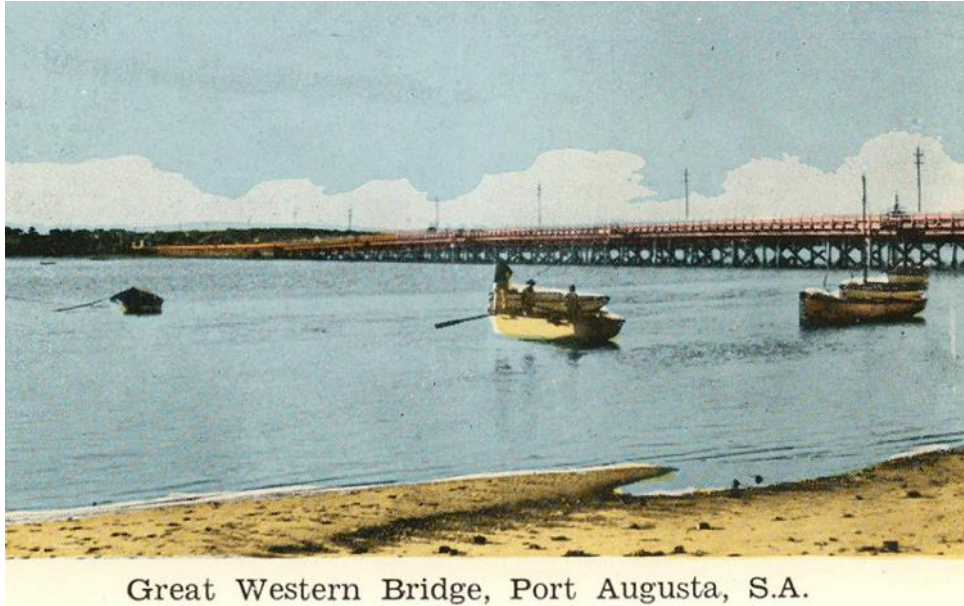


HERITAGE ASSESSMENT (ABRIDGED)

NAME: Great Western Bridge

PLACE: 26565

ADDRESS: Barngarla Country
Foreshore, Port Augusta



Great Western Bridge, Port Augusta, S.A.

Coloured postcard of the Great Western Bridge c.1948, showing the additional piles and bracing added after the bridge was widened in 1944.

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ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Heritage Significance:

As this place is not considered to meet any of the State criteria, a Statement of Heritage Significance has not been prepared.

Relevant South Australian Historical Themes

4 Building Settlements, Towns and Cities

4.6 Supplying services and utilities

5 Developing South Australia's economies

5.6 Connecting South Australia through transport and communications

Comparability / Rarity / Representation:

Bridge Types

Bridges are broadly categorised as either fixed or movable, with several subcategories under each. Fixed bridges are considerably more numerous than movable bridges in

South Australia. As the Great Western Bridge is a fixed bridge, only fixed bridge types are considered further here.

There are numerous types of fixed bridges, however, they are broadly categorised as beam and/or girder; truss; arch; suspension; and cable-stayed bridges. The Great Western Bridge is a type of beam bridge, known as a trestle bridge due to the form of the legs that supports the beams and girders on which the road deck is constructed. Trestle bridges can be made from timber, steel, concrete or a mixture of materials, however timber is typically used. The Great Western Bridge features timber piles and transverse bracing to piles, however, its girders and cross girders (possibly beams), which support the timber decking are made from rolled steel.

Timber trestle bridges were commonly built in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, often in association with railways, spanning gullies, water and other landscape features. The timber trestle is also a typical feature of jetties and piers.

Bridges

There are 50 bridges entered in the South Australian Heritage Register (the Register) as State Heritage Places. The bridges entered in the Register tend to be listed because they either demonstrate important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history and / or demonstrate new construction techniques or are highly technically accomplished for the time in which the bridge was built. In the early twentieth century, it was the introduction and use of concrete and, in particular, reinforced concrete that is considered to be a notable technical development in bridge design and construction.ⁱ

Of the 50 bridges that are listed as a State Heritage Place, 8 are timber bridges or have timber as, at least, one major structural element, excluding timber decking, and are:

