ROOMS

BACK ROOM - Previously the Magistrate's Room for closed court sessions and private meetings.

COURTROOM/GIFT SHOP - Previously, the Clerk of Courts office for administration, payment of fines, registration of witnesses, etc.

KITCHEN - Previously a holding room for male previously, with interview room.

VISITOR INFORMATION - Previously a holding room for female prisoners, with an entry to the dock.

PRESERVATION OF BUILDING AND FURNISHINGS

The first entry in a receipt book held by Yarram Courthouse was made in 1856. The Public Works Department steathily removed this book, along with other historical records, and all the furnishings on a single day in 1990; prompting the fight to save the building and its history. In 1994, after significant lobbying by the people of Yarram, the furniture was removed from storage at Bairnsdale, but the records were not. In the intervening time, a local business man had offered to buy the Courthouse and have it demolished.

Grants from the Victorian Government, Wellington Shire Council, the generosity of local businesses and charity of many volunteers, assisted by May Scammell (Mirridong Services Inc). and Frank Norden (Wellington Shire Council) have helped modernise, maintain and secure the Courthouse for future generations.

THE MIDDLE OF EVERYWHERE

CONTACT US

Yarram Courthouse Gallery and Visitor Information Centre
9 Rodgers Street
Yarram VIC 3971
Phone: 03 5182 6553
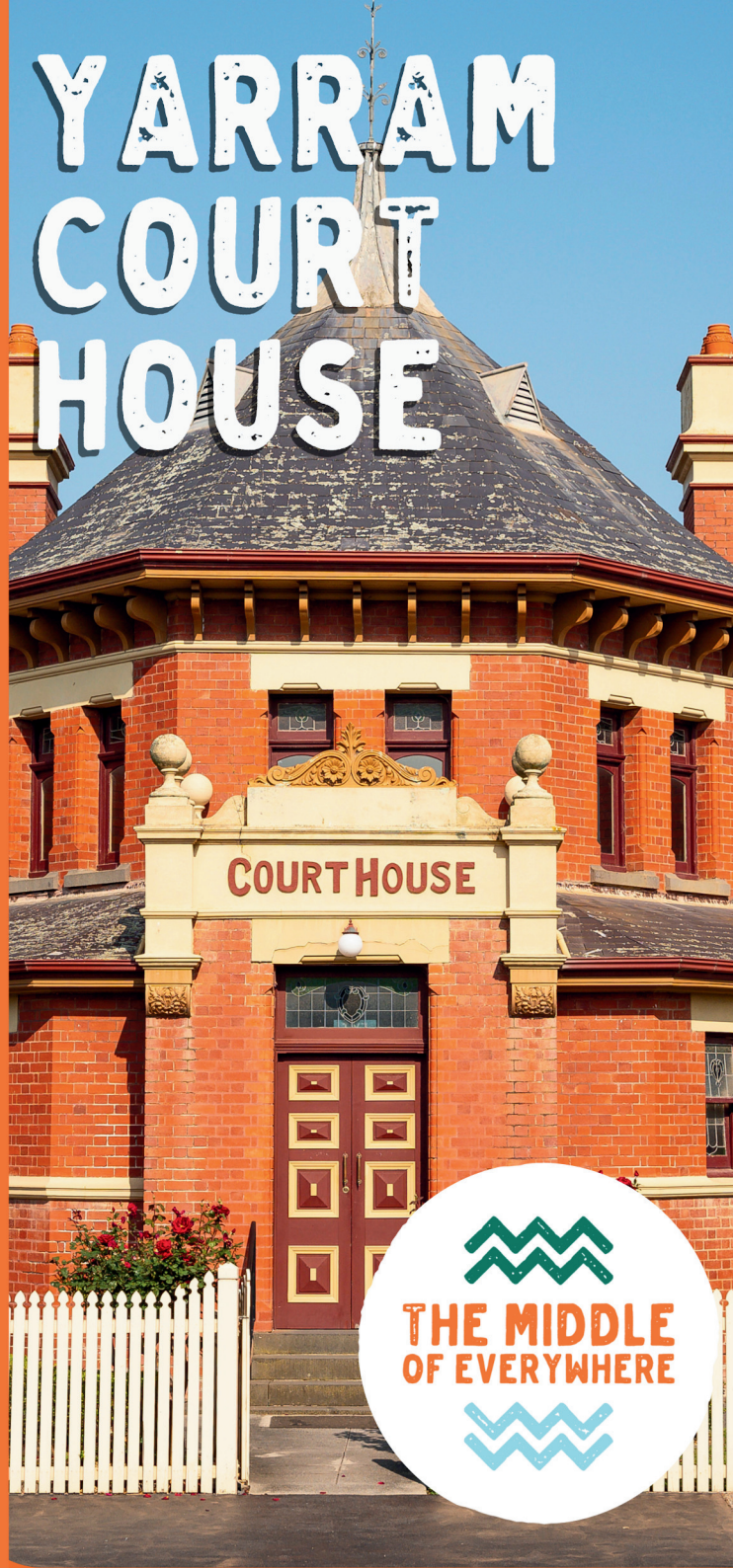Website: www.yarramcourthousegallery.com
Email: yarram@wellingtoninfo.com.au
Social Media: @themiddleofeverywhere

