Changes 1970		Site Address No. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">51</div> Street/Site Name <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Hyland Street</div>	
Survey Date <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">08/07/1998</div>		Cons Man Plan High Priority		Town/Suburb <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Fyansford</div> Postcode <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">3221</div>	
Recorded By <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">D Rowe &amp; L Huddle</div>		Precinct Name <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Fyans</div>		Current Site Name <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">GC Peter M. McCann Memorial Grove</div>	



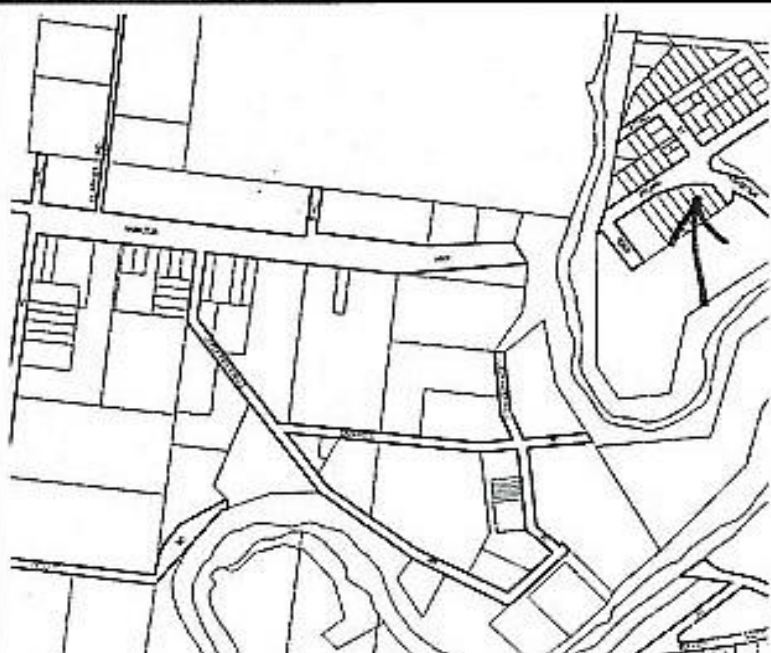
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Heritage Status</b></p> <p><b>Register of the National Estate</b> Database No. <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div> File No. <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div></p> <p><b>Victorian Heritage Register</b> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div></p> <p><b>Planning Scheme:</b> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">C.G.G.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">HO1732</div></p> <p><b>Heritage Inventory (Archaeological)</b> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div></p> <p><b>National Trust Register:</b> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div></p> <p><b>Other:</b> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div></p> <p><b>Recommended Heritage Listings</b></p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Victorian Heritage Register  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Victorian Heritage Inventory  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Register of the National Estate  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HO City of Greater Geelong         </p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Heritage Study Degrees of Significance</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">A H C Assessment Criteria</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Significance Level</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Aesthetic value</td> <td><div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Historic value</td> <td><div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">C.2</div></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Scientific value</td> <td><div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">F.1</div></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Social value</td> <td><div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">H.1</div></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Overall Significance Level</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;"><div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Regional</div></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="width: 48%;"> <p><b>Condition of the fabric</b></p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good  <input type="checkbox"/> Fair  <input type="checkbox"/> Poor  <input type="checkbox"/> Ruinous  <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed         </p> </div> <div style="width: 48%;"> <p><b>Integrity of the site</b></p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good  <input type="checkbox"/> Fair  <input type="checkbox"/> Poor  <input type="checkbox"/> Partially excavated  <input type="checkbox"/> Fully excavated         </p> </div> </div>	A H C Assessment Criteria	Significance Level	Aesthetic value	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div>	Historic value	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">C.2</div>	Scientific value	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">F.1</div>	Social value	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">H.1</div>	Overall Significance Level		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Regional</div>	
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# GREATER GEELONG OUTER AREAS HERITAGE STUDY: STAGE 2

TECHNICAL SHEET

<p>Precinct Name <u>Fyans</u></p> <p>Site Plan/Location Sketch (not to scale)</p> 	<p><b>Site Address</b></p> <p>No. <u>51</u> Street/Site Name <u>Hyland Street</u></p> <p>Town/Suburb <u>Fyansford</u> Postcode <u>3221</u></p> <p>Site Name <u>GC Peter M. McCann Memorial Grove</u></p> <p><b>Australian Map Grid Co-ordinates</b></p> <p>E <u>264180</u>km N <u>5774850</u>km</p> <p>Map <u>Geelong 7721-1-3</u></p> <p>Scale <u>1:25,000</u></p> <p>Ownership <u>State</u></p> <p><b>Cadastral Location</b></p> <p>County <u>Grant</u></p> <p>Parish <u>Moorparryal</u></p> <p>Allotment <u></u></p> <p>Block <u></u></p>																								
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<p><b>Significant Architectural Features</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Original Materials</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Original Chimneys</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wall Decoration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Verandah Structure</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Verandah Decoration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Original Parapet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other Prominent Elevations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Fence</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Early Garden</li> </ul> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Roof</td> <td><u></u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Openings</td> <td><u></u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Decoration</td> <td><u></u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Finish</td> <td><u></u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stylistic Character</td> <td><u></u></td> </tr> </table>		Roof	<u></u>	Openings	<u></u>	Decoration	<u></u>	Finish	<u></u>	Stylistic Character	<u></u>	<p><b>Present Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Human; mining</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Human; visitor erosion</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Human; vandalism</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Human; development</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Human; conservation/maintenance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Human; stock</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Natural Forces; erosion</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Natural Forces; vegetation</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not threatened</li> </ul>													
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# GREATER GEELONG OUTER AREAS HERITAGE STUDY: STAGE 2

