

# John Foord Bridge over Murray River at Corowa

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## Item

<b>Name of Item</b>	John Foord Bridge over Murray River at Corowa
<b>Item Number</b>	4301018
<b>Type of Item</b>	Built
<b>Item Sub-Type</b>	Iron Lattice Bridges
<b>Roadloc</b>	
<b>Address</b>	**** Wahgunyah Road (MR 86) Corowa 2646
<b>Local Government Area</b>	Corowa
<b>Owner</b>	Local Government
<b>Current Use</b>	Road bridge
<b>Former Use</b>	Road bridge

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## Statement of significance

<b>Statement of significance</b>	The John Foord bridge, completed in 1892, is of State significance. The iron lattice trusses are significant for their materials and form, and their association with British Bridge technology and design engineer John A McDonald. The form and setting have high aesthetic and social significance. The bridge as a whole is extremely important and visible identity of the historic precinct of Wahgunyah and Corowa.
<b>Date Significance Updated</b>	29 May 2009

## Description

<b>Designer</b>	JA McDonald
<b>Builder</b>	Wahgunyah Murray Bridge Co.
<b>Construction years</b>	**** - 1892
<b>Physical description</b>	<p>John Foord Bridge is an iron lattice truss bridge one lane wide across the Murray River at Corowa. The main axis of the bridge is north-south.</p> <p>There are three main spans supported on twin cylindrical cast iron piers. On the northern approach there are four upper spans. The approach spans are timber girders supported on timber trestle piers with a timber deck. The main span also has a timber deck.</p> <p>The three main truss spans are of riveted steel lattice construction, (approximate spans of 42.82m (centre) and 34.6m (ends)). The trusses support riveted iron cross girders and longitudinal timber stringers. The three main spans are set at a high level alleviating the need for a lift section.</p> <p>The northern approach spans range from 9.14m to 10.66m and are of traditional timber girder construction. The girders are supported on timber trestle piers. The girders are also propped at mid span.</p> <p>The bridge has a concrete abutment at the southern end and a timber abutment at the northern end. There is a footway on the eastern side of the bridge. The bridge was built in 1892.</p>
<b>Physical Condition and/or Archaeological Potential</b>	Original condition assessment: 'The northern approach section is inadequate for current traffic needs. The timber deck and approaches require constant rehabilitation. The timber deck requires regular maintenance due to damage by vibration.' (Last updated: 21/05/1998.) 2007-08 condition update: 'Good.' (Last updated: 17/4/09.)
<b>Modifications and dates</b>	N/A
<b>Date condition updated</b>	17 April 2009

## History

<b>Historical notes</b>	<p>The Corowa-Wahgunyah area was first explored by Charles Sturt in 1838 and rapidly taken up as squatting runs. The most influential settler was John Foord, son of a well-known Parramatta coach-builder, who was attracted by the district when he was overlanding cattle from the Monaro to Victoria in 1839 and immediately returned to take up 12000 hectares, straddling the Murray.</p> <p>Agriculture, with wheat and tobacco, developed and the gold rushes of the 1850s (including one at Corowa) created a new, significant market. Foord was encouraged in 1856 to lay out a private town on the Victorian side of the river, called Wahgunyah, and in 1857 he bought Henry Hopwood's Echuca punt when Hopwood built his pontoon bridge there. The punt was installed at Wahgunyah but was replaced in 1863 by a privately owned wooden toll-bridge operated by a company headed by John Foord.</p> <p>The bridge was decisive in encouraging urban development on the New South Wales side, where North Wahgunyah, Foord's second private town, became Corowa. The customs houses at the Corowa bridge handled large amounts of wool and the wheat and oats crops were very substantial in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The wooden bridge deteriorated with heavy traffic and in 1890 tenders were called by the Government of New South Wales to construct a new iron bridge.</p> <p>The bridge, completed in 1892, is the sixth in a series of seven lattice truss bridges designed by J A McDonald between 1887 and 1893. Despite local protests at the narrowness of the 5.5 metre carriageway, the original design was not altered and it remains unchanged today. The wooden bridge of 1863 was demolished in 1894, two years after the iron bridge was opened. John Foord, founder of both Wahgunyah and Corowa, builders of the first bridge and owner of the riverboat Wahgunyah, who had died in 1883 but whose widow was still alive in 1892, was the obvious eponym for the iron bridge.</p>
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Listings

Heritage Listing	Reference Number	Gazette Number	Gazette Page
Register of the National Estate	015941	126	0004
Heritage Act - s.170 NSW State agency heritage register			
Local Environmental Plan	Sch 1	100	8455
National Trust of Australia register			

