The National Heritage List is a record of places in the Australian jurisdiction that have outstanding natural, Indigenous or historic heritage values for the nation. These places they are protected by federal law under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. Nominating a place for the National Heritage List means identifying its national heritage values on this form and providing supporting evidence. If you need help in filling out this form, contact (02) 6274 2149.

Form checklist
1. read the Nomination Notes for advice and tips on answering questions in this form.
2. add attachments and extra papers where indicated (Note: this material will not be returned).
3. provide your details, sign and date the form.

Nominated place details

Q1. What is the name of the place?

‘Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain’ including the following sites:

The Coal River Precinct, Newcastle (NSW State Heritage Register No.1674).
(Also formally on the RNE ID number 1284 & 1283 ‘Fort Scratchley’ registered 1978 & Nobbys Head ID number 100016 registered 1980, & Soldiers Baths, Shortland Esplanade ID 100270 registered 1980

The Convict Lumber Yard (NSW State Heritage Register No.570).
(Also formally on the RNE ID number 16502 ‘The Convict Lumber Yard’ registered 1980

Newcastle Government House & Domain (NSW State Heritage Register No.1841).
(Also formally on the RNE ID number 101838 ‘James Fletcher Groups’ registered 1980 & ID number 1300 ‘Medical Superintendent’s Residence’ registered 1978, & Court house ID number 100785. Registered 1980.

The Bogey Hole (NSW State Heritage Register No.1678).
(Also formally on the RNE ID number 1313) registered 1980.

King Edward Park-  (Also formally on the RNE ID number 16584 ‘King Edward Park, The Terrace Newcastle’ registered 1980), as well as Band Rotunda, York Drive (Also formally on the RNE ID number 1274 ‘Band Rotunda, York Drive, Newcastle’, registered 1978. Masonic and City Bowling Club Gates & Piers -  (Also formally on the RNE ID number 102119 registered 1980)

Shepherd’s Hill Defense Group (NSW State Heritage Register No.1806).
(Also formally on the RNE ID number 18950 ‘Shepherd’s Hill Cottage and surrounds registered 1980)

Precincts are in the Newcastle Conservation Areas of Newcastle East & the Hill
Q2a. Where is the place? Address/location:

The Coal River Precinct is situated at the southern entrance to the Port of Newcastle, New South Wales. It includes landmarks such as Nobbys, Macquarie Pier (Breakwater), the southern headland (Colliers Point/Signal Hill and Flagstaff Hill) including Fort Scratchley, the convict lumber yard and adjoining foreshore.

The Newcastle Government Domain to the south of the Coal River Precinct is on a dramatic coastal setting and where of Newcastle’s Government House and gardens were once located. It was the official site of Governance. Behind the Government House was the Government’s ‘sheep pastures’ from 1801, and by 1821 a pretty walk had been created by the then Commandant Major Morisset called the Horseshoe, leading to a private bath he had hewn with convict labour out of the rock platform now called the Bogey Hole (also known as “Morisset’s Bath” and the “Commandant’s Baths”). From 1856 the area was known as the “Newcastle City Extension Reserve”, then “Recreation Reserve”, known today as Shepherd’s Hill and King Edward Park. On the hillside facing the Hunter River is the James Fletcher Hospital, where military buildings and parade ground still exists and sections of the hillside quarried out using convict labour. The Newcastle Court House is on the north boundary of this precinct. This is also the location has the first working coal shafts in Australia. The Bogey Hole is to the south of the military buildings on a rock platform at the base of a gully at King Edward Park. Above the Bogey Hole is the defence site of Shepherd’s Hill. The Obelisk on the hill to the west overlooking the military buildings, it has panoramic views and is on a standalone peak that was once the site of the windmill belonging to the penal settlement.

Both Precincts have been government owned and continuously managed since 1801 to current day. The Precincts are the locations of the two government mine sites, the mines at the Coal River Precinct (drifts or horizontal passageway), and mines at the Government Domain (vertical shafts). Each the earliest of their type and are the first working coal mines in Australia.

Q2b. Boundary:

The Coal River Precinct is bounded by Fort Drive, Nobbys Drive, Foreshore Drive, Shortland Esplanade and Scott Street. Nobbys Lighthouse is a Commonwealth Heritage Places and Fort Scratchley was a Commonwealth Heritage Place up until recently when it was transferred to the Newcastle City Council.

The convict lumber yard, which is in close proximity to the Coal River Precinct on the west, and identified as Community land and is on the State Heritage Register as 570 within Lot 2 DP 706760’. The entire Lumber Yard extends beyond Lot 2 into adjoining property to the north, east and west. The street address is Scott and Bond Streets Newcastle NSW 2300.

The Newcastle Government Domain is situated on the southern hills overlooking the historic city, and includes the James Fletcher Hospital, Fletcher Park, The Obelisk, King Edward Park and the Bogey Hole. The north and west boundary of the precinct is Church & Newcomen streets, also Wolfe Streets and The Terrace, and the east and southern boundaries are the coastline of Pacific Ocean. Fletcher Park formally known as Lower Reserve and Ordnance Park. This park is situated directly across the road (Watt Street) from the James Fletcher Hospital, on the east side of the precinct. The park is bounded by a fence on the seaside and there is a steep cliff drop off. It has recently been landscaped by Newcastle City Council (2005) and has a path running through the middle of the park. There is also a statue of Mr. James Fletcher that stands predominantly on the uphill slope, facing down to the city.

A large portion of this area is already on the NSW State Heritage Register and is indicated in attachment A

Locations

Bogey Hole Lat:151.78192337 Long:-32.93539082
Coal River Precinct Lat:151.79210464 Long:-32.92417821
Convict Lumber Yard Lat:151.78585907 Long:-32.92692373
Newcastle Government Domain Lot 1, DP 1069317, Lot 7059 DP 1116454, Lot 72&15 DP 755247
Shepherds Hill Defence Group Military Installations PART LOT 42 DP 152846, PART LOT 78 DP 154075, SP 4203, LOT 3116 DP 755247
Q2c. Type of map you have supplied:

A map of the area showing the two Precincts and the Convict Lumber Yard for National Heritage Listing

Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain Newcastle

Application for National Listing Feb 2012
Location Plan (Q2)

A map of the area showing the two Precincts and the Convict Lumber Yard for National Heritage Listing
1. **Who owns it?** Owner’s name (If more than one owner, attach a list - Appendix A):

The place is public land owned and controlled by Commonwealth, State and Local Governments. The most immediate authority is Newcastle City Council. (see separate sheet for other owners)

**Address:** Newcastle City Council, City Administration Centre, 282 King St, Newcastle

**State:** NSW  
**Postcode:** 2300

**Telephone:** 02 4974 2000  
**Fax:** 02 4974 2222  
**Email:** 02 4974 2000

2. **Q3b. Is the owner(s) aware of the nomination?**

   - NO
   - YES
   - SOME ARE ☑ (Please list):

3. **Q4. Who has an interest in the place?** This could include the property’s manager, local environment or historical groups, local council, Indigenous people and developers or industry groups. Please provide names and contact details.

   - Minister for Environment & Heritage
     The Hon Robin Parker MP. Contact- 02 4933 1617
   - University of Newcastle Coal River Working Party
     Contact - Gionni di Gravio ph 02 4921 5819
   - Heritage Office of NSW
     Contact - , ph 02 9873 8500
   - Awabakal Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (ATOAC)
     Kerrie Brauer and Shane Frost, 49 588170
   - National Trust of Australia (New South Wales)
     Contact - Graham Quint (Conservation Director), ph 02 9258 0123
   - Hunter Contact - Ann Hardy Secretary, PO BOX 2151 DANGAR NSW 2309 ph 0438509139
   - Parks and Playgrounds Movement Incorporated
     Contact - Doug Lithgow ph 02 4943 1781
   - Hunter Heritage Network Incorporated
     Contact - Sarah Cameron, President, ph 02 4974 2000
   - Awabakal Land Council
     Contact - 02 4965 4532
   - Worimi Land Council
     Contact - 02 4965 1500
   - Federal Member for Newcastle
     Contact- Sharon Grierson MP, 02 4926 1555
   - Newcastle City Council
     Contact - Ms Sarah Cameron, NCC Heritage Officer, ph 02 4974 2000
     Department of Primary Industries (Catchments & Lands) 02 4920 5085
   - Commonwealth of Australia
     Contact - Department of Environment and Water, Mr Graham Crocket, 02 262742196
   - Australian Coal Association
     Contact - 02 6273 6044
   - Fort Scratchley Historical Society Inc
     Contact - President, ph 02 4927 0889
   - Newcastle Family History Society
     Contact - Ken and Maree Shilling ph 4963 2813
   - Engineers Heritage Australia (Newcastle)
     Contact - ph 02 4926 444
   - Surf Life Saving Association of NSW
     Contact - ph 02 9984 7188
   - Residents Standing Committee on Newcastle Development
     Contact - Beverly Southern, ph 02 491635
   - Friends of King Edward Park
     Contact- Kim O stinga, 02 4929 7647
Q5. What is its significance? How would you tell people that this place has great importance to Australia? For example, why does this place, unlike other similar places, best highlight an outstanding aspect of Australia’s heritage?

