

LEX LOCI'S TRAVELS

7 APRIL 2021

An irregular one-pager from The Public Land Consultancy

Lex stops on the Roadside At Tarrington on the Hamilton Hwy



Tarrington is one of those little towns you just drive right through. You slow down at the 80k sign, watch out in case there's a police camera, then speed up again at the 100k sign.

But our Lex has stopped. His attention has been drawn to certain roadside artworks. As he is well aware, 'art' has taken some weird directions in recent times, but there's no doubt about the Tarrington haybales: they are works of art.

The artists are the local farmers, their medium is the haybale, and their gallery is the roadside.

By what authority do they mount their exhibition here? Lex finds himself working through questions of road ownership, control, and management.

There's more legislation here than you can point a stick at. The *Road Management Act* addresses agency responsibility; the *Road Safety Act* addresses traffic, the *Planning and Environment Act* native vegetation. The *Aboriginal Heritage Act* addresses Aboriginal sites, the *Catchment and Land Protection Act* weeds and rabbits, the *Electricity Safety Act* powerlines - and so forth. Nothing about artworks.

So, what about roadside litigation? Well, *Perovic v Ballarat* was all about a stone gutter. *Monty v Bayside* was about a guard rail, *Kennedy v Campaspe* a footpath, and *Clarke v Shepparton* a stormwater pit. Again, nothing about artworks.

So are artworks allowed on roadsides? Lex comes to the conclusion that he doesn't much care, provided that the residents of Tarrington are allowed to express their creativity.

Roadsides are community places. Like many towns, Tarrington has a playground and a recreation reserve, and a once-a-year racecourse, but the better used public land seems to be the roadside. This is in effect the community centre.



Let's face it, if Tarrington had an actual Art Gallery, how many travelers would stop and go in? To be bewildered by the bizarre installations that these days pass as artworks? Not our Lex. ♦

See you there! Lex Loci
Tarrington is in Gunditjamara country