Assessment of Significance

Historical Significance	The John Foord Bridge has historical significance as an important link over the Murray River that has existed for over 100 years. It was erected at a time of high commercial activity in the town of Corowa, although river traffic was declining with the coming of the railway. The John Foord Bridge also has historical importance as an iron lattice truss bridge. The lattice trusses were of British Bridge technology which was still dominant at this time. The bridge is one of eighteen surviving iron lattice bridges in New South Wales which were the dominant group of major road bridges from 1873 to 1893. It is the only three span lattice bridge with spans of 113, 140, 113 feet exceeded only by Aberdeen and Elderslie, both over the Hunter River. At the time of completion 1892, it was one of only four bridges over the Murray River (Albury, Corowa, Mulwala and Echuca) so it had a significant impact on inter-colonial commercial communication. The bridge is a significant example of its type and has extremely high integrity.
Historical Association	****
Aesthetic/Technical Significance	The John Foord Bridge has aesthetic significance due to its outstanding setting and landmark qualities. The bridge provides a gateway to NSW and the town of Corowa. With the open land on the Corowa Bank and the colonial buildings on the high Wahgunyah side the bridge forms a heritage environment that is largely untouched. The combination of size and setting provides an excellent and rare example of road and river.
Social Significance	The John Foord Bridge has high significance as the only iron lattice bridge in the region. The bridge was featured in promotion material about Corowa as the venue for the 1893 Federation Conference. Glenda Campbell of the Historical Society expressed that the bridge ties in the Federation history of the twin towns of Corowa and Wahgunyah. The John Foord Bridge is the only bridge along the Murray River named after a pioneer. The social importance of the bridge is tempered by its perceived traffic inadequacies.
Research Significance	This bridge is a rare example of an iron lattice bridge being only one of its type in the group of road bridges over the Murray River between Albury and the South Australian border. The bridge is in fair condition and has high integrity. It includes all the characteristics of iron lattice truss bridges constructed in the era of 1893 to 1893. John A McDonald, its designer, was the leading bridge engineer in the Public Works Department at the time, whose design for timber truss road bridges in 1884, now bears his name. The bridge has increased significance as a unique member of the Murray group of bridges.
Rarity	****
Representativeness	****
Integrity/Intactness	****
Assessed Significance	State

References

Type	Author	Year	Title
Written	C O'Connor	1985	Spanning Two Centuries: Historic Bridges of Australia
Written	Limbrecht C	1978	A Brief History of Wahgunya
Written	O'Connor C	1983	'Register of Australian Historic Bridges'
Written	O'Connor C	1997	'Spanning Two Centuries : Historic Bridges of Australia'
Written	R P Whitworth	1866	Bailliere's New South Wales Gazetteer and Road Guide
Written	B Burton	1973	Flow Gently Past: the Story of the Corowa District
Written	Pennay, Bruce	1997	'Federation at the Border : A Thematic History & Survey of Places Related to Federation in the Albury & Corowa District'.

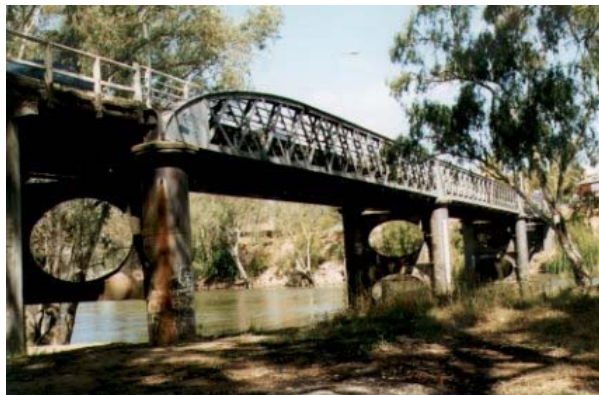
Study details

Title	Year	Author	Inspected by	Guidelines used
Murray Crossings Heritage Study	1998	Hughes Trueman Reinhold		Yes
Indigo Shire Heritage Study	2000	Peter Freeman Pty Ltd Conservation Architects & Planners		Yes
Study of Heritage Sig. of pre 1930 RTA Controlled Metal Road Bridges in NSW	2001	Cardno MBK		Yes

Custom fields

<b>RTA Region</b>	South West
<b>Bridge Number</b>	5695
<b>CARMS File Number</b>	104.146 (Information on NT Victoria listing and assessment information is in FN M2483)
<b>Property Number</b>	Bridge
<b>Conservation Management Plan</b>	****

## Images



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