Natural, Indigenous and historic heritage values that make the Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain an outstanding heritage place of national significance is described using the following themes, Aboriginal, historic and intangible cultural heritage.

Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain is of outstanding National heritage significance because it is a place of ‘living history’, where Aboriginal and Colonial lifestyle is mirrored in the landscape. These two cultures reflect the early Aboriginal and European association with the place and their use of the land and how these cultures came together to tell a unique story.

The place shows outstanding heritage value to the Nation because of the characteristics it shows of Australia’s natural and cultural environment that is not known to exist elsewhere. The elements of this single environment represent modes of construction, engineering and surveying techniques that were used in conjunction with an understanding of the natural earth formations and ocean and river systems.

**Historic and Natural Heritage Values**

Heritage significance of Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain lies in evidence of a process of adaption and transformation over time. The landscape tells these stories in a dramatic fashion; through its changing landforms shaped by the demands of industry, through its archaeological remains intact and in situ, and through the continued and inescapable presence of a bustling working harbour. The area is a “functional precinct, a living zone, a scene of business and recreation and dwelling, providing a remarkable fusion of heritage and the everyday….illustrates the vibrant interactions between natural and cultural forces communicating a sense of origin while tracing a long and complex history of economic and industrial transformation.” (Roberts & Eklund 2012)

The shaping of the landscape through settlement, development and infrastructure; using natural resources, coal, the development of industry and communications, all of which continue to be represented there and important to Australia economically.

**The Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain is the site of:**

- Australia’s first discoveries (1791 and 1796), first export (1799) and first profit (1801) of a natural resource (i.e. coal) in this country. (see Appendix B)

- The important transitions in Australia’s journey to nationhood; from government industry to private enterprise, from convict to free labour, from punishment to profit, from a natural to a human-fashioned landscape. The landscape tells these stories in a dramatic fashion; through its changing landforms shaped by the demands of industry, through its archaeological remains intact and in situ, and through the continued and inescapable presence of a bustling working harbour. (See Appendix C - Roberts & Eklund Australian Convict Sites and the Heritage of Adaption: The Case of Newcastle’s Coal River Heritage Precinct 2012)
Cultural Heritage Values

The place has strong associations with cultural activities and new innovative ideas. Artists were nurtured and supported, the people of Newcastle advocated for the environment and generally many new, but unplanned institutions were adopted at Newcastle. Again this is evidence of a process of adaption and transformation over time, new uses imposed over old infrastructure.

The Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain is the site of:

- Australia’s first full length autobiography and dictionary compiled by James Hardy Vaux in 1811-1814. (See Appendix D)

- Australia’s “Cultural Capital” during the Macquarie era from 1810 to 1821 that led to the creation of artistic objects and works of world significance such as the Macquarie Chest, Wallis Album, Skottowe manuscript, notable engravings and paintings.

- Australia’s first environmental action in 1853-1854 on behalf of a community to protect a natural landform (Nobbys)

- Australia’s first Industrial School for Girls, and later, the first hospital for “Imbeciles and idiots”.

Aboriginal Heritage Values

Signifies a place of contact between Aboriginal and migrant peoples and the valuable relationships that were formed (Windross p.11). Some of the early relationships, for example between Bungaree and Governor Macquarie, as well as the collaboration of Biraban and Reverend Threlkeld, and Desmond and William Sacheverell Coke is evidence of the early contact period (pre-1840) where these two cultures come together to reveal valuable aspects of each culture. These stories are important to the cultural heritage of all Australians.

The Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain is the site of:

- First systematic study of an Aboriginal language anywhere in the country by Biraban, Chief of the Newcastle Tribe (now known as the Awabakal) and the Reverend Lancelot Threlkeld and published in a series of works from 1826 to 1892. This is one example of the unique cultural relationship that is mirrored here between Aboriginal and Colonial peoples. (See Appendix E) and (Letter of support from Awabakal Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation Appendix F)

See the Nomination Notes for examples on how criteria might be interpreted.

Q6. Which criteria does it meet? Please try and identify each criterion from the list below applies to the place and explain why it meets that criterion (attach evidence in relation to each criterion claimed to have been met).

Natural, Indigenous and historic heritage values that make the Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain an outstanding heritage place of national significance is described using the following themes, Aboriginal, historic and Intangible heritage.

Regarding definitions we declare that the site has importance for the Nation based particularly on the categories “a”, “d”, “g” and “i”. 

a - the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia’s natural or cultural history

**Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain** is of an outstanding heritage value to the Nation because of the characteristic of Australia natural and cultural environment that is not known to exist elsewhere. The elements of this single environment represents modes of construction, engineering and surveying techniques that were used in conjunction with a sound understanding and respect of the natural earth formations, ocean and river systems.

- A place that is an extraordinary example of the National understanding of Aboriginal languages, Biraban and Threlkeld’s work is the earliest and the most accomplished in Australia. Their work documents that dreamtime story of the giant kangaroo, stories that need to be retained of this fading culture. The known Awabakal language was the first to be translated in Australia

- A place (Nobbys Headland) that represents the Awabakal Dreaming story of the ‘giant kangaroo’ and the association of the Aboriginal culture with the natural landscape formations. Nobbys a significant to Aboriginal history and is represented in stories documented by Threlkeld.

- A place that represents patterns of economic and social development of the early colonial period through the movement from government-controlled and convict-worked industry to the arrival of free labour and the beginnings of private enterprise.

- The place best shows how the landscape has changed over time due to the large-scale transformation of local geography to meet industrial, commercial and residential demands and is expressed in a tangible way.

- The place best represents a convict penal settlement that is directly related to beginning of Australian industry (coal mining) through the first discovery, first export and first profit of a natural resource.

- The place is an exceptional example of the forced migration of convicts and developments associated with the punishment and reform of the criminal elements an important stage of human history in the modern era.

- The place has a high degree of significance in regard to Australian convict heritage, particularly convict labour and the associated convict built heritage of the site, and this is reflected in the landscape.

- The place is an outstanding example of the work begun by convict labour (port related works, especially Macquarie Pier) that was the foundation of the Australian maritime economy that reflects the same use that continues today.

- The place is an outstanding example of early navigational, maritime and military history and Nobbys lighthouse is associated with the early coal-fired beacon lit in 1804 on the Signal Hill

- The place is of central importance to the nation in building a national economy and contributed to how economic, political or social processes were formed.

- The place is an outstanding example of Australia’s early position at the forefront of applied coal mining technology in the early 1800s this contribution to the nation’s economic development.

- The place is highly significant culturally because of its representation in documents that exist in historical records and visual sources about the site from the late 1700s.
• The place is highly significant as a cultural capital during the the Macquarie era from 1810 to 1821 that led to the creation of artistic objects and works of world significance such as the Macquarie Chest, Wallis Album, Skottowe manuscript, notable engravings and paintings.

- The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia’s natural or cultural history

The Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain is unique because it represents the earliest major public works project in Australia, (Macquarie Pier -Nobbys Breakwater) that not only provided a safe entrance into the Hunter River, but contributed to the Colony’s growing coal export trade. The convict breakwater is testament to the skill and technology used in the Colonial period, that has become the foundation of Nobbys Beach, now a popular surfing beach.

• The place is a remarkable example of the transition of Australia’s first industry, the coal mining industry (its inception at the foot of Nobbys Island and the Flagstaff Hill) coal has greatly contributed to the Australian economy.

A place that is nationally rare because Macquarie Pier the largest early major public works project begun with convict labour in a penal settlement and continues to be used today.

• A place that is nationally rare because its attributes as a former Island later joined to the mainland by a breakwater in 1818.

• A place that is nationally rare because it possesses Australia’s oldest surviving physical evidence of coal mining.

• In a global context, the early convict coal mines at Coal River and the Government Domain are rare.

• A place nationally rare because if possesses Australia’s first convict work site (Convict Lumber Yard).

• A place nationally rare because if possesses the oldest surviving lighthouse on the east coast of Australia that was replaced by the earlier coal fired beacon located on Signal Hill, first lit in 1804.

• A place nationally rare because if possesses an intact coastal fortification (Fort Scratchley) showing patterns of evolution in construction and military technology from the 1880s to the 1940s.

• A place nationally rare because Nobbys beach has been formed along the line of the Macquarie Pier (breakwater) and is indicative of the shift from work and industrial usages to leisure-orientated pursuits and contemporary beach culture; in essence the beach has formed due to human intervention.