SCAN THE QR CODE AND FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF EVERYWHERE

YARRAM COURT HOUSE

COURT HOUSE

THE MIDDLE OF EVERYWHERE

HISTORY OF THE COURTHOUSE

The history of the Yarram Courthouse is not complete without an understanding of the history of the surrounding localities, for the settlement of Yarram wasn't formalised until the imminent decline of the shipping industry at Port Albert.

1843 - Alberton, a government township is established east of the Albert River, but is slow to develop.

1846 - A small jetty for loading for livestock is erected at what is to become Port Albert.

1850 - Port Albert is declared a port of entry and clearance and a customs presence has been established.

1850s - Gold is discovered north of Gippsland in the High Country. Volumes of shipping at Port Albert river the Port of Melbourne.

1858 - Due to monopoly of land by merchants at the port, Palmerston, a governement township is established immediately adjacent to Port Albert (north of South Street). Subsequently, many substantial government buildings, including a courthouse are constructed.

1861 - A post office is opened at Yarram, domiciled "Yarram Yarram".

1860s - Navigation of Lakes Entrance bar becomes common, and shipping for East Gippsland and Sale largely bypasses Port Albert.

1879 - The Gippsland Railway from Melbourne to Sale is completed.

1892 - The Great Southern Railway, from Melbourne to Palmerston (Port Albert) is opened.

1897 - The Shire of Alberton decides to relocate its headquarters from Alberton to Yarram, only five kilometres away. With the relocation of the municipal centre, business and services begin to move to Yarram and Alberton declines.

1900s - Despite having a courthouse in Albert and in Palmerston, most local judicial administration is already handled in Yarram.

1905 - The little used Alberton Court House is relocated to Toora to become school buildings. Pressure to close the Palmerston Court House at this time is firmly resisted by the Solicitor General.

1906 - The Public Works Department acquires the present day site of the Yarram Court House, on the corner of Rodgers Street and Commercial Road, for £300 in February 1906, stating that 'the building will be brick and in the style of architecture similar to Heidleberg Court House'. A Mr J.B. Cohen, who designed the Heidleberg building, designs the Yarram Court House building.

1907 - Tenders were called for the new building in May 1907. Locals criticised the design as local timbers were not used. However the Court House was duly constructed by a Mr N. Falconer, at a cost of just over £2795.

1908 - Council minutes, dated 13th August 1908, record Cr McKenzie reminding councillors of the official opening of the Court House. On that date, a banquet celebrated the opening of what remains one of Yarram's most notable buildings. Mr J.W. Clarke, the then clerk of petty sessions, moved in the very next day. Subsequently, on October 13th 1908, an assault case was heard by the first sitting of the County Court.

1915 - Palmerston Court House is closed.

1921 - A branch line of the Great Southern Railway is built from Alberton to Yarram, and then onto Woodside.

1940s - Rail service between Albert and Port Albert/Palmerston are terminated.

1989 - Yarram Court House is closed for Court proceedings.

ARCHITECTURE

Roofed in slate, the Courthouse is built of Northcote bricks on reinforced concrete foundations. The brickwork is tuck pointed all round, and ornamented with cement moulding.

The massing of the building and its distinctive roof, reflect the Edwardian style of architecture.

The main feature is a high, centrally located, octagonal courtroom, which is highlighted by clerestory windows above eye-level. The courtrooms are panelled in Karui pine, with doors of varnished red deal (Scots pine). Stained glass windows, with an impressive high-pitched roof, antique leather furnishings combine to present a most impressive interior.

Ancillary offices surround the courtroom, and a corridor on two sides provide access to the courtroom. The building includes a magistrate's room, a jury room and a prisoner's room with entry into the dock. Mitcham tiles were used in the three porches. The surrounding fencing is made of jarrah.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Secure lighting.
- Remediation and prevention of rising damp.
- Furnishings, including seating, tables and shelving.
- Restoration of timber floors.

Officially reopened on the 5th September 2005, Mirridong Services leases the building and has been operating as an art gallery and visitor information centre since.