

## Statement of Significance

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### What is Significant?

The Cranbourne Shire Offices, Public Hall, Court House and Post Office Complex (former), 156-160 Sladen Street, Cranbourne is significant.

Features which are significant include the main brick building, constructed in stages between 1875 – 1913

Features which contribute to the significance of the place are:

- The mature *Araucaria heterophylla* Norfolk Island Pines located to the rear of the site c1948
- The mature *Agonis flexuosa* Willow Myrtle Tree located to the rear of the site (unknown date)
- The mature *Corymbia ficifolia* Flowering Gum trees located to the Sladen Street frontage (unknown date)

Features which do not contribute to the significance of the place are:

- Hard landscaping, including paving, carparking and associated public infrastructure such as fencing and handrails
- Garden beds and trees planted post 1962
- Alterations and additions to the main brick building post 1913
- Engineers Block c.1962

### How is it Significant?

The Cranbourne Shire Offices, Public Hall, Court House and Post Office Complex (former), 156-160 Sladen Street, Cranbourne is of local historical, social and aesthetic significance to the City of Casey.

### Why is it significant?

Historically, it is significant as the first permanent offices of the Shire of Cranbourne and demonstrates the growth and importance of Cranbourne in the administration of the West Gippsland area in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is of further historical significance as one of the earliest public buildings within the City of Casey to survive and demonstrates both the importance of and interconnection of civic function and local government in the nineteenth century through the numerous services operating from a single building. The intact internal fixtures and fittings, demonstrating the former use of the different sections of building, including fireplaces, stage, timber joinery and other elements are also of historical significance. (Criterion A)

The complex is of social significance for its long and enduring connection with the local community of Cranbourne. The use and attachment of the community to the place is demonstrated first in its long and continuous history of use as a place of civic and government function, and later as a place of meeting and recreational activity. The use of the place for municipal function (as the City of Casey) continues today. The fight by the local community to prevent the complex being demolished in 1970s to construct a new municipal office, and the continued use of the site for municipal and recreational functions demonstrates an enduring attachment to the place by the local community. (Criterion G)

Aesthetically, the complex is significant for its local landmark qualities, being located at the intersection of the two principal roads in Cranbourne, at the highest point of the township. The Norfolk Island Pines and Willow Myrtle (to the rear of the complex) and Flowering Gums fronting Sladen Street enhance the landmark qualities of the site. Furthermore, the complex is of aesthetic significance for its ability to demonstrate a variety of architectural styles which have largely been unified into the Italianate Romanesque style over several decades of development, with small expressions of different periods demonstrating key periods of change. (Criterion E)