• A place nationally rare because the Bogey Hole is the oldest European swimming bathes in Australia and represents changing patterns of bathing culture, from official use by the Commandant, to public recreational use.

• A place (military Barracks) nationally rare because the sites configuration of the open parade with buildings around its circumference has been preserved throughout its life.

• A place (Government Domain) is nationally rare because the Newcastle Asylum for Imbecile and Idiots (1871) was the first specialist institution for intellectually disabled people in Australia.
c - The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia’s natural or cultural history

- A place has the potential to provide important new national information in regard to Awabakal sites that reveals a rare incidence of Aboriginal archaeology within the major regional city.

  (NOTE: Significant Aboriginal relics were found in 2009 at the former Palais site (Archaeological & Heritage Management Services. May 2011))

- A place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because the recording of the ancient Awabakal language translated by Biraban and Threlkeld (one of the earliest and most accomplished in Australia) and the potential for scholars to yield information from unpublished works that will contribute to further knowledge of Aboriginal language and culture. (Roberts, 2008)

- A place that can help us understand aspects of the relationship between two cultures Aboriginal and European people in the early contact period as it was an important site for the early relationship between.

- A place that can help us understand aspects of the Australians language Coal River was where the first Australian dictionary of ‘flash language’ was compiled in 1819 (Vaux, James Hardy), author also wrote the first autobiography in Australia.

- A place that is, and continues to be interpreted through new material coming to ‘light’ to provide new knowledge of Coal River and the Government Domain, such as colonial artworks of ‘official’ government artists.

  (The Wallis Collection was purchased in 2011 by the State Library of NSW showing scenes of Newcastle in 1810s)

- There is no other comparable evidence surviving as that of the physical evidence at the Convict Lumber Yard and Stockade (1814-50) and the coal adits at Colliers Points and therefore these sites are very important as a potential source of further information which will contribute to a wider understanding of Australia’s industrial beginnings.

- A place with significant features of the early convict coal mines and the Convict Lumber Yard that has immense cultural value and further archaeological research conducted to provide information about colonial and convict life in Australia.

- A place has significant potential to reveal, through archaeological field work knowledge of Australia’s early cultural history related to mining and to reveal further knowledge about convict workings, and coal shafts/drifts, coal adits, as well as tunnelling on Nobbys Headland (pre 1850s)

- A place with outstanding heritage value to the nation because can contribute to an understanding of Australia’s largest and earliest colonial public work begun with convict labour (Macquarie Pier) and the nature of construction and techniques used in the convict-era.

- A place with outstanding heritage value to the nation that contributes and advances knowledge of industrial convict sites and our understanding of convicts as a cultural group and the contribution made by their enforced labour.

- A place with outstanding heritage value to the nation because it contributes to the knowledge associated with the growth of ‘Public Recreation’ and Victorian park and landscape designs regional areas.

  See the Nomination Notes for examples on how criteria might be interpreted.
d. the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of:
   a class of Australia's natural or cultural places, or
   a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments

- While other places with similar characteristics exist (Coal Mines Historic Site, Tasmania), this place shares all those characteristics and emerges from that group as the earliest example of a convict coal mine in Australia, and the southern hemisphere.

- While other places with similar characteristics exist in terms of public infrastructure (example, the Great North Road) the construction of Macquarie Pier shares most of those characteristics and emerges as the earliest example of a major public works project developed by convict labour in Australia.

- While other places with similar characteristics exist, this place differs to Port Arthur and Norfolk Island as a place of secondary punishment, in that it progressed to economic and cultural transitions and is a convict ‘living’ site.

- The Convict Lumber Yard and stockade (1814-50) was a central industrial workplace and supplied colonial NSW with industrial products.

- While other places with similar characteristics such as McIver’s Bath in Sydney exist, the Bogey Hole at Newcastle is by far the earliest swimming baths in Australia, reflecting the labour of convicts, recreation of the Commandant’s, something the other baths do not.

- While other places with similar parklands exist, King Edward Park is an early regional park and was gazetted 16th July 1863, it is a rare landscape associated with both Aboriginal and European occupation that has remained relatively undeveloped. This is a particularly rare example in NSW due to its coastal location and additional feature of the Bogey Hole.

- While other places with similar characteristics exist such as the Victoria Barracks in Melbourne VIC or Sydney NSW, the military barracks and parade ground at the Newcastle Government Domain were completed in 1843, this was earlier than the Victoria Barracks in Victoria in that were not fully complete until 1848. They are closely associated with the military history of the Colony during the 1840s a vital military strength of NSW and indirectly related to aiding the growing economy and coal export of the Colony.

- While other asylum sites exist in Australia, the one at Newcastle is unique because it was not purpose built and its coastal urban location is rare, particularly as it has survived to 2012 as a mental health site.

e. The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group

Aesthetically the Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain is a rare example of the transformation of the natural landscape that has been shaped by convict labour and early European occupation and intervention. The precinct, especially Nobbys Headland is an outstanding landmark.

- A place that has a high degree of aesthetic value, a wealth of individuals have found creative inspiration from the landscape since 1804 to current day and whose works have documented the transformation of the place shaped by human intervention.

- A place that has a significant heritage value in regard to visual aesthetics as it captures the essence of Australian industry and maritime history.
• The place is of significant heritage value in regard to visual aesthetic as it is featured on numerous panels of the nationally significant Macquarie Chest, as well having a collection of artefacts from the Coal River within it.

• The place is of significant heritage value in regard to the Parade Ground at the Government Domain, with its open space, textures, plantings and other features, adds aesthetic value to the military buildings.

✔ f - The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period

• A place that represents the establishment of an industry that continues to be a major strength of the Australian economy.

• A place that shows technical achievement and innovation in introducing the first coal mining in the Southern Hemisphere and marks the use of the transfer of the ‘bord and pillar’ coal mining techniques from across the world to Australia.

• A place that shows the best early example in Australia of a major Colonial public work (Macquarie Pier) and where built features and the natural landscape work together, its original use remains active and the structure recognisable today.

• A place that shows innovative and technical achievement related to masonry, quarrying and construction techniques to build Macquarie Pier, to provide a safe entrance into the port that contributed to the growth of the Colony’s coal industry.

• The place that shows skilfulness of design in the reshaping of Nobbys Headland for the construction of Nobbys lighthouse.

• A place that shows the diversity of skills among the convicts whose craftsmanship and artistry produced works that are now considered to be of National importance, for example the Macquarie Chest.

• A place that shows technical innovation in the area of built construction methods and excavation to build the Military buildings at Government Domain.

✔ g - The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

• A place that holds special meanings to the Awabakal and non-Aboriginal people who share the spiritual Dreaming stories of Whibayganba or Nobbys Headland, a cultural and spiritual Aboriginal place that tells the Dreaming story of the giant kangaroo.

• A place that holds special meanings for people who share the knowledge of the Aboriginal culture, such as the Awabakal significance of Yi-ran-na-li a cliff face at South Newcastle Beach.

• A place that holds other special meanings for academic, historians and the community who value the rich cultural significance of this place and the diverse meanings that it holds.

✔ h - The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, or importance in Australia’s natural or cultural history.
• The place has a strong association with Captain Cook who sighted Nobby's Island on his voyage in 1770.

• The place is closely associated with the re-offending convicts following the 1804 Irish rebellion at Vinegar Hill who were the first convicts at Coal River.

• The place is closely associated with the Governor Macquarie who implemented many Government projects that supported the developing coal industry and economic growth of the Colony.

• The place is of significant importance to the natural history of Australia as revealed through the work of early geologists, engineers and surveyors of the coal measures that were important investigations that contributed to the economic growth of the Colony.

• The place is closely associated with Aboriginal and migrant relationships that lead to new knowledge of Aboriginal culture to be further understood, for example the relationship between Biraban the Aboriginal Awabakal leader and Reverend Threlkeld.

• The place is closely associated with Captain George Barney also prepared plans for the construction of the Newcastle Military Barracks, during the mid 19th Century.

• The place is closely associated with Mr Frederick Norton Manning the first Inspector General of the Insane in NSW and instrumental in establishing Australia’s first specialist institution for the intellectually disabled.

• The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s importance as part of Indigenous tradition

• Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain contains sites of outstanding significance for local indigenous people. Whibayganba (Nobby’s Head), and the Coquun (The Hunter River) are the locations of a dreaming story that details Newcastle and the Hunter’s earthquake history.

• Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain has heritage values that are held by Awabakal people as part of their culture and traditions of Whibayganba or Nobby’s Headland and the Dreaming stories represented at the site including Tahlbihn (Fort Scratchley), Yirranali (Cliffs overlooking South Newcastle Beach).

Q7a. How would you describe the place?

The proposed Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain is a cultural landscape rich in historical importance that is comprised of sites which represent the birthplace of Australia’s second oldest city, and invoke and exhibit themes of transition. Both Precincts are unique and show the transition from an Aboriginal landscape to colonial penal settlement to a civil society to a major port city, and the transition from a place of punishment to a place of outstanding economic importance to the nation.