<b>Site Address</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Street/Site Name</b>	<b>Town/Suburb</b>	<b>Postcode</b>
	51	Hyland Street	Fyansford	3221
			<b>Site Name</b> GC Peter M. McCann Memorial Grove	
<b>Description</b>				
<p>The site is a relatively flat area of land covered with numerous (recently planted) eucalyptus and She-oak trees. The northern boundary abuts the Hamilton Highway and the southern boundary is adjacent to the Fyansford river flats. To the west is the Fyansford Hotel, bottleshop and parking area. There is a simple sign constructed of two treated pine poles and two flat boards on which 'Peter M McCann Memorial Grove' is written. A fence of treated pine poles surrounds the site.</p>				
<b>History</b>				
<p>This is thought to be the site, or near the site, of Captain Foster Fyans home from 1837 until 1840. Foster Fyans arrived in Geelong on 8 June 1837. He arrived on foot and first established himself in a slab hut, under a Union Jack ceiling, above the junction of the Barwon and Moorabool Rivers, at what became Fyansford. He began a Port Phillip District and Victorian career which included being the first Police Magistrate and the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and later, Mayor and deputy sheriff. He lived on or near this location when he was appointed as the first Commissioner of Crown Lands for the Portland District. Three huts of wood slabs were erected for the Clerk of Works, three constables and Captain Fyans.<sup>2</sup> There is no longer any evidence of their existence above ground.</p> <p>History continued under Comparative Listings on page 4.</p>				
<b>Heritage Precinct: Significant Urban Character Features</b> visually connected to this place (this section is only applicable to places in precincts)				
			<b>Precinct Name</b> Fyans	
<b>Neighbouring Buildings</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Similar Types <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Bulk/Form <input type="checkbox"/> Similar Styles <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Architectural Detailing <input type="checkbox"/> Similar Construction Dates <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Materials & Finishes <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Set Backs <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Fence Designs & Locations			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Significant Historical Development <input type="checkbox"/> Original Paving <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Significant Urban Focil <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Allotment Sizes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Significant Views <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Street Furniture <input type="checkbox"/> Original Kerbing			
<b>Urban Design</b>				
<b>Landscaping</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Treelines <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Gardens <input type="checkbox"/> Median Strips <input type="checkbox"/> Nature Strips			

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# GREATER GEELONG OUTER AREAS HERITAGE STUDY: STAGE 2

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<b>Comparative Listings</b>				
<p><b>History continued.</b> Captain Fyans described his site thus, "... proceeding to the junction of the rivers Marrobool and Barrowon, a distance of three miles, to one of the most beautiful valleys in the world, ever after known Fyans Ford. The change put our party to considerable trouble and labor lost; but we are not to grumble, and so we went, cutting, sawing, and working. So anxious were the men to get housed that in a short time the huts were in progress, ... For about two years and a half, I resided in this beautiful valley. The hut afforded good accommodation; had two rooms, not very large, only ten feet square each, but sufficiently so for the times. The chimney was prodigious: on the old Sydney plan, made of wood, with a remarkably graceful bend thrown from the building. This was my home, and how happy and comfortable people by prudence can make themselves, by attending timely to wants! "<sup>3</sup></p> <p>Mrs Brenda McCann, wife of the late Peter M McCann (III) dedicated the last tree planted at the official opening ceremony 17 Oct 1986, on this site to commemorate the establishment of the Peter McCann Reserve in Fyansford.</p>				
<b>Statement of Cultural Significance</b>				
The Peter McCann Memorial Grove not individually significant but is within the Fyans Precinct.				
<b>References</b>				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Geelong Advertiser</i>.</li> <li>2. John McNeill, <i>A Journey to Destiny 1890 - 1990, 100 years of cement manufacturing at Fyansford</i>, Australian Cement Limited, p11, p67</li> <li>3. P.L. Brown Ed. <i>Memoirs recorded at Geelong, Victoria, Australia by Captain Foster Fyans</i>, Geelong Advertiser Pty Ltd, 1986, ppxi, 208</li> </ol>				

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**I can't help but wonder, "Why the surrounding cyclone fence?"**



**I'd hate to think this small parcel of historic landscape  
has moved into the hands of some developer;  
to be passed on to the highest bidder for the most profitable venture.**

