Brief history of Heathcote

In the heart of central Victoria, nestled between the stunning McHarg and McIvor Ranges, and just 100km from Melbourne, is the charming township of Heathcote.

Heathcote boasts a rich history. A number of prehistoric quarry sites have been found at nearby Mount Camel Range, providing evidence of ancient Aboriginal associations with the land.

Pastoral runs and squatters called Heathcote home from the 1830s, but it wasn't until gold was discovered at McIvor Creek in 1852 that the region really exploded. The gold rush brought in a digger population estimated at around 40,000 by late 1853, but by the following year, many of them had moved on.

The first official land sale was in January 1854 and it was around this time that the township was named Heathcote. Records are unclear as to why – possibly it was after a newly appointed British MP, or perhaps simply the abundance of wild heath growing in the area.

By the mid-1860s the town had a hospital, school and Anglican, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and Catholic churches. Many beautiful buildings from this era still stand, particularly in the main street, showcasing the stunning architecture and craftsmanship of the time.

After the gold rush had faded in the 1870s, many people took up farming as a way to live and grazing, agriculture and dairying have remained mainstays of the Heathcote economy.

Modern day Heathcote benefits from beautiful architecture, picturesque surrounds and rich, Cambrian soil producing a local food and wine industry that is known globally to be one of the very best.

Historic Post Office

Historic site of District Road Board meetings

Visitor Information Centre

Be sure to pick up these other great brochures for what to see and do while in the Heathcote region.

For more information, please contact

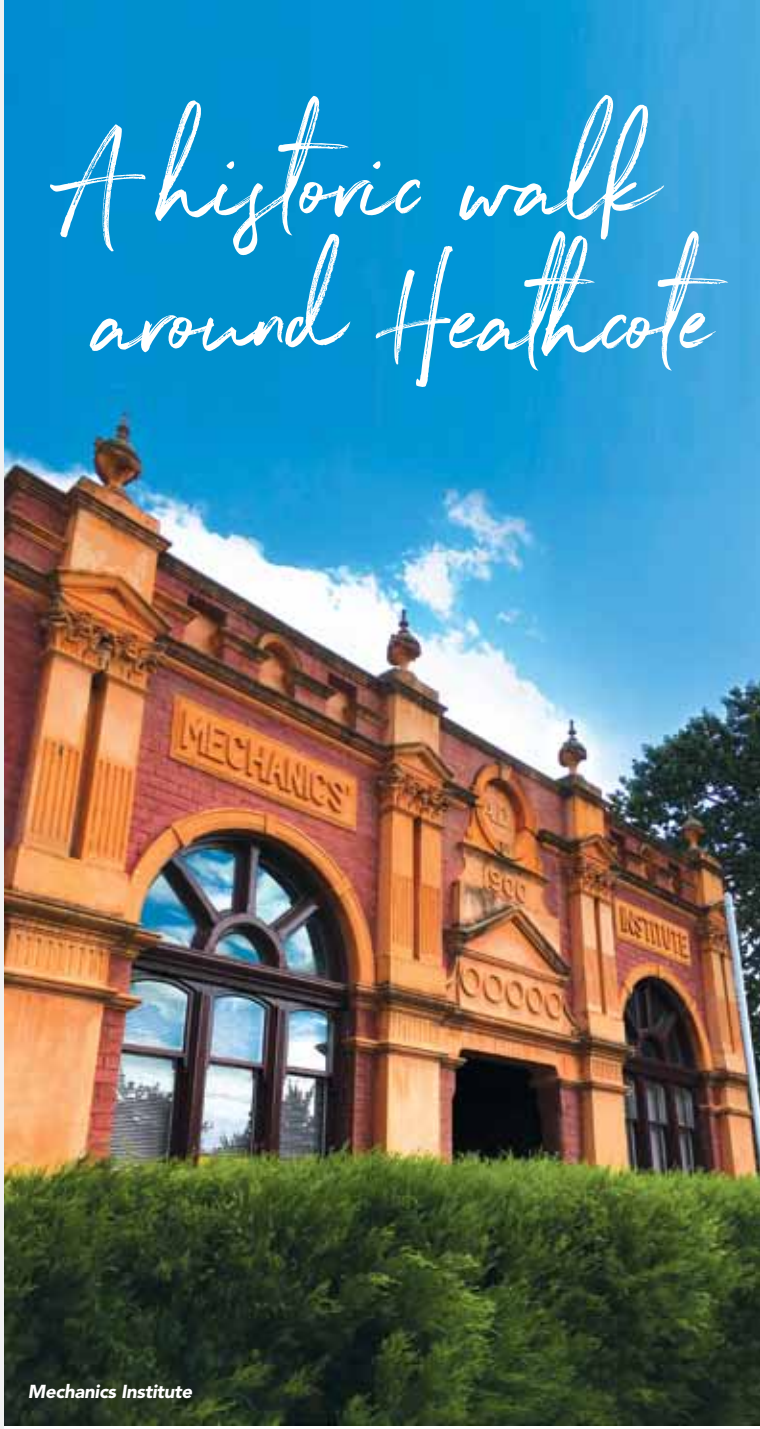
Heathcote Visitor Centre
Open daily 9am - 5pm *(except Christmas Day)*
(03) 5433 3121
heathcote.org.au
heathcotevic@bendigo.vic.gov.au