- Angle Vale Bridge [Laminated Timber Arch], 1876, Heaslip Road, Angle Vale, (SHP 10570, listed 24 July 1980). The bridge collapsed June 2023, just a few days before work was due to commence to stabilise the structure.
- Suicide Bridge (previously Lunatic Bridge) [Timber Trestle] & former NSW-SA Telegraph Line Posts, Chowilla Game Reserve [Part of Bookmark Biosphere Reserve Buffer Zone], Old Coach Road to Wentworth near Border Cliffs, (SHP 13345, listed 9 February 1995 under criteria (a) and (b)). The rarity of Suicide Bridge is connected to its association with the coaching era, the use of vernacular materials and the remaining elements of the Telegraph between South Australia and New South Wales.
- Old Currency Creek Road Bridge [Laminated Timber Arch], 1872, Off Goolwa - Strathalbyn Road, (SHP 10350, listed 24 July 1980).
- Dawes Bridge [Timber Girder], 1856, McIntyre Ford Road near Dawesley via Nairne, (SHP 14597, listed 21 October 1993).
- Crossman's Bridge over Inman River, [Under-strutted Timber], Mt Alma Road, Inman Valley, (SHP 12717, listed 14 February 1985).

- Bridge over the River Somme [Under-strutted Timber], 1911, Sedan-Angaston Road, Keyneton, (SHP 12718, listed 14 February 1985).
- Second Valley Seawall, Causeway, Bridge and Jetty, 1855-1910, Second Valley, (SHP 16260, listed 11 June 1998 under criterion (a) and (b)). The rarity is associated with the construction of harbour works rather than the use of any particular construction technique.
- Wilson Road Bridge [Timber Girder], 1880s, Wilson Road, Williamstown, (SHP 12555, listed 4 April 1984).

Jetties

In many respects the Old Western Bridge follows a similar construction method to jetties, known as trestle construction, and consequently looks similar to many of the jetties built in South Australia from the nineteenth century. Timber piles were driven into the seabed and braced with transverse timber supports, with joists supporting the timber decking, and with timber railing. The major difference between the Great Western Bridge and many jetties is that steel rather than timber joists were used. The use of trestle on long structures is not uncommon, with many jetties being several hundreds of metres long. A notably long jetty is the one at Port Germein, Port Germein Jetty Site, The Esplanade, Port Germein (SHP 10176, listed 12 March 1984) at over 1600m in length, before storm damage reduced it to the present approx. 1500m.

There are 20 jetties entered in the Register as State Heritage Places and a further 9 jetties listed as Local Heritage Places. Selected examples include:

- Largs Bay Jetty, 1882, Esplanade, Largs Bay (SHP 14360, listed 4 March 1993).
- Semaphore Jetty, 1860, Semaphore Road, Semaphore (SHP 14360, listed 4 March 1993).
- Stenhouse Bay Jetty and Loading Plant (including ruins of gypsum and salt storage bins, the cutting through the cliff and the conveyor footings), 1913, Innes National Park, (SHP 16679, listed 8 July 1999 under criteria (a), (b), (e)).
- Elliston Jetty, 1900, Off Flinders Highway, Elliston (SHP 14210, listed 23 April 1992).
- Milang Jetty and Hand Crane, 1856, Lake Front, Milang, (SHP 13815, listed 29 June 1989).
- Grange Jetty, 1879, Esplanade, Grange (Local Heritage Place).
- Henley Jetty, 1883, Esplanade, Henley (Local Heritage Place).
- Port Noarlunga Jetty, 1921, replaced an early structure built in 1855, Esplanade, Port Noarlunga (Local Heritage Place).

Port Augusta

There are 13 State Heritage Places located at Port Augusta that are entered in the Register. These State Heritage Places represent the various aspects of the history of Port Augusta and the contribution it made to the development of South Australia. 8 of the 13 State Heritage Places are associated with the provision of law and order, civic amenity, and services to support the burgeoning port town. One is a geological

site, while another, School of the Air (SHP 19036), is associated with providing education from the mid-twentieth century to children living in the outback. The remaining three State Heritage Places in Port Augusta are associated with the important role Port Augusta played in the development of the mining, agricultural and pastoral industries and, particularly, the transportation of those goods.