The principal heritage elements of the nomination are:

Nobby Headland
Nobby’s is the icon of Newcastle and immortalised in an Aboriginal dreaming story and later in historic documents and artworks from the beginnings of European contact. The operational Lighthouse standing on
Nobbys Headland at the entrance to the Port of Newcastle. This lighthouse is the oldest functioning lighthouse on the Australian mainland, built in 1857, is unique because the headland where it is situated was cut down to erect the lighthouse. Prior to this a coal fired beacon on Fort Scratchley had operated from 1804, this was the earliest light beacon in the Colony. As a landmark, the lighthouse it is clearly identified with the southern arm and the entry to the Port of Newcastle. The Lighthouse is intact and free standing. “Nobby’s Lighthouse is the lighthouse built on Nobby’s Headland in 1857... It remains highly intact and operative to this date. The lighthouse consists of a free-standing stone tower, cast iron glazed lantern, conical roof and vent, cantilevered gallery, internal access ladder (not seen) and original optic. Historically, Nobby’s Light & Signal Station were used as a day marker for shipping as well as at night,” (Clive Lucas Stapleton 2007, p.2).

In the early 1850s convicts excavated three tunnels into the base of Nobbys Head to place gunpowder, for blasting the top off the headland, to provide a platform for building the lighthouse. However, due to a public petition the explosives were never ignited. This stands as Australia’s first documented environmental action on behalf of a community to protect a natural landform. Historical photographs show the entrances to two of these tunnels. The entrances are now covered by rock fall debris. (Kerr, Roslyn 2011)

Signal Hill - Colliers Point Mines
Seams of coal at the entrance to the river, outcropping at Nobbys and on Colliers Point/Signal Hill were the focus of the first systematic coal mining in Australia beginning officially in 1801. There were several entrances to the coal drifts from Signal Hill, the strata which continued a yard six inches thick. From geological records, and later written evidence, we know this seam to be the upper split of the Dudley seam. (Lt Menzies in HRNSW, 367). These mine entrances exist and were investigated in 2006. (Wilson, John, and Alex Widgery 2006)

Macquarie Pier
Construction of the Pier started in 1818 and was completed in 1846 and is testament to the skill and technology used in the Colonial period (Davies 1996.p 41). Many of the convicts remained in Newcastle to complete the pier. The Macquarie Pier was strategically established to serve the purpose of industry, defence and the growing economy. This structure not only provided a safe entrance into the Hunter River, but contributed to the Colony’s growing coal export trade.

Convict Stockade Lumber Yard
The stockade was once enclosed by a 3.4 metre high log wall. Here convicts both lived and worked. They were also employed outside the stockade at timber cutting, lime burning, coalmining and breakwater-building. In 1820 there were about 1000 convicts working in the area.

The stockade ceased to be a convict workplace by about 1850 and much of the fabric from this era remains buried beneath the sand drifts that subsequently covered the site.

The Berthing Master’s Office and the Stationmaster’s Cottage on the stockade site are evidence of the association of the area with Newcastle’s port and railway history, as are the Customs House and Sailors Home adjoining to west and east, beneath which extend the archaeological remains of the stockade’s fabric.

The stockade is already a nationally significant archaeological site marking the beginnings of industry at Newcastle.

Harbour Works and Reclamation
Harbour works and reclamation started in the convict era.

The first wharf was built west of the stockade, and a lagoon embayment to the east provided a harbour for the small craft used to convey convicts for cedar getting and lime burning tasks. A ballast wharf was constructed east of the main wharf (Watt Street) and a stone boat dock was built within the reclaimed area about 1860, for the use of pilots and port boatmen. Slipways were added in 1870. The dock and the boat sheds were part of the pilot Station.

The space between the ballast wharf and the shoreline was reclaimed and used for railway marshallings yards. A rail extension was provided to carry Waratah sandstone to reinforce the breakwater.
The Commissioners for Railway built Zaara Street Power House at the eastern end of the yards in 1915. Most of the area is now part of the Foreshore Park.

**Government Domain**

**The James Fletcher Hospital**

The site has been in continuous Government ownership and use since 1804 and was important in the convict system in NSW. The two vertical mine shafts on the site are Australia’s first working coal shafts, dug by convicts sent to Newcastle. The quarried site and sandstone retaining wall, the parade ground, the Soldiers’ Barracks and Officers’ Quarters, Guard House and former military hospital are intact and tangible evidence of convict labour to prepare and build the foundations under military supervision.

Other elements on the site evidence significant changing uses over time. Following withdrawal of the Military, the place was initially used by the Police (1851-1866), then an Industrial School for Girls in NSW (1867-1871), and later, the first hospital in NSW for ‘imbeciles and idiots’, a specialist asylum that broke the long tradition of general Lunatic Asylums in NSW (1871-1879), becoming the Hospital for the Insane (1879-1916) and other names applied during the 1900s. It was the first regional public asylum and the first institution for the care of the mentally disabled in NSW and significant because it represents Governmental care that in Britain was managed by religious and charitable organisations. In Australia institutions for the mentally disabled have a strong tradition and culture of Government support and responsibility. The place reflects the evolution of mental health care from the introduction of “Regulations for the Insane” in the 1870s to contemporary mental health policies; the site continues to operate for the purpose of public mental health care.

A section of roadway in Watt Street and part of Fletcher Park was the location of Newcastle Government House and Garden and includes potential archaeological evidence of a flagstaff. The park has a statue of James Fletcher who was a significant figure representing Newcastle in the Legislature Assembly, and was also a friend of the miners’. Together, the James Fletcher Hospital site and Fletcher Park make up the Domain of the original Government House, established in 1804. The James Fletcher Hospital includes two coal mine shafts, one of these is known as the Wallis Shaft (1814), adit or drain (1830s?), the remains of a convict-built parsonage and Glebe (1819) and a former military hospital (1842), military barracks and parade ground (1843).

The Surveyors Alignment Marker at the top of Watt Street was put there to align streets in the township, placed by surveyor DM Maitland in 1864. In 1834 and in 1838 were two Acts passed which dealt with the placing and referencing of alignment marks to define street widths and footpath widths (and hence indirectly where the actual frontage of parcels are land are). One of the reasons for the alignment marks was under a “Policing Act” was to show where police could legally walk before entering a private person’s property. It is unlikely that the alignment mark was placed prior to then, but was probably placed as a consequence of the 1834 or 1838 Act. A marker exists at the Government Domain at the centre point that is at the end of Ordnance Street. The Institution of Surveyors commemorated this little piece of history with an historic marker in the 1980s.

**Fletcher Park**

Its use as a public park promoted in 1878 after ornamental shrubs and trees were planted there. The park was originally the site of Government House and flagstaff and is identifiable in many colonial artworks, also near Yi-ran-na-li at the cliffs on the east of the park, the general integrity and intactness Fletcher Park is fair. The park reflects the early European occupation of the area (an open area not heavily built on), although the Newcastle Government House ceased to exist after the 1830s, and the overall feature of the parkland is significant because of the earlier position of the flagstaff and views to the ocean. The area remains an open space reflecting the landscape of the colonial settlement and complementing Upper Reserve (King Edward Park). A wooden relic remains in shrubbery and it is highly likely to part of the former Government Flagstaff because of its location. The parks current namesake reflects the life of Mr James Fletcher, his statue erected in 1897 demonstrating the importance of thee site. The statue stands prominent where the former Government House once stood. The statue is in good condition.
Coal shafts and Adit
Three Government coal mines are located on the hillside at the Government Domain; the first working shaft (named ‘Wallis’ shaft, after the Commandant of Newcastle in 1810s) was sunk near the former Government House. The ‘Wallis shaft’ is one of two ‘Asylum shafts’ that exist within the grounds of the James Fletcher Hospital (Archaeological Management Plan 1995), and is also shown in the Report of the Royal Commission on Earth Subsidence at Newcastle 1908. (See Newcastle Government House and Domain SHR nomination for further details). Another former Government coal shaft (Bowling Green Shaft) is located at King Edward Park.

The mine adit, if confirmed to be associated with convict mining, would have a very high archaeological potential. Further research to understand how it is associated with the convict mine workings is highly recommended. This adit on the cliffs Yi-ran-na-li at South Newcastle Beach, it is in excellent condition and has retained features. It would appear that there has been a minimal change to this item since it was established, and it is accessible.

King Edward Park, Bogey Hole & Obelisk
King Edward Park formally known as Upper Reserve is a Victorian era parkland that has retained much of its nineteenth century qualities. This park is special to the Nation because it one of the earliest established regional parks. It is a coastal historic park that has features that reflect the openness of the landscape of pre contact period and resemblances of the colonial parklands. The place has national heritage significance because the park contains the oldest coastal swimming baths used by the Commandants of the early settlement. The park was the colonial recreational area of the early Commandant’s, with Government House situated nearby.