@ExploreHeathcote #ExploreHeathcote

Heathcote

CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO

A historic walk around Heathcote



Mechanics Institute

Heathcote

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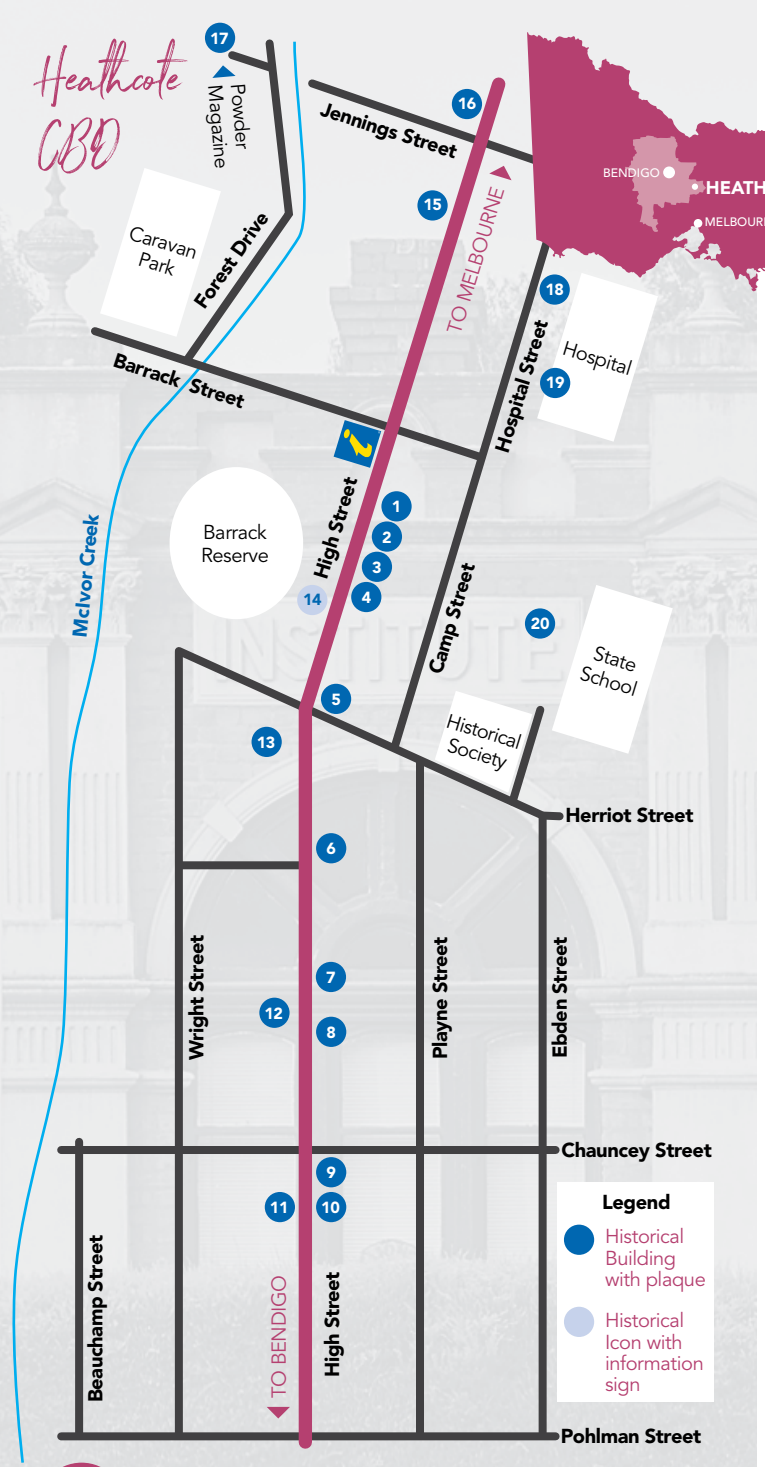
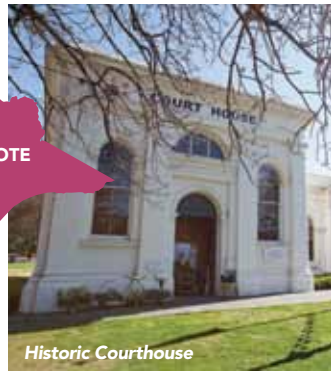
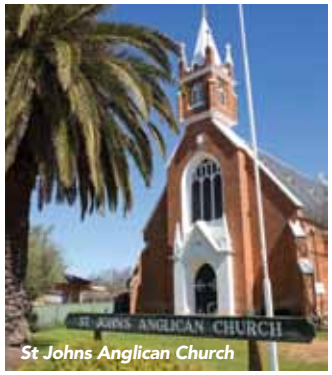


