

# Heritage (Decision about Registration of Tharwa School, Tharwa) Notice 2018

## Notifiable Instrument NI2018—176

made under the

**Heritage Act 2004, s40 (Decision about registration)**

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### **1 Name of instrument**

This instrument is the *Heritage (Decision about Registration of Tharwa School, Tharwa) Notice 2018*.

### **2 Decision about registration**

On 5 April 2018, the ACT Heritage Council (the **Heritage Council**) decided to register Tharwa School, Tharwa (the **Place**).

### **3 Registration details of the Place**

The registration details of the Place are in the schedule.

### **4 Reasons for the decision**

The Heritage Council is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the Place has heritage significance as it meets one or more of the heritage significance criteria in section 10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*. A detailed statement of reasons including an assessment against the heritage significance criteria is provided in the schedule.

### **5 Date registration takes effect**

The registration of the Place takes effect on the day after this notice is notified.

## **6 Revocation**

The *Heritage (Decision about Provisional Registration of Tharwa School, Tharwa) Notice 2017* (NI2017—610) is revoked.

Jennifer O’Connell  
Secretary (as delegate for)  
ACT Heritage Council  
5 April 2018



ACT Heritage Council

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**  
**HERITAGE REGISTER**  
**(Registration)**

For the purposes of s. 40 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, an entry to the heritage register has been prepared by the ACT Heritage Council for the following place:

**Tharwa School**

**Blocks 6, 7, and 8, Section 7, Tharwa**

**DATE OF REGISTRATION**

5 April 2018 Notifiable Instrument 2018–

Copies of the Register Entry are available for inspection at ACT Heritage. For further information please contact:

The Secretary  
ACT Heritage Council  
GPO Box 158  
CANBERRA ACT 2601  
Telephone 13 22 81

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This statement refers to the location of the place as required in s. 12 (b) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

#### **LOCATION OF THE PLACE**

Tharwa School (Tharwa Primary School, Tharwa Provisional School, Tharwa Part-time School)

Tharwa School, Blocks 6, 7, and 8, Section 7, Tharwa.

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This statement refers to the description of the place as required in s.12(c) of the *Heritage Act 2004*. The attributes described in this section form part of the heritage significance of the place. For the purposes of s. 12(c) of the *Heritage Act 2004*, the boundary of the place is at Image 1.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE**

Tharwa School, consisting of the following attributes:

- the 1912 weatherboard schoolhouse, incorporating the 1947 and 1957 extensions and the water tanks;
- the 1963 toilet block
- the 1967 classroom and walkway, incorporating the 1983 extension; and
- the school grounds consisting of:
  - the remaining 1930s border plantings of trees and shrubs, and
  - open areas for school activities and equipment such as, but not limited to, grass, paved areas, gardens, soft landscaping, educational or play equipment.

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This statement refers to the heritage significance of the place as required in s.12(d) of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

#### **STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

Tharwa School is an archetypal early rural school. Established at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when legislation was enabling small rural communities to build schools across the country, it has a standard government designed one-room weatherboard building at its heart that has been added to as the needs of the community have grown. The core of the place has remained and new buildings and facilities have been built around it, showing change and continuity for more than a century of practically continuous use. It is one of only five remaining examples of early rural schools in the ACT and has a high level of integrity as one of only two, along with Hall School, that are part of a continually operating educational facility.

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#### **CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE**

The guiding conservation objective is that Tharwa School shall be conserved and appropriately managed in a manner respecting its heritage significance.

The ACT Heritage Council may adopt heritage guidelines applicable to the place under s25 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

For further information on guidelines applicable to the place, or for advice on proposed works or development, please contact ACT Heritage on 13 22 81.

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## REASON FOR REGISTRATION

The Council has assessed the Tharwa School, Tharwa against the heritage significance criteria and is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the place has heritage significance under three criteria [(a), (b) and (d)] of s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*.

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## ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The Council's assessment against the criteria specified in s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004* is as follows.

In assessing the heritage significance of Tharwa School, Tharwa, the Council considered:

- the original nomination and documentary evidence supplied by the nominator;
- the Council's *Heritage Assessment Policy* (February 2015);
- information provided by a site inspection on 8 September 2017 by ACT Heritage; and
- the report by ACT Heritage titled, *Background Information Tharwa School*, April 2018, containing photographs and information on history, description, condition and integrity;
- information and comments received during the public consultation on the provisional registration of Tharwa School.

Pursuant to s.10 of the *Heritage Act 2004*, a place or object has heritage significance if it satisfies one or more of the following criteria. Future research may alter the findings of this assessment.

**(a) importance to the course or pattern of the ACT's cultural or natural history;**

The Council has assessed Tharwa School against criterion (a) and is satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

Schooling in the Canberra region greatly expanded in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to changes in legislation that made it easier to qualify for funding. This was partly designed to distribute schools more widely across the country allowing the widely dispersed population access to an education. Tharwa School is an important part of this history as it provided access to education for children in rural communities who would not otherwise be able to attend school in the more populated areas. This occurred during a period when small schools were being encouraged so that education could be taken to the children, whereas nowadays school sites are chosen based on the largest numbers of children that could attend. As Tharwa School started in this period, and was centrally located in the rural area, it was able to continue its functions while surrounding small rural schools like Naas and Church Rock Valley closed.

Additionally, Tharwa School shows important changes to educational practices for well over a century as a practically continually running school that has expanded its facilities as needs and requirements changed over the years. While the community-supplied slab building no longer stands, the place demonstrates the standard of government supplied facilities of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that were sympathetically added to the 1912 weatherboard building. This theme continued with the later mid- to late-20<sup>th</sup> century buildings which have designs that are reflective of the changing attitude to educational facilities of that time.