The park contains military installations and the Obelisk a navigational aid for shipping first established in 1850.

Generally the has unique heritage and landscape, open coastal headland and cliffs, it is a Victorian coastal recreational place and characteristics that reflect Aboriginal dreamtime stories.
Application for National Listing Feb 2012
Location Plan (Q7)
Q7b. What condition is it in? Describe whether the place is intact or if there has there been any damage or disturbance.

The City of Newcastle is a principal landowner and manager of assets within the Coal River precinct and throughout Newcastle. Council has expressed its support over many years for the listing of the Coal River precinct and more recently, to the inclusion of the Government Domain to the NSW State Heritage Register. In accordance with its support for these state heritage listings, Council has undertaken a range of initiatives which give strength to the cultural significance of these precincts. The iconic assets in the precinct reinforce our Novocastrian sense of place, pride and identity. The place has remained in public ownership because of its great significance to harbour, port, defence and other strategic functions. This has contributed to its present spatial integrity with a considerable amount of surviving physical evidence in the sites identified in this nomination.

Highly significant precincts with tangible Aboriginal and convict sites that include the Nobbys Headland (Whibayganba), Macquarie Pier (breakwater), convict coal mines under Fort Scratchley (Tahlbihn), and the convict lumber yard site.

- Nobbys Headland is intact and work is underway to secure ongoing public access to Nobbys which has been a successful joint venture between Council, the Newcastle port Corporation and community groups. Council continues to work cooperatively with the Port Corporation and other stakeholders to manage the precinct. Council is currently funding the design and construction of an interpretative installation at Nobbys which will showcase aspects of the city’s maritime history.

The 1850s gunpowder tunnels dug into the side of Nobbys Head for blasting the top off the headland are still intact. The tunnel entrances are no longer visible, but potential exists for future archaeological investigations of the chambers.
Macquarie Pier is intact. In recognition of Macquarie 2010, The University of Newcastle’s Coal River Working Party embarked on the quest to locate the Foundation and Inscription Stone laid in Newcastle by Governor Lachlan Macquarie back in 1818, and believed lost for over 190 years. The research work continues, with a thorough GPR test to be conducted. A commemorative event with the Governor of NSW was held in recognition of this tangible link to the public infrastructure work of Governor Macquarie.
• The convict coal mines, under the Fort Scratchley are intact. In September 2005 these mines beneath Fort Scratchley were re-discovered by the University’s Coal River Working Party who successfully researched and located the historic site of the first convict coal mines at Newcastle. This significant discovery located the site of the historic first profit ever made in the fledgling colony of New South Wales, at Coal River in 1801.

• The Fort Scratchley Historic site is intact. Ownership, investment and joint management of the Fort Scratchley Historic Site, and maintenance and promotion of the place as an outstanding historical attraction. Council is guided by an adopted Conservation Management Plan as well as a Plan of Management for Fort Scratchley which ensures that Council activities and operations sustain the heritage significance of the Fort into the future. Council works cooperatively with the Fort Scratchley Historical Society to deliver an outstanding historic attraction to the community, and invests in ongoing maintenance of the site through its major asset preservation program.

• The Convict Lumber Yard is an important historic site located in the heart of Newcastle. The site was the subject of an extensive archaeological dig between 1989 and 1992, resulting in the discovery of hundreds of artefacts dating back to the first days of the Newcastle penal settlement and ‘substantial evidence of its history and hence of the major themes which generated the development of
Newcastle.' Important Aboriginal materials were found at deep levels within the site, reflecting the ancient Aboriginal occupation of the region. The significance of the site has been recognised by inclusion on the NSW State Heritage Register, its listing on the Register of the National Estate (now called the National Heritage Database) and inclusion in the Newcastle Local Environmental Plan. The site is now owned by Newcastle City Council as an urban park. Signage and artworks offer opportunities to learn about the history of the site.

**Government Domain**

The James Fletcher Hospital at the Government Domain has physical fabric and evidence that remain from the Macquarie period includes sections of the old parsonage, two convict coal mines and possibly an adit. Although there have been changes to the area, there is evidence of the landscape having been cut away, shaped by convict labour. Today the Military Barracks, former military hospital, officer's quarters and gate house all exist, as well as an open space used for recreation at the former Parade Ground.

The landscape of the James Fletcher Hospital shows an exposed quarried landform on the south side, approximately 20 metres high. The exposed rock has eroded somewhat due to environmental conditions; however this landscape remains a noticeable and strong feature of the site, the quarried section that formed a wall runs the full length of the southern boundary. A large expanse of the grounds was leveled to build the military barracks and parade ground. The topography was originally a gentle slope from the ocean cliffs towards what is known today as the 'The Hill'. The area is relatively underdeveloped compared with the surrounding area of the city of Newcastle.

The Former Military Parade Ground remains an open parkland and grassy area that has not been hindered or interrupted by significant development. Significant vistas remain across all areas of the site because the recreation ground is in the centre of the collection of buildings.

The James Fletcher Hospital with its preserved Parade Ground, Military Barracks, and the Former Military Hospital is significant and relatively intact. The Former Military Hospital has a surviving timber shingle roof and other masonry elements in regard to the original and early timber joinery. The Former military Barracks has surviving original timber roof structure and lining boards and original masonry elements, as well as verandah structure and columns. The surviving original fabric (circa 1842) of the military buildings and surrounds is exceptional, including:-

- The surviving original fabric of the former men’s Barracks
- The surviving original fabric of the former Officer's Quarters
- The surviving original fabric of the former Guard House
- The surviving original fabric of the former military outbuildings
- Underground brick water tanks.

The place has significance to the Nation because it has retained the physical evidence of the convict era, military and asylum phase of its use. The military buildings all built in the 1840s are intact and a tangible link relating to convict labour.

What survives are numerous buildings, relics and a landscape that show the important changes made by convict labour, military/defence, welfare/mental health, changes that have taken place over a 208 year period. It has a strong association with the history of mining in Australia and the historical phase of convict occupation and labour, with evidence of early methods of coal mining. The convict coal shafts are associated with the growth of coal mining in the Hunter region that continues today, with Newcastle as the largest coal port in the world.

The Surveyors Alignment Marker at the top of Watt Street was put there to ‘align’ the streets (in what we now call the kerb line). From this fixture the alignment and width of street and distance to property boundaries were defined, in effect by the Government Gazette via plan registration in the Registrar Generals Office. In the last 100 to 150 years, most of these major alignment posts have been destroyed by councils making kerb and guttering, placing driveways and road widening, but one very significant marker still existed at the top of Watt Street and unscathed by the years.
Newcastle Council is actively investing in improving its facilities and cultural attractions in these precincts upgrading the Bathers Way, which interprets and promotes the heritage values through signage, pavement treatments and artworks.

**King Edward Park, Bogey Hole & Obelisk**

The open park land has been landscaped and the general integrity and intactness of the landscape is fair. The park reflects the early European occupation of the area (an open area not heavily built on) and although Newcastle Government House ceased to exist after the 1830s, the overall feature of the open parkland is significant because of the earlier position of the flagstaff and view to the ocean. The condition of the park is reasonable good by Newcastle City Council; much of the open space has remained undisturbed, except for the garden beds on the west side (Watt Street) that were replaced in 2005. It is possible this recent work disturbed archaeological remains of the former Newcastle Government House. The park’s current namesake reflects the life of Mr James Fletcher, his statue erected in 1897 demonstrating the importance of the site. The statue stands prominent where the former Government House once stood. The statue remains in relatively good condition.

Archaeological potential is high in this area, as it is related to the earliest visually recorded built heritage in the settlement of Newcastle (1804). It is possible that relics could be found in this area, including remnants of the flagstaff and foundations of Government House and outbuildings.

Further archaeological evidence includes a wooden post at the top end of the park that is one of a few marks placed by surveyor DM Maitland to fix the alignment of the streets of Newcastle in 1864.

The site of convict era Bogey Hole constructed by Major Morisset between 1819 and 1821 is still intact. Newcastle Borough Council enlarged the Bogey Hole to its present size and added stanchions and chains in 1884. In August 2012 repairs and upgrade work was conducted to ensure safe public access with $360,000 committed for its restoration.

**Coal shafts and Adit**

At present the heritage features of the coal mines cannot be fully ascertained until further investigations are completed, information is limited due to the lack of research undertaken. Shaft No.1 has been filled and sealed, mine shaft No.2 is reported to be in good condition have been capped but is not filled and would offer an excellent opportunity to open up the shaft for inspection and recording. Shaft No 2 is reported to be in good condition when opened in 1987, this offers a chance of future research and interpretation. The integrity and intactness of Shaft No.2 has the potential to accurately record this significant mining heritage. It is highly likely from the limited accounts of shaft No 2 that original features may have survived, therefore restoration may be viable.