A selection of State Heritage Places at Port Augusta include:

- Port Augusta Cultural Centre (Former Port Augusta Waterworks workshop, storeroom, stables and courtyard), c.1880, Beauchamp Lane, Port Augusta (SHP 10243, listed 26 November 1981).
- Curdnatta Art Gallery (former first Port Augusta Railway, 1881, Commercial Road, Port Augusta (SHP 14611, listed 21 October 1993).
- Second Port Augusta Railway Station, 1914, Stirling Street, Port Augusta (SHP 14610, listed 21 October 1993).
- Port Augusta Wharf, 1885, Off Tassie Street, Port Augusta (SHP 14641, listed 11 April 1996).

**Assessment against Criteria under Section 16 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*.
All Criteria have been assessed using the 2020 Guidelines.**

(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

The place should be closely associated with events, developments or cultural phases which have played a significant part in South Australian history. Ideally it should demonstrate those associations in its fabric.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if they are of a class of things that are commonplace, or frequently replicated across the State, places associated with events of interest only to a small number of people, places associated with developments of little significance, or places only reputed to have been the scene of an event which has left no trace or which lacks substantial evidence.

The Great Western Bridge is associated with two historic themes, 'building settlements towns and cities' and 'developing South Australia's economies'. The relevant subthemes are making regional centres, living in country towns, supplying services and utilities; and connecting South Australia through transport and communications.

While the Great Western Bridge is associated with these themes and subthemes it has only a localised and narrow association with them. The bridge connected two townships each with its own sense of community, namely Port Augusta and Port Augusta West resulting in the incorporation of both with Davenport, another small community located close by, to create one incorporated town in the 1930s, known as Port Augusta. This is a typical historical event replicated across South Australia throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, perhaps more readily visible in the Adelaide metropolitan area when smaller municipal and district councils merged to created larger entities, for example the City of Port Adelaide Enfield.

Similarly, the provision of infrastructure such as bridges by the State Government is also a typical pattern that occurred across the State, and the Great Western Bridge is one of many bridges built to connect local communities and improve transport routes. This is further substantiated by the nearly 50 years between the local community calling for a bridge (1880) and its construction (1927) and its narrow width, which is less than that required for a main road bridge.

While the Great Western Bridge is a part of the State's broader transportation history, it is again a local story rather than a State one. In the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, Port Augusta was an important State port and railway hub for wheat, wool and mineral ores (copper, lead, manganese, silver and gold). In the early twentieth century it also became the focus of national railway linkages and an integral part in the completion of the transcontinental railway by the Commonwealth Government. These aspects of the State's history are demonstrated by the wharf and two railway stations, each listed as State Heritage Places as well as other sites.

While some mineral ore such as manganese was transported by road to Whyalla over the Great Western Bridge, it was via ship and rail that most of the iron ore and steel products created by BHP at Whyalla, from the early twentieth century, were transported. Similarly, the Great Western Bridge has only incidental associations with the role Port Augusta played in the industrialisation of the State in the second half of the twentieth century as a major generator of electricity. It is the now demolished power stations and railway infrastructure, specifically built to transport brown coal from the Leigh Creek mine and the mine itself that demonstrate this aspect of South Australia's history at the State level.

The Great Western Bridge is not considered to meet criterion (a).

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (a).

(b) it has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

The place should demonstrate a way of life, social custom, industrial process or land use which is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost, or is of exceptional interest. This encompasses both places which were always rare, and places which have become scarce through subsequent loss or destruction.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if their rarity is merely local, or if they appear rare only because research has not been done elsewhere, or if their distinguishing characteristics have been degraded or compromised, or if they are at present common and simply believed to be in danger of becoming rare in the future.

The Great Western Bridge is one of many wooden bridges and in particular wooden trestle structures built in South Australia, as the trestle technique is also commonly used in South Australia in the construction of both bridges and jetties. Consequently, the Great Western Bridge is not considered to possess rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance to South Australia.

The Great Western Bridge is not considered to meet criterion (b).

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (b).

(c) it may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history.

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

The place should provide, or demonstrate a likelihood of providing, information that will contribute significantly to our knowledge of the past. The information should be inherent in the fabric of the place. The place may be a standing structure, an archaeological deposit or a geological site.

Places will not normally be considered under this criterion simply because they are believed to contain archaeological or palaeontological deposits. There must be good reasons to suppose the site is of value for research, and that useful information will emerge. A place that will yield the same information as many other places, or information that could be obtained as readily from documentary sources, may not be eligible.