The historical buildings and icons of Heathcote featured in this guide are identified by a historical plaque. Look out for these for further information.


Historic Courthouse

Heathcote Hospital


St Johns Anglican Church

1 Mechanics Institute – 1900
Constructed to replace a timber hall, the Institute has provided a venue for social, cultural, health and educational activities as far back as 1859. It now accommodates Senior Citizens, Girl Guides and Lions Club.

2 Old Courthouse – 1863
The Courthouse served the town from 1863 to 1989. Designed by Melbourne architect, John Flannagan, the building still houses the original witness box and Judge's Bench and is now home to a craft shop.

3 Shire Offices – 1863
Combined with the Courthouse, the interior of the original Shire Offices were gutted by a 1951 fire. Rebuilt in 1953, the space is used as the regional office of the City of Greater Bendigo.

4 The Commercial Bank – 1885
The building originally consisted of the banking premises and a manager's residence and now accommodates The Bank Heathcote Cellar Door and Ministry of Chocolate café.

5 Post Office and Residence – 1870
Built by the Public Works Department, this building served as the Heathcote Post Office until 2013.

6 Moore Christie & Spinks Flour Mill – 1869
The Mill was of the stone grounding type, powered by steam, but it could not compete with the steel roller mills, and so it was closed soon after opening. The chimney of Christie's Mill is still standing today. Now a private residence, famous artist Leonard French lived here and created the stained glass ceiling of National Gallery of Victoria from this building.

7 St Johns Anglican Church – 1868, & Budd Hall – 1854
St John's Anglican (built by Vahland and Getzschmann) was the only local church to remain on its original site granted by the government in 1853. Budd Hall was the first church to be built in Heathcote.

8 Union Hotel – 1856
Heathcote's oldest existing and longest-serving hotel still stands in its original condition today.

9 Craven's Store – 1853
Serving as a General Store until 1941, Craven's also included a bakery and coach service. Since 1997 the building has been host to the Heathcote Winery, Cellar Door and Galleria Food & Wine Bar.

10 The Emeu Hotel – about 1857
Originally built as a miner's pub, the small shop at the side was Brady's Butcher Shop. It is now Emeu Inn Bed & Breakfast.

11 Survey Office – 1854
The district surveyor Phillip L.S. Chauncey, surveyed the township in 1853-54. The original building (stone section at rear), was extended in 1897 for private residence and a doctor's practice.

12 Site of first District Road Board Meetings – 1854
Originally the premise of William Dove's bakery, grocery and drapery business, the building has been a private residence since 1925.

13 Mona Lisa Gallery – 1850s
Heathcote's St Andrews Presbyterian Church moved and relocated here in 1863. The brick church was built next door in 1955 and the building is now a private residence and gallery.

14 The Quartz Mill – gold rush remnant
Used for the crushing of gold bearing stone. This Quartz Mill was originally from Redcastle Mine and was donated to the Mclvor Historical Society by Mr Wes Tyson and Mr Jack Rozinszky.

15 Masonic Hall – 1859
A purpose built and continuously occupied Masonic Hall.

16 Bank of Australasia – 1860
Taken over by the Oriental Bank just six months after opening, the building was sold to Bank of Victoria in 1865. The remnant stone guttering was left at the owners' request when the kerb and guttering was modernised.

17 Powder Magazine – 1864
Built by the Public Works Department and used to store explosives, it's a rare building type featuring fine masonry and brick vaulting work.

18 Former Shire Hall – about 1864
Renovated externally but remnants of the original sandstone building remain. Through the years this property has housed a bank, Roads' Board, Shire Office and Private School and is now Connally's Real Estate.

19 Heathcote Hospital – 1859
Originally established in a tent in 1853, the building was completed in 1859. Today all that remains of the original building are the front stone walls.

20 Camp Hill
In the 1853 gold rush, the government set up a tent based camp here, including government offices, police barracks, gold office, courthouse, lockup, stables, store rooms and living quarters. The remaining building is the stone gaol block. Now used by the Heathcote Historical Society.