

Sites

- *Large Concrete Dam*
- *Hand laid stone channels*
- *Maori Lass mine site*
- *Views to depth of mine*
- *Story board*

SITUATED

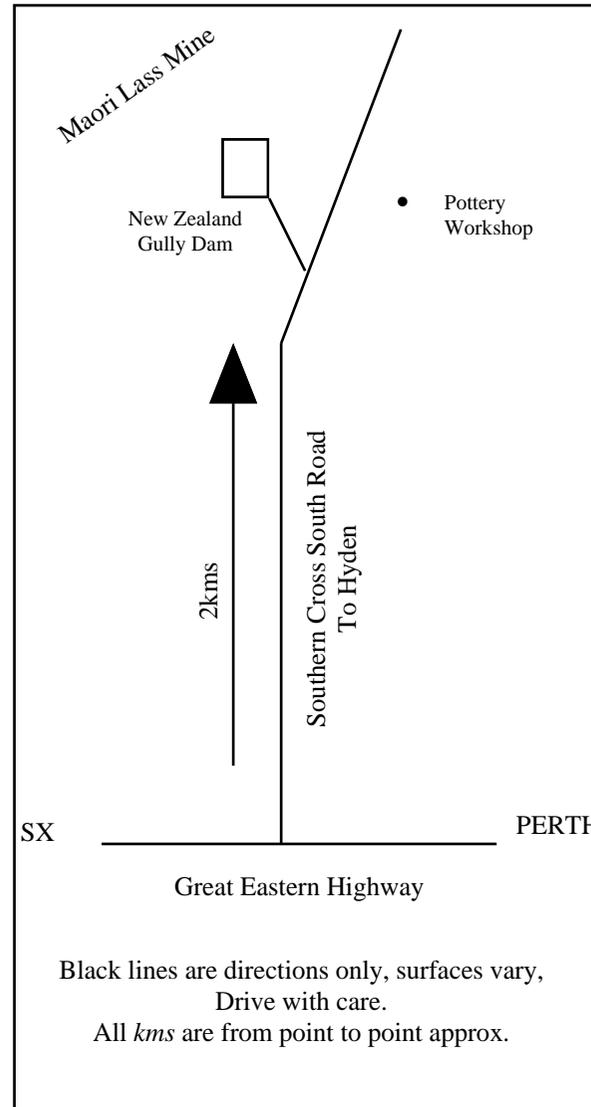
1km west on Great Eastern Highway, turn left onto Southern Cross South Road to Hyden.

2kms to gate and entrance on left. Plaque indicates this historical site.

Gravel all weather road.



New Zealand Gully Dam



Maori Lass Mine

New Zealand Gully Dam & Maori Lass Mine



Maori Lass Mine



New Zealand Gully Dam & Maori Lass Mine

Water!

Or lack of it was the curse of early Southern Cross. Between 1888 & 1894 the only source of water to service an ever expanding town was obtained from rock holes, soaks, what ran off the roof of the houses or from the condensers around the lake. These condensers turned salt water into palatable drinking water and was sold at a very high price.

As the railway reached Southern Cross in 1894, water was carted via rail from Northam some 260kms to the west, this was meant to be a temporary measure. As the population swelled the government considered it necessary for a large dam to be built. This led to the New Zealand Gully Dam site being selected, due to the considered good run off from the hills alongside.

A catchment of 300 acres was set aside, care was taken to ensure the area be kept free of pollution and trenches were built, some stone lined to channel water into the dam. The dam had a holding capacity of 1 & ¼ million gallons. To provide an outlet, a stand pipe and tank was erected with pumping facilities. Water was carted the 1 & ½ miles to Southern Cross by horse and cart and sold for £1 per 100 gallons. Spring carts equipped with a water tank and fast horse were used to enable more than one trip a day to be carried out. Mostly the water was used for washing and the animals, some 700 horses and camel teams operated in the area at the time.

Condensed water was still used for drinking and cooking purposes.

A stone cottage was built at the north side of the dam for the caretaker, his duties being to ensure that the water was not stolen.

On completion of the Dam by the PWD in July 1894, good rains in January to June 1895, filled it to its capacity. The railway stopped carting water, the condensers closed down for several months. The Council even had plans to pipe water to town using 1 & ½ inch sheeting with riveted and soldered joints as far as Wimmera Hill, where they proposed to build a reservoir. However good fortune ran out.

Heat evaporation, lack of rain in the following seasons, extremely dry 1900-1901, the cracking of the concrete walls plus the great demand on the limited supply available saw the return of the condensers and rail supplied water.

In 1903 the goldfields pipeline reached Southern Cross . A great ceremony was conducted with the turning on of the first water tap!

The New Zealand Gully Dam lay dormant until 1980, when the area was sold to a local farmer who restored the dam into working order, with great foresight he introduced Marron and fish stock with moderate success. Eventually with mining becoming more prominent the area was sold to a mining company.

Clay from this area was used some two years prior to 1894 for brick manufacture to build the existing Post Office and old Court House in Southern Cross.

The first Race Course in the eastern Goldfields was also in this area.

Myth or Mystery?

It was recorded, a local doctor and nurse both drowned while swimming in the dam. Was it suicide? How did they drown? What actually happened, no one seems to know. We leave it to your own imagination.

Maori Lass was the name given to the Mine alongside this dam.



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Maori Lass Mine

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