The site has the potential to reveal archaeological remains of the first commercial coal mining in Australia by mine shaft (vertical shaft). There has been minimal archaeological research carried out on these mine shafts. The mines were apparently begun in 1814 and were worked from 1817 and 1831. There was minimal mining in this area after this time. There is a high archaeological potential (particularly of No.2) in finding information relating to colonial mining techniques. It is suggested in the Nctle Archaeological Plan that these shafts may also be associated with other Government mines shafts on the southern side of Ordnance Street (Bowling Green shaft) and of the potential of finding relics related to the convict/Macquarie period.

Council is investing in excess of $1 million in the presentation and maintenance of Council owned heritage places, themselves significant for their association with convictism in Newcastle - including the Cathedral Park ‘open air museum’ and revitalisation project, the Convict Lumber Yard and Stockade interpretation site, ongoing investment in the presentation of the Newcastle East Heritage Conservation Area, and ongoing care and management of King Edward Park, Fletcher Park and monument and Shepherds Hill military fortifications. This includes insurance cover for these places and heritage items such as the memorials and landscaping of each place.
Q8. What is its history? Summarise its origins and development. You may need to attach additional information.

Newcastle was the first area of white occupation in New South Wales outside of the Sydney basin with an early settlements in 1801, which was abandoned in 1802 and was permanently re-established as a place of secondary punishment in 1804. By 1819 there were almost 700 convicts in the area, and by 1820 the total resident white population was approximately 1,200. The area was of major economic importance as a source of coal, timber, lime and salt for the new colony. The closure of the penal settlement at Newcastle in 1823 led to a decade or two of stasis. Population growth, trade and wealth shifted towards the lower Hunter Valley, and the principal town of Maitland and its nearby port Morpeth.

According to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies 2000 “The Aboriginal people who occupied the present area of Newcastle prior to Contact belonged to the Awabakal language group. Their nearest neighbours were the Worimi to the north who were centred around Port Stevens however it is believed the Hunter River, as a major geographic feature, was the demarcation line between these two language groups”.

Awabakal and Worimi people live in and around the Hunter River. The Awakabal’s traditional country ranges from Lake Macquarie to the southern shore of the Hunter River, while the Worimi live in what became known as the Stockton Bight/Port Stephens area. From the late 1790s initial contact between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people tended to be sporadic, but after 1804, the Awabakal had to contend with the permanent occupation of their country by convicts and their gaolers. Written, visual and archaeological evidence indicates that traditional patterns of their economy, society and kinship were maintained into the 1850s. Thereafter, traditional societies were overwhelmed by more widespread and intensive land use with many Aboriginal people choosing, or being forced, to relocate to a mission on Lake Macquarie which was established by Reverend Threlkeld in the 1820s. Others moved to the Lake Macquarie area, and their ancestors are resident in the region today, and continue to still have connections to their culture and land.

It was the presence of coal which initially attracted Europeans to the area in the early 1800s. The outlet of the Hunter River and the presence of coal were officially noted by Lieutenant John Shortland in 1797. Shortland’s journey north of Sydney in the Governor’s whaleboat in September 1797, his eye-sketch of the river he named after Governor Hunter, his optimistic impression of the area, and his return of coal samples to Sydney were historically important factors in the eventual expansion of the newly-established penal colony out of the Sydney Basin.

Shortland’s visit was not the first landing in the area by Europeans. William and Mary Bryant, along with six other escaped convicts and two children from Sydney, may have landed in the area in March 1791. There is some debate whether they entered what was later known as the Hunter River, and most likely they landed at Glenrock Lagoon, five kilometres south of the Hunter River. The Bryants are well known to Australian history since they, remarkably, made it all the way to Timor, only to be found out by British officers from the recently-wrecked Pandora. In Newcastle history, however, their claim to fame rests with their discovery and use of coal at Glenrock Lagoon.

Another pre-1797 European contact came in June 1796. David Collins, Judge-Advocate for the fledgling colony, detailed a visit by a party of fisherman ‘from a bay near Port Stephens’. This party brought back samples of coal to Sydney. Unlike Shortland, a navy man with a subsequent heroic career, these unnamed fishermen of lowly status were difficult candidates to eulogize as European explorers, despite the impeccable European credentials of Collins as a source. Moreover, their visit to Coal River had been an occasion for violence between the visiting party and local Aborigines. Collins reported that the party ‘conducted themselves improperly on shore, two of them were severely wounded by the natives...’ Collins does not record nor did he probably know of the outcome for local Aborigines. Coupled with these on-shore visits by Europeans was Captain Cook’s sighting of what later became ‘Nobbys Island’ in May 1770.

Further exploration in 1801 confirmed the area’s resources and potential. In June 1801 Lieutenant Colonel William Paterson, together with Lieutenant Grant, Ensign Barrallier, a party of marines and a gang of convicts arrived at Coal River to work the coal and exploit the cedar, accessible via the Hunter River. The more senior and capable officers left in July leaving Corporal Wixstead in charge. The 1801 settlement...
struggled under the inexperienced leadership of Wixstead and later the overly severe Surgeon Mason, and was withdrawn in early 1802.

Governor King first established the outpost in 1801 to control unchecked exploitation by private traders and provide hard labour for re-offending convicts. The settlement was withdrawn in 1802, but re-established in 1804 following the Irish rebellion at Vinegar Hill. Systematic extraction of coal continued in the immediate area from 1804 to 1817, after which newer mines west of the nominated area were opened. The Australian Agricultural Company took over the government mines in 1831. Free labour eventually replaced convict workers from the 1840s (Pemberton, 1986).

A convict settlement was re-established in 1804. This was designated a place of secondary punishment. The first convicts sent to Coal River were Irish rebels who participated in the Castle Hill insurrection. Coal mining had the dual value of being both dangerous, punishing work, while also producing a potentially valuable resource for the new colony. Captain Wallis established a refractory for women on Nobbys Island around 1816, he did this because there were increasing problems in managing both men and women together. Women convicts also came to Coal River, Nobbys was used as a factory for women. (Windross 11)

Coal mining was seen by early colonial administrators as a possible means to make the colony more financially self-sufficient. Governor Hunter had reported that the coal sighted at Coal Cliff, south of Sydney, was inaccessible, but the Coal River deposits outcropped at convenient locations at the entrance of the Hunter River. In 1797 Lieutenant Shortland was impressed with the loading and trade potential of the area: ‘Vessels from 60 to 250 tons may load there with great ease.’ (Shortland, 1798 in HRNSW, 481-82) It was these seams at the entrance to the river, outcropping at Nobbys and on Colliers Point/Signal Hill, that was the focus of the first systematic coal mining. The officer in charge of the 1804 settlement, Lieutenant Menzies, wrote that to Governor King that ‘an excellent mine has been opened, the strata of which continues a yard six inches thick.’ From geological records, and later written evidence, we know this seam to be the upper split of the Dudley seam. (Lt Menzies in HRNSW, 367)

From 1811 both coal production and the settlement’s population increased. From 73 persons in 1811 the population almost doubled to 134 by 1812. Similarly coal production increased from 800 tons in 1808 to 1400 tons in 1811, and peaked at 2193 tons in that decade. The penal settlement continued until 1823 with the convicts mining coal, preparing lime from shell and timber getting. The increase in convict numbers and production levels at Coal River coincided with Governor Macquarie’s decade-long programme of public works and construction. Such ambitious colony building would not have been possible without the resources provided by the Newcastle outpost. (Broadbent in Broadbent & Hughes, 1992, 157) For example, the first Government House at Parramatta was constructed using imported lime to secure the sandstone bricks, while Macquarie’s extensive building programme utilised the vast amounts of lime from Coal River.

If the first occupation of the 1800s was largely about coal, subsequent free settlers of the early 1820s were attracted by land. It was the availability of fertile land with rich alluvial soils adjacent to the Hunter, Williams and Paterson Rivers which was especially appealing. The Hunter Valley was opened to free settlement in 1823, and extensive numbers of settlers, sheep and cattle entered the valley in the next five years. Some of the more recalcitrant convicts were removed to the new penal station at Port Macquarie. However, convicts remained in the town, as assigned servants, as labourers on the town gang, and after 1831, as miners working for the Australian Agricultural Company, which took over the ownership and operation of the Government mines. Some convicts were also sent to Newcastle Gaol during the 1830s after conviction in the Sydney courts. (McCabe, 1999, 179). During the 1830s, one historian estimates that 165 female convicts passed through Newcastle goal whether on their way to private assignment, after conviction in Sydney, for punishment, or for re-assignment (McCabe, 1999, 181). By the 1830s, the Hunter Valley included a number of wealthy landowners with large estates, many owned by ex-army officers, which typically had considerable demand for convict workers. (Walsh, 2006, 67-90)

In the 1830s large numbers of convicts returned to Newcastle. The convict lumber yard was renamed ‘the stockade’ and a large gang was put to work on finishing the Macquarie Pier. A guard house was built adjoining the stockade in 1833 as the public work gang returned to continue the breakwater. Work on the pier had lapsed in 1823. It was finally complete by 1846. Over this period Nobbys was also used to ‘stockade’ convicts, usually as a method of punishment.
By the 1850s Newcastle resumed stronger economic growth. The gold rushes momentarily unhinged the regional labour market, but the ending of the Australian Agricultural company’s monopoly in coal mining in 1847 and the boom in emigration in the 1850s and 1860s, sparked a new round of coal mine development which shaped the urban typography and demographic makeup of the developing suburbs of Newcastle. These new developments around the pit top towns of Adamstown, Hamilton, Waratah and Wallsend, were inaugurated by private companies. The coal mining industry of the Hunter Valley had finally transformed into a market economy.