**(b) has uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the ACT's cultural or natural history;**

The Council has assessed Tharwa School against criterion (b) and is satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

Tharwa School is a rare and endangered early school. There have been over thirty small rural schools in the ACT area, and even more in the surrounding region that serviced the area, however there are only five that are still remaining.

Tharwa School is one of the few extant schools in the area that represent the early period of public education in Australia, particularly relating to small rural areas. The other extant schools from this period are St Johns Schoolhouse, Hall School, Tuggeranong School and Ginninderry School (Gungahleen Schoolhouse has been reconstructed and is not considered to be an extant example); of these, only Hall and Tharwa schools have such a long functioning educational function in their various capacities. They are a part of the education system that does not exist anymore and given the density of the ACT now and the ease of transport, it is unlikely to ever be seen in the region again.

**(c) potential to yield important information that will contribute to an understanding of the ACT's cultural or natural history;**

The Council has assessed Tharwa School against criterion (c) and is satisfied that the place does not meet this criterion.

Tharwa School has kept many records since 1899, many of which may have some potential to yield important information that will contribute to an understanding of the ACT's cultural or natural history. However, these records are not a part of the current Tharwa School assets, having been removed from the place by people wishing to ensure they were not lost. Records that may contribute to an understanding of the ACT's cultural history include student enrolments, performance over time, and punishment books; while natural history may be represented in other school records kept as a part of the classes unique to Tharwa School such as rainfall records and other records of farm and rural studies (bee-keeping, agricultural studies, the Young farmers program, etc.). These records may be able to provide empirical evidence of the effects of the changing curriculum, changes in demographics for the region, and information on environmental conditions and changes over time. However, these records, while an important part of its history, are largely not an integral part of the place. They may, however, be considered as a separate heritage object, which if registered should be encouraged to be kept at the school.

The school and grounds may provide some more information about changes over time, however, it is unlikely that this information will be of a significant nature given the amount of archaeological and historical research already conducted around NSW that has already provided an excellent record of early schools in Australia.

**(d) importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or objects;**

The Council has assessed Tharwa School against criterion (d) and is satisfied that the place meets this criterion.

Tharwa School is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of early schools in the region. It retains the original 1912 school building, which was a standard government design, as

well as demonstrating how this was then added to as the school grew. The 1912 building shows the basic level of support that was provided for small rural areas, while the extensions show the growth of the region by proxy of increased enrolments. The later buildings and additions are also important evidence of the school adapting to change over the years by expanding and adding to the buildings and grounds. The 1967 building and its 1983 extension, with its more open and light design, shows the more progressive educational standards of the middle to late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Australian rural schools, i.e. part-time, provisional schools or smaller public schools, have their origins in the *Public Schools Act 1866* and the *Public Instruction Act 1880*, which allowed schools to be formed (by receiving government funding and support) in areas with a fairly small catchment. This had the effect of a proliferation of small schools in the more rural and remote areas of NSW in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The smallest schools required the local community to provide the facilities for the new school, which would often be in the form of a small slab building that could be erected quickly and cheaply by unskilled workers. These initial buildings were often quickly outgrown and the Department of Public Instruction would be requested by parents and teachers alike to provide more adequate facilities, which would often take the form of a basic weatherboard single room building with an enclosed verandah/wash room/cloak room. When these buildings proved to be inadequate for a growing population, they would be added to as required, until eventually an entirely new, larger main building would be required.

Tharwa School demonstrates many of the principal characteristics of Australian rural schools including:

- non-extant, original low-quality community-provided building (exists only as historical value and archaeological potential);
- initial government supplied building, consisting of:
  - a single room building with enclosed verandah as a washroom/cloakroom;
  - weatherboard construction;
  - corrugated iron roof;
  - simple open gable roof (although larger schools would have a hipped roof)
  - simple geometry/Georgian style architecture, original section rectangular in plan;
  - several extensions added on to original building as required; and
  - shelter sheds added on.
- water tanks;
- school grounds, often with garden and later additions including play equipment and paved areas; and
- later additional buildings taking over as the main classroom, extended as needs expanded.

**(e) importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by the ACT community or a cultural group in the ACT;**

The Council has assessed Tharwa School against criterion (e) and is satisfied that the place does not meet this criterion.

While the Tharwa School has a rural character and charm and has had sympathetic extensions that are likely valued by the local Tharwa and catchment residents, there is no evidence to show that it is important in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by the wider ACT community or a cultural group in the ACT.

**(f) importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement for a particular period;**

The Council has assessed Tharwa School against criterion (f) and is satisfied that the place does not meet this criterion.

Tharwa School has various elements that are standard designs and extensions for the periods that they were built and, as such, is not considered to be important in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement for a particular period.

**(g) has a strong or special association with the ACT community, or a cultural group in the ACT for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;**

The Council has assessed Tharwa School against criterion (g) and is satisfied that the place does not meet this criterion.

Tharwa School is likely to have very strong and special associations with the residents of Tharwa and the school's catchment area as evidenced by successive generations being enrolled as well as community involvement in fundraising and other campaigns. However, the association required in this criterion must be with the wider ACT community or a cultural group in the ACT, which has not been demonstrated.

**(h) has a special association with the life or work of a person, or people, important to the history of the ACT.**

The Council has assessed Tharwa School against criterion (h) and is satisfied that the place does not meet this criterion.

There have been many people that are prominent in the history of the region that have an association with Tharwa School, but it cannot be demonstrated that they have a special association, i.e. one that is above the ordinary, with the school, or that what has made them important to the history of the ACT is directly related to that special association with the school.



# SITE PLAN



Image 1 Tharwa School registration boundary