

Railway Lattice Bridge and Viaducts, Wagga Wagga

location Bomen to Wagga Wagga across the Murrumbidgee River and flood plain, New South Wales.

owner State Rail Authority, New South Wales

the plaque

type **Historic Engineering Marker**

location The plaque is no longer on display.

True to his engineering origins, John Whitton built 12 British iron lattice bridges between 1872 and 1887. The designs were checked and drawings prepared in London, and the structural components supplied by British fabricators for assembly by local railway contractors. Eleven iron lattice bridges were extant in 1998 with nine in service.

plaque text

Railway Lattice Bridge and Viaducts

This railway crossing of the Murrumbidgee River and flood plain was planned by John Whitton, Engineer-in-Chief for Railways 1856–90. The wrought iron lattice bridge was assembled from English components and completed in November 1880. Between 1897 and 1901, the original timber viaducts were replaced by plate web girders, at the time the largest application of steel in New South Wales. This river crossing continues to be essential to the rail link between Sydney and Melbourne.

Dedicated by The Institution of Engineers, Australia and The State Rail Authority of NSW, 1995.



John Whitton (1819–1898)

Whitton served his apprenticeship in Britain under two famous British civil engineers, John Hawkshaw and John Fowler. He was appointed Engineer-in-Chief of the NSW Government Railways in 1856.

During his term, the railways grew from 37km to 3494km of high-standard lines. He succeeded despite persistent opposition from politicians and others.

He strongly advocated a uniform gauge for all colonial railways but this did not eventuate.

The Great Zig Zag near Lithgow, NSW, is his most famous work.

John Whitton retired in 1890 and is honoured as the “Father of NSW railways”.