This firm economic base encouraged other related industries such as railway workshops, regional steamship companies and secondary manufacturing, as well as naturally created further demands for improvements in harbour facilities, navigational services, and coal loading technology. From 1857 the Great Northern Railway, augmented by the private lines of the coal companies, formed the backbone of the regional economy, linking Newcastle with the produce and trade of the valley, and ultimately eclipsing Morpeth and Maitland as the economic hub of the region. It wasn’t until 1887, when a direct rail connection to Sydney was opened, that the centrality of the port in Newcastle’s maritime economy was significantly challenged.

Likewise by the 1850s elements of the proposed Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain had firmly entered the hearts of Novocastrians. Nobbys Head by this time was a clearly identifiable image of the town so much so that plans to remove Nobbys via explosive methods were vigorously resisted. An 1854 petition called on the government to halt the destruction of Nobbys. This petition represents one of the nation’s earliest demands for the preservation of a culturally-significant landmark. The subsequent construction of the 1857 lighthouse on a preserved Nobbys crowned Newcastle’s most identifiable landmark. It announced the maritime connections of the town, and the port community’s continuing battle with the vagaries of the sea and the dangers it posed to seafarers. At a deeper cultural level strong feelings for Nobbys showed that Novocastrians no longer evinced a migrant sensibility as they embraced their local environment and its significant features in a place they now called home.

Nobbys

Nobbys is a distinctive landmark at the mouth of the Hunter River, noted by Captain James Cook during his voyage of discovery up the east coast of Australia. On 10 May 1770 Cook wrote in his ship’s log that the Endeavour passed by a ‘small clump of an island lying close to shore’. Shortland named the island Hacking Island, in his ‘Eye Sketch’. Paterson named it Coal Island presumably because of the visible coal seams. The Aboriginal name was Whibayganba, and this has been documented in Mitchell’s survey sketch book of 1828. On his chart of Coal Harbour in 1801, surveyor Ensign Francis Barrallier estimated the island to be 203 feet (62 metres) high. Rigby and Fryer (2010) have estimated that the original height of Nobbys was actually less than this, at about 142 feet (43 metres). The height of Nobbys Head is now only 98 feet (30 metres). (Kerr, R 2011)

Nobbys Island was used as a place of confinement for the worst convicts before the island was joined to the mainland. Several tunnels were cut into Nobbys for the blowing up of the headland and these tunnels were visible for many years and gradually becoming sealed by falling rock. (Windross 12) The entrance to a tunnel shelter in the northern cliff face has been covered by rock falls.

A meeting was held in Newcastle in June 1854 to protest against a perceived threat to remove the island in the interests of navigation. However Nobbys was cut down a lighthouse was established there in 1857 replacing the coal-fired beacon that had been operating at Signal Hill.

Colliers Point Mines

Lieutenant Colonel Paterson writing to Governor King named the headland Collier’s Point and explained that:

*The point is composed of two strata in sight and one, which is bare at low-water mark only. This is by much the best coal, which you will see by the specimen I desired might be kept apart from the other, which is the middle strata, about 16 inches deep; that below is 22 inches; the distance between them is about 20 feet.*

In 1801 and 1804 John Platt, a skilled coalminer set out the mines in what was clearly the method at the forefront of mining technology - the bord and pillar system. He advised Governor King of the damage done
when the mines were not properly regulated and timbered. Colliers Point was the site of the first coalmining in Australia, which continued at the location until 1814. Dr D F Branagan has identified the lower seam and the middle seam as the Dirty or Dudley seam.

The *Newcastle Morning Herald* 29 January 1885 reported on the old convict coal workings and the wall then being built the fort:

*All necessary precautions having been taken by filling in or roofing the many underground chambers their entrances were finally blotted out of sight for ever by a thick wall of concrete and masonry.*

**Macquarie Pier**

Governor Lachlan Macquarie laid the foundation stone for ‘Macquarie Pier’ on 5 August 1818. The pier was the most ambitious harbour improvement project of a convict era.

The connection to Nobby's Island was completed in June 1846. Heavy seas in subsequent years breached the pier, which was later strengthened on the seaward side by using huge sandstone blocks transported by rail from a quarry at Waratah. The work was completed by 1872. A sand dune system and the popular Nobby's Beach have formed on the ocean side of Macquarie Pier. In 1957 the harbour side of the breakwater was cement rendered except for a small stairway near Nobby's.

The Macquarie Pier, constructed to enable safe entrance into the harbour was started in 1818 with Governor Macquarie laying the foundation stone. This was the Colony’s largest public works project and is not only important to the history of capital works programs of the Colonial Government, but to convictism and early technology in Australia. The construction of Macquarie Pier assisted in safe harbour access, it was essential structurally and strategically in enhancing the efficiency of the coal exported, thus increasing profits for the British Empire. The provision of convicts to construct Macquarie Pier was in the economic interest of the Colony.

**Signal Hill**

Signal Hill is an important and historic landmark with a commanding position overlooking the river entrance. The northern extremity was Colliers Point.

Lieutenant Shortland camped at the base of the hill when he entered and surveyed the river in 1797 and noted the coal seams in the cliff face.

Fresh water was available from a small watercourse at the base of the hill.

The coal-fired beacon erected on Signal Hill in 1804 to guide and warn mariners was probably the first light on the Australian coast. It was extinguished in December 1857 when the new lighthouse at Nobby's commenced operation. On the hill were also erected a signal station, a distinctive pagoda like building as a residence for the stoker and signalman, and about 1860, a house for the harbourmaster (Captain Allen).

Signal Hill was also known as Beacon Hill, Captain Allan’s Hill and Flagstaff Hill by 1840. Due to a perceived threat from Britain’s enemies in the 1870’s, substantial fortifications were erected at key outposts in British colonies, such as Fort Scratchley in 1881.

Extensive quarrying to gain material for Macquarie Pier and other purposes has dramatically altered the shape of Signal Hill and the old convict coal workings beneath the hill were sealed up with a thick wall of concrete in 1885.

**Newcastle Government Domain**

As mentioned this is the location of the place named *Yi-ran-na-li* at the cliff at South Newcastle Beach. It was described by Reverend Threlkeld as followed,
“There is a sort of sacred place near Newcastle on the sea-beach, beneath a high cliff, named Yi-ran-na-li, where, it is said, that if any person speak, the stones will fall down upon them, from the high arched rocks above, the crumbling state of which is such as to render it extremely probable, that the mere concussion of air from the voice would cause the effect to take place.

I was walking beneath the projecting rock and called loudly to McGill, who with other Aborigines, were with me, he instantly beckoned me to be silent, at which I wondered, a few small stones fell down from the crumbling overshadowing cliff at that moment, and they urged me on.

When we had passed out of the precincts of the fearful place, I asked what they meant by commanding my silence, and pushing on so quickly, without speaking? This elicited the tradition of the place as a fearful one, for if any one speak whilst passing beneath the overhanging rocks, stones would invariably fall as we had just witnessed.” (Threlkeld in Gunson 1974:65)

Newcastle’s Government House was located on the hillside above Yi-ran-na-li from 1804 and was built on the hillside and is associated with the many Commandants of Newcastle including Lieutenant Charles Menzies, Charles Throsby, Commandant Wallis and Major Morisset. Government House & gardens were located on the area, adjoining the house was a coal shaft worked with convict labour.

It is from this place that coal mining by shaft begun in Australia. These two early mines were worked using convict labour and forged what becomes Australia’s economic base, the coal industry. The landscape was a convict workplace, firstly the coal mines and gardens were worked and later the hillside was quarried to provide an area suitable to build a military barracks and parade ground. A third shaft (c1822) is located on the hill at King Edward Park, it too was convict-sunk and later referred to as the ‘Bowling Green’ coal pit. It too was a Government Shaft and engineer John Busby (1824) mentions that ‘from a ravine to the south a mine was driven to join it [to drain water from the ‘Bowling Green’ coal workings], (D.F. Branagan)

It has been in continuous Governmental ownership and use since 1804 and was important in the course of the establishment of the convict system in NSW, also as a secondary place of punishment.