There is no evidence to suggest that the Great Western Bridge will yield meaningful information about the history of South Australia that is not currently known. The bridge is well documented by other sources, including images, books and newspaper articles. The structure is also typical of its type built across the State and is well documented in those other physical examples.

The Great Western bridge is not considered to meet criterion (c).

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (c).

(d) it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

The place should be capable of providing understanding of the category of places which it represents. It should be typical of a wider range of such places, and in a good state of integrity, that is, still faithfully presenting its historical message.

Places will not be considered simply because they are members of a class, they must be both notable examples and well-preserved. Places will be excluded if their characteristics do not clearly typify the class, or if they were very like many other places, or if their representative qualities had been degraded or lost. However, places will not be excluded from the Register merely because other similar places are included.

The Great Western Bridge belongs to the class of places known as timber trestle bridges and/or structures. Timber trestle was a common construction method for jetties and to a lesser extent bridges in South Australia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While timber trestle was predominantly used in jetty construction, numerous other structural methods and materials were used to build bridges in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

While timber bridges and even timber bridges constructed using specific structural methods and materials are of cultural significance to South Australia, in this instance the Great Western bridge is not considered to be an outstanding representative of a timber trestle bridge and/or structure. By 1926-1927 when the bridge was built, many other construction methods and materials were being used due to their greater structural soundness and longevity. Consequently, the bridge demonstrates the use of technology and materials that were being superseded and cannot be considered to be a key evolutionary stage in the development of the class, nor an influential example of it. The basic nature of the bridge's design, its inability to adequately fulfill its function due to the narrowness of its width, the almost immediate need for repairs after opening, a major structural recondition within a decade and then widening in 1944 all mean that the Great Western Bridge also cannot be considered to be an exceptional example of a timber trestle bridge.

The Great Western Bridge is not considered to fulfill criterion (d).

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (d).

(e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics.

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

The place should show qualities of innovation or departure, beauty or formal design, or represent a new achievement of its times. Breakthroughs in technology or new developments in design would qualify, if the place clearly shows them. A high standard of design skill and originality is expected.

Places would not normally be considered under this criterion if their degree of achievement could not be demonstrated, or where their integrity was diminished so that the achievement, while documented, was no longer apparent in the place, or simply because they were the work of a designer who demonstrated innovation elsewhere.

The Great Western Bridge is a timber trestle bridge built in the mid-1920s and is a typical example of such structures, the trestle also being a common structural technique employed to build jetties. While it is a functional bridge, it is not an outstanding representative of the trestle technique, nor does it demonstrate a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment. Rather is it a typical representative in its simplest form. The bridge did not receive any critical recognition or acknowledgement of exceptional merit nor was it a breakthrough, creative adaptation or extend the limits of the technology. Indeed, it is notable for requiring repair work soon after its completion, with major stabilisation works necessary within less than a decade of opening.

The Great Western Bridge is not considered to meet criterion (e).

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (e).

(f) it has strong cultural or spiritual association for the community or a group within it.

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

The place should be one which the community or a significant cultural group have held in high regard for an extended period. This must be much stronger than people's normal attachment to their surroundings. The association may in some instances be in folklore rather than in reality.

Places will not be considered if their associations are commonplace by nature, or of recent origin, or recognised by a small number of people, or not held very strongly, or held by a group not widely recognised, or cannot be demonstrated satisfactorily to others.

The Great Western Bridge has a strong association for some members of the Port Augusta community who value it as habitat for marine wildlife. The bridge also has associations for other members of the Port Augusta community who valued the security it provided as a backup link between Port Augusta and Port Augusta West prior to the duplication of the Joy Baluch AM Bridge, while others appreciate its age and contribution to Port Augusta's history.

The bridge has only recently been identified as a marine habitat and the connection the community has with the bridge for this association is so new that it cannot be said to be an enduring association. Further, it is questionable if the group would be recognised broadly as a group that would resonate across South Australia. Any group concerned about the marine habitat who does resonate as a group across South Australia would be unable to demonstrate that their attachment with the bridge is strong, as any such group would have similar attachments to many places, for example the cuttlefish breeding ground.

Community concerns about Port Augusta and Port Augusta West remaining connected in the event of the temporary closure of the Joy Baluch AM Bridge had resulted in some members of the community becoming attached to the Great Western Bridge. Although the Great Western Bridge has been a pedestrian bridge only since the mid-1970s, it provided a sense of security that east and west would remain linked in the event of an emergency, without the need to travel approximately 24km via Yorkey's Crossing. However, this association exists for only a part of the larger Port Augusta community and the duplication of the Joy Baluch AM Bridge has diminished this association further.

Some members of the broader Port Augusta community have an association with the Great Western Bridge due to the role it played in connecting the communities on the eastern and western sides of Spencer Gulf and the subsequent merging of Port Augusta and Port Augusta West. However, while the Port Augusta community as a whole may be considered a group that resonates broadly across the State, there is no evidence to suggest this group collectively has a strong cultural or spiritual connection with the bridge. While any subset of the larger group, with such a connection, would not be considered to resonate broadly across the State as a group.

The Great Western Bridge is not considered to meet criterion (f).

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (f).

(g) it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance.

Criterion arguments have considered the *Guidelines for State Heritage Places*:

The place must have a close association with a person or group which played a significant part in past events, and that association should be demonstrated in the fabric of the place. The product of a creative person, or the workplace of a person whose contribution was in industry, would be more closely associated with the person's work than would his or her home. Most people are associated with many places in their lifetime, and it must be demonstrated why one place is more significant than others.

Places will not generally be considered under this criterion if they have only brief, incidental or distant association, or if they are associated with persons or groups of little significance, or if they are associated with an event which has left no trace, or if a similar association could be claimed for many places, or if the association cannot be demonstrated. Generally the home or the grave of a notable person will not be entered in the Register unless it has some distinctive attribute, or there is no other physical evidence of the person's life or career in existence.

The Great Western Bridge was built by the State Government in the 1920s as a part of the main roads program and as such is associated with the work of the State Government. As a part of the main roads program, it is one of many structures built by the government to facilitate transport across South Australia. Consequently, it is not considered to have a special association with the work of the Government of South Australia.

The Great Western Bridge is not considered to meet criterion (g).

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not fulfil** criterion (g).

HISTORY

**A succinct history is presented below, followed by an extensive chronology featuring annotations.*

Port Augusta is located on the traditional lands of the Barngarla People who have lived across the northern Eyre Peninsula for over 40,000 years. In 2021, Native Title was granted to the Barngarla People over Port Augusta, in addition to the 44,000 square km already recognised under native title law. The Port Augusta area, and in particular Gladstone Square, is a significant meeting place for First Nations people.

Port Augusta was created as a port town in the nineteenth century to facilitate the transport of wool, wheat and mineral ores produced by the pastoral, agricultural and mining sectors. The extension of the railway into the north of South Australia further supported the transportation of these items to the port facilities at Port Augusta. Later, in the early twentieth century Port Augusta became an important link in the transcontinental railway, connecting the east and west coasts of Australia. From the

mid-twentieth century, Port Augusta played a vital role in the industrialisation of South Australia, with coal transported by rail from the Leigh Creek Coal Mine to fuel the power stations built at Port Augusta. The power stations were built specifically to generate electricity to power existing, growing, and emerging industry in Adelaide and at regional centres such as Whyalla.

The Great Western Bridge then known as 'The Bridge' was constructed in 1926-1927 and was built after decades of calls for a bridge to span the head of Spencer Gulf, to link the townships of Port Augusta and Port Augusta West. The bridge shortened the road distance by about 24km, across poorly made and maintained roads, considerably reducing travel times between Port Augusta and Port Augusta West. Previously there was a ferry and/or barge that made the crossing between the townships, however, it was not always operational during low tide, meaning a possible 5-6 hour waiting time to cross.

During construction concerns were raised that a 17ft bridge was too narrow to enable two vehicles to pass. Major repair work was required in 1936, and in 1944 the bridge was substantially widened, requiring additional piles and bracing. Even then it was only widened to 23ft 9in, which by 1951 was still too narrow for a main road bridge, 24ft being the minimum width.

The construction of the bridge hastened the amalgamation of Port Augusta with Port Augusta West and Davenport, with incorporation of the three towns as a single entity occurring in 1932.