The place has links with Awabakal heritage, convictism and the growth of the economy in New South Wales, inspired by Governor Macquarie. Lachlan Macquarie on his tour to the northern settlements in 1821 stayed at Newcastle’s Government House (Macquarie’s Journal 1973. P 217) and had several visits there stating “…immediately on my landing respecting the inspection of the settlement, I went with Mrs. M. & c. to view the coal mines…” (Macquarie’s Journal p.86). The future of the coal mining industry and was important to Governor Macquarie and this is shown in his laying of the foundation stone to build the Macquarie Pier in 1818. This was a major colonial public works project that was undertaken to join the mainland with Nobby’s Island and established a safe port entrance to facilitate the coal export trade. Coal was essential to the Colony’s economy and Newcastle’s commercial coal mines were integral to Governor Macquarie’s plan to promote the Colony as self-supporting.

Government coal shafts are also located there, the ‘Wallis’ shaft is described as having been located next the Government House, “…mouth of the shaft immediately adjoins the offices of the Commandant’s house”, “Twenty seven men are employed in the working of the mine, and the mouth of the shaft immediately adjoins offices of the Commandant’s House”. (Bigge 1822 p.114-118). The shaft is thought to have been excavated between 1814 and 1817 (Eklund 2004).

After these mines became disused there was very little reference made to them during the 1800s. It was not until the 1900s that a mine subsidence report provided more detail about the existence of the convict mines, (Report of the Royal Commission on Earth subsidence at Newcastle 1908). In the 1940s Mr Jonathon Dixon carried out research on the site and attempted to locate the position of the first convict coal shaft by surveying an early map (Draft of the town of Newcastle 1822). Dr B W Champion (1949) also supports Dixon’s location of the convict coal mines, and also added that it was sunk approximately 20 yards inside the Mental Hospital gates (‘Newcastle & Hunter District Historical Society’1949).

1 Quoted in D.F. Branagan, Geology and Coal Mining in the Hunter Valley 1791-1861, Newcastle History Monographs No.6, Newcastle City Council, 1972, page 32.
Further subsidence occurred within the hospital grounds in 1943 which revealed a convict mine shaft. This shaft is thought to be the ‘Wallis Shaft’ and was described as being, “… inside the gates of the hospital” (Newcastle Morning Herald & Miners’ Advocate July 21, 1943). Dixon (1949 p.35) argues that the subsidence revealed both the position of the old convict mine shaft, as well as the position of the Commandant’s House or Government House.

King Edward Park, Bogey Hole & Obelisk

The area of King Edward Park was the sheep pastures of the penal settlement in 1804. Later the Government coal mine on top of the hill was leased to the Australian Agricultural Company, when this was longer used the area was Government unused land. The southern part of the park is known as Shepherd’s Hill, and previously referred to as Khatrerin, “So in the cliff near Khatrerin, (south of Shepherd's bush cliff) the dip is slightly to N.W , but close to this there exists an anticlinal curve, one end dipping to N., and the other to S “ (APPENDIX.— No. 1. (1847, October 13). The Sydney Morning Herald (NSW : 1842 - 1954). Another reference to the area in mining literature is, “At the highest point, Khatrerin or South Shepherds Hill, about halfway, there are 5 seams exposed. (vide Plan 2 , Section No 3”). (H T Plews (1858). The origins of Khatrerin is unknown and further research is required to explore if it is an Aboriginal term.

In 1856 the public park was first proclaimed a recreational reserve, largely thanks to Newcastle’s first Chamber of Commerce, ‘The Government were induced by the Chamber to grant the citizens in perpetuity (35) thirty-five acres of land as a recreation ground in the most delightful and picturesque part of Newcastle from the top of Watt Street round the Horse Shoe to the Obelisk.’ (Bingle, 1873:21) The park was later known as ‘Upper Reserve’, plantings of Norfolk pines were completed in the late 1800s, and in 1910 the park was renamed King Edward Park. This was the main ‘civic’ park of the city of Newcastle were commemorative and celebratory services took place, until a new the Civic Park was established in the 1937.

The Obelisk was originally the site of the Government Flour mill (windmill) in 1820 used to grind flour. It become a prominent ‘landmark’ and navigational marker for ships approaching Newcastle and when it was removed in the 1840s there was an outcry from mariners who used the windmill to navigate safe entry to the port. After a petition was forwarded to the Governor an Obelisk was erected at the place in 1850. The Obelisk is closely related to seafaring and shipping history, including an industrial protest to have an Obelisk erected about the windmill was removed.

The Bogey Hole is a place that is likely to have been used by Aboriginal people prior to it being carved out by convicts in about 1819 for use by the Commandant of Newcastle Major Morisset, it was know at this time as the ‘Commandant’s Bathes’. The term ‘Bogey’ is believed to have associations with Aboriginal term ‘to bathe’. In 1863 the Bogey Hole was handed to the Newcastle Borough Council for public use, and it remains in public use today.
It is important to bear in mind that Norfolk Island was initially established in 1788 not as a place of secondary punishment, but as a way to divide the colony’s resources in the face of scarcity. It was only after the closure of the Newcastle penal settlement in 1823 that Norfolk Island was re-established as a place of secondary punishment in 1825, its regime and underlying philosophy based on the first such experiment at Coal River. The personnel for the new site of punishment later included Commandant James Thomas Morisset, who had spent three years at Newcastle from 1819 to 1823. Newcastle was indisputably the first place of secondary punishment and an experimental outpost which was highly influential on later convict policy. Similarly, the Sarah Island site, on the west coast of Van Diemen’s Land, was established the year after Newcastle was closed. It too was a convict outpost that sought to exploit the local resources of coal, timber, and lime. The successful Newcastle experiment must have weighed heavily in this case too.

Furthermore, while places such as Norfolk Island, Fremantle Prison, and Port Arthur are particularly strong on evidence of changing incarceration and punishment regimes, they are less revealing in terms of the convict industrial and economic role. The First Government House site is an evocative place that says much about colonial society and the personalities that controlled the convict system yet again it does not evoke the role of the convict workforce. At the Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain the presence of the convict coal mine and the nearby convict lumber yard is an especially significant pairing which reveals much about the economic role of convictism in producing crucial resources for the emerging colonial economy.

Other sites of secondary punishment such as Port Macquarie, Sarah Island, and Moreton Bay have less physical remains than the Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain. These sites are often located in isolated areas with difficult access. The Coal River (Mulubinba) Cultural Landscape sits at the ocean gateway to Australia’s largest regional city. The well-populated Central Coast and Hunter Valley regions, together with the nation’s largest city, Sydney, are only a short drive away.

National recognition and further development of the Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain represent an unparalleled opportunity to show large numbers of Australian and overseas visitors crucial elements of the convict story in a vibrant, lively and accessible precinct.

Q10. What other information is available on the place? List any articles, books, reports or heritage studies that may provide evidence supporting your nomination. You may also have information from Traditional Owners and Custodians, scientists or heritage specialists. If they have agreed to share their knowledge, please include their contact details.

Also Refer to APPENDIX G- Photographs

On-line Resources

Coal River Working Party (CRWP) Blog
http://coalriver.wordpress.com/

Online diary for local researches and events involving the University’s Coal River Working Party, with links to thousands of online digitized resources relating to history of the Region.

http://coalriver.wordpress.com/history/
http://coalriver.wordpress.com/dreaming/

http://coalriver.wordpress.com/key-documents/

Primary Sources

1791 - James Martin Memorandoms: Escape from Botany Bay, 1791 : being ‘Memorandoms’ / by James Martin ; introduction and notes by Victor Crittenden (Canberra : Mulini Press, c1991) - discovery of coal

1797 - Lieutenant John Shortland. An eye sketch of Hunter’s River. 1797. Signed L.S. [initials presumed to be those of Lieutenant John Shortland]. Copy is held in the University Archives at Shelf Location A6472 (iii) Original is held in the Hydrographic Department. Ministry of Defence, Taunton, Somerset, United Kingdom: C642/1.


1801 - Captain James Grant Aboard the Lady Nelson


1801 - Corporal Wixsted and the settlement at Coal River (Newcastle) July 1801.


1805 - John Platt’s Account of the coal mines at Newcastle.
Platt, John (5 May 1805), Account given by John Platt a coal miner of the coal mines at Newcastle. Sydney Gazette.

1811-1812 - Lachlan Macquarie visits Port Stephens and Newcastle
http://www.lib.mq.edu.au/all/journeys/1812/1812.html


1813 - Skottowe, Thomas. The Skottowe manuscript : Thomas Skottowe’s select specimens from nature of the birds, animals, &c. &c. of New South Wales / edited, with an introductory essay, by Tim Bonyhady ; natural history consultant: John Calaby