Annotated Chronology

Year	Event
1802	Matthew Flinders explores the head of the Spencer Gulf, naming several locations.
1803	Captain Freycinet explores parts of Spencer Gulf.
1839	Governor Hindmarsh names the Flinders Ranges after Matthew Flinders.
1839-1840	Edward John Eyre's expedition travels through the district, on its overland journey to Western Australia.
1840	<i>Water Witch</i> leaves stores at the head of Spence Gulf to resupply Eyre's party. Eyre requests Captain Germain survey and report on a suitable location for a port.
1843	William Pinkerton reputedly travels through a pass in the Flinders Ranges later called Pichi Richi pass, while droving sheep to Port Lincoln.
1845	John Tennant's attempt to establish a sheep station near Mount Arden fails, after First Nations people defend their country.
1846	Lt. Governor Colonel Robe investigates the head of Spencer Gulf in <i>Lapwing</i> (Captain Lipson). John A. Horrocks travels through the Flinders Ranges via a pass later named after him.

- Small deposits of copper and lead are found near Mount Remarkable and Alexander Elder and John Grainger form the Mount Remarkable Mining Company.
- 1848 Royal South Australian Almanac records the suitability of three good harbours, with one at the head of the gulf described as 'capacious, deep and secure', later becoming Port Augusta.ⁱⁱ
- 1851 The first pastoral lease in the area is granted.
- 1852 Alexander Elder and John Grainger appraise the area, choosing a suitable site for a township, which is named after Governor Young's wife, Lady Augusta Young. An embryonic settlement begins to grow.
- 1854 Port Augusta township is surveyed and the first blocks are auctioned in Adelaide.
Bandicoot and Daphne load the first shipments of wool from the district at Port Augusta.
 Workmen arrive on the *Yatala* to open Horrocks Pass for vehicular traffic.
- 1855 First businesses open in Port Augusta including Elder, Stirling & Company's Store (managed by AD Tassie), Dover Caste Hotel (A Mackay), Kearney's Blacksmith Shop.
 Elder, Stirling & Co, construct the first jetty at Port Augusta.
- 1856 Thomas Burgoyne constructs a second jetty.
- 1857 First mail arrives in Port Augusta from Adelaide on the steamer *Marion*.
 Copper ore is discovered north of Port Augusta in the Flinders Ranges, heralding the beginning of the Blinman Mine, later sold to the Yudanamutana Mining Company in the early 1860s.
- 1859 Customs House, with court room, post office and residence for the Government official, Hiram Mildred, is constructed on Flag Staff Reserve.
 The first ships to be loaded for direct passage to England from Port Augusta arrive.
- 1860 10,000 bales of wool are shipped from Port Augusta.
- 1862 First direct shipment of cargo from England arrives.
- 1863 Yudanmutana jetty is constructed by the Yudanmutana Mining Company to ship ore from the Blinman Mine. At this time approximately 80,000 tons of ore had been smelted, carted to, and shipped from Port Augusta.
 Up to 14 ships were anchored at any time awaiting loading with the wool clip.
 National Bank, the first bank in Port Augusta opens.
- 1864 First mail coach arrives.
 Construction of the Port Augusta waterworks commences.
- 1865 Port Augusta West is surveyed.
 Severe drought begins.

- 1866 Telegraph Station opens.
- 1867 Bignall and Young commence business operations.
Court House and Police Station are erected on the corner of Commercial Road and Jervois Street.
It is noted that water is being supplied to the township via a four-inch pipe from the Woolundunga Springs.
Western Hotel constructed at Port Augusta West.
Population of Port Augusta is approx. 450.
- 1868 Goal opens.
- 1870 First pole of the Overland telegraph is planted at Port Augusta.
- 1872 Overland Telegraph Line begins operating.
- 1873 Construction of the hospital begins.
- 1875 Town of Port Augusta is incorporated, TM Gibson is elected the first Mayor.
Institute is completed.
Thomas Young (Bignall and Young) constructs a wool store and jetty.
First pole in the telegraph line from Port Augusta to Eucla, WA is planted.
- c.1876 Geological surveys undertaken to locate suitable artesian bore sites to provide additional water supplies for the growing township.
- 1877 Government jetty is constructed, tramway used to transport goods from stores built in the main street. At 155m long and 7m wide it becomes the largest jetty at Port Augusta.
- 1878 Construction of the railway to Government Gums (Farina) commences, keeping pace with agricultural expansion and an expectation that the area would become the granary of the north.
First public school opens.
- 1879 15 December, Port Augusta-Quorn railway line opens.
Population of Port Augusta is approx. 2,000 leading to an increase in business types and the improvement of others.
- 1880 Dunn & Co open a flour mill.
Initial meeting of residents resolves to send a telegram to Mr Stoke at the Edgemore Iron Company asking him if he might provide a quote for the cost of materials to build a bridge between Port Augusta and Port Augusta West. The residents intend to send a 'factual memorial' to the colonial government requesting the government build the bridge once the cost is known. It is unclear if Mr Stoke provides a quote and if the memorial is sent.
- 1881 Government enquiry into wharves and jetties identifies the need for a new wharf.
Port Augusta Railway Station (SHP 14611) is built as a part of the construction of the first section of the Great Northern Railway. It becomes a centre for shipping wheat, wool and minerals via rail.

- 1883 Ostrich farm established.
- 1884 New Court House and new Customs House are constructed.
- 1885 Consolidation of jetties and construction of a new wharf commences.
- 1886 New wharf opens providing deeper berths to meet increased shipping demands, often directly to international ports with loads of wool or minerals including silver, gold and copper respectively from the Barrier; Teetulpa and Wangaringa; and Blinman and North-east mines.
Foundation stone for the Town Hall laid by the Mayor's wife Mrs Knipe.
- 1887 Township of Port Augusta West is incorporated.
Township of Davenport is incorporated.
Port Augusta Town Hall opens and is the first building in town to have electric lighting.
- 1888 Coal discovered at Leigh Creek.
- 1893 A record breaking 48,330 bales of wool are shipped from Port Augusta.
- 1895 Drought begins again and the resulting impacts last until 1903, with no wheat shipped in some years and by 1901 the wool clip reduced to only 12,403 bales.
- 1898-1899 Nectar Brook reservoir completed and connected to the Woolundunga main.
- 1911 December, Commonwealth legislation authorising the Trans-Australia Railway is passed.
- 1912 Construction of the Trans-Australia Railway commences. The line will complete existing lines by connecting Port Augusta with Kalgoorlie, a distance of approx. 1,600km.
- 1917 Trans-Australia Railway, also known as the Intercontinental Railway, is opened.
- 1919 Increasing use of motor vehicles raises the need for a bridge to link Port Augusta with Port Augusta West. The ferry is considered to be inadequate, while the road around the head of the gulf via Yorkey's Corner is often difficult to traverse, particularly by motor vehicles.
- 1924 Commonwealth Railways make electric lighting available to Port Augusta.
- 1925 The cost of a bridge linking port Augusta and Port Augusta West is estimated to be £30,000. Local residents hope that the Commonwealth government might assist with partial financing. The barge that is used for crossing between the two townships is dependent on the tides, with it often being impossible to operate at low tide. Mr Duffield from the Department of Mines investigates the requirements for boring depths for bridge piles. It is estimated that the bridge will be approximately 1,000ft (304m) long.
- 1926 July, the tender to construct the bridge between Port Augusta and Port Augusta West is awarded to Adelaide firm Atkinson and Finlayson. The firm

- is to construct a lightweight timber bridge for use by vehicular and stock traffic.
- August, the stone to construct the approaches to the bridge is being quarried at the Saltia quarry. Concerns are raised about the proposed width of the bridge, it being suggested that it will be too narrow to allow two vehicles to pass. A request is made to build the structure wider. This is refused, as a wider structure would require additional piles and supports substantially increasing the cost. A modification to the setting of the handrail is made to create an additional foot in width.
- November, pile driving commences.
- 1927 March, piling is completed and work commences on the decking.
- 6 July, Governor of South Australia Sir Tom Bridges opens the Great Western Bridge also known as The Bridge and the Old Great Western Bridge, linking Port Augusta and Port Augusta West for vehicle traffic.
- The structure is a fixed timber bridge, with stone approaches and timber abutments and piles, supporting rolled steel joists from BHP, with jarrah timber decking, wheel guards and handrails. The vehicle deck is finished with tar and sand and is expected to be bituminised in 1928, while the footpath section of the deck is finished with limestone rubble, top dressed in shells. At the time of completion, the bridge, including land-based approaches is 2,800 ft (853m), with the span across the water 1028ft (313m) long and 17ft (5m) wide.
- 9 July, it is reported in the newspapers that the State government solely paid for the construction of the bridge and that no Commonwealth funding was received.
- 1932 Port Augusta, Port Augusta West and Davenport Councils merge. JM Beerworth is elected the first Mayor of the combined township.
- 1936 Extensive repair works are carried out on the Great Western Bridge, including strengthening and reconditioning the structure; tightening of girders, supports and railings; electric welding of the cross girders; removal of barnacles and tarring of the piles and supports; and painting of the railings.
- 1941 Increased use of the bridge including the transportation of manganese by vehicle to Whyalla, results in calls for the bridge to be widened by relocating the footpath to the northern side of the structure or for the bridge to be replaced with a sturdier and wider bridge.
- 1944 Morgan-Whyalla pipeline completed.
- August, after 16 months of work the reconstruction of the Great Western bridge is completed. During the works the bridge was widened, by driving in additional piles, with new steel girders welded to the structure and new decking laid. The new width of the bridge is 23ft 9 inches.
- 1948 Branch pipeline to Woomera constructed.

Further calls for the Great Western Bridge to be widened, the approaches are redesigned to alleviate a sharp bend.

Site work commences for a power station to supply industry in Adelaide and elsewhere in South Australia, as a part of the Playford Government's industrialisation strategy.

- 1951 The Highways Department refuses to widen the footpath on the Great Western Bridge, as the bridge already failed to meet the width minimum requirement of 24ft for a main road bridge by 3 inches.
- 1953 Work commences on construction of a dedicated railway line between Leigh Creek coal mine and Port Augusta, to fuel the power stations.
- 1954 Playford A Power Station begins operating and is fuelled with brown coal mined at Leigh Creek and transported via railway from the mine.
- 1955 Preparatory works commence on the second power station.
- 1963 Playford B Power Station commences operating.
- 1970 Railway line between Whyalla and Port Augusta commences, to facilitate freight of iron and steel products from BHP Whyalla steel works. A new railway bridge is constructed across Spencer Gulf.
- 1972 Great Western Bridge is made redundant when a prestressed concrete bridge is built, named Joy Baluch AM Bridge in 2012, after long serving Port Augusta Mayor Joy Baluch AM.
The Great Western Bridge becomes a pedestrian bridge.
- 2017 Due to its poor condition and safety concerns, the Great Western Bridge is closed to public access and gates are placed at either end to prevent people from accessing it. The estimated cost to make the bridge safe for continued use as a pedestrian bridge is \$7.5 million. The port Augusta City Council doesn't have the resources to make the repairs.
- 2018 Playford A and Playford B power stations are demolished.
- 2020- Duplication of Joy Baluch AM Bridge.
- 2023

The chronology has been drawn from the *Pictorial History of Port Augusta* with additional text from the references below.

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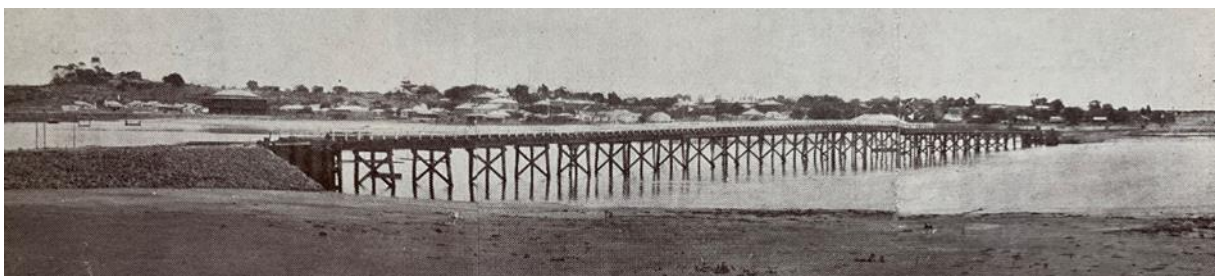
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PHOTOS

NAME: Great Western Bridge

PLACE NO.: 26565



Great Western Bridge, c.1927 soon after opening.

Source: H.I. Aldersley, et al. *History of Port Augusta*, p.45.



Great Western Bridge, 1949, showing the widening of the bridge.

Source: SLSA B44567

ⁱ John Fleming, Hugh Honour and Nikolaus Pevsner (1998), *Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture*, 5th ed., (London: Penguin), p.71.

ⁱⁱ Reg J Mayes (1974), *Pictorial History of Port Augusta*, (Adelaide: Rigby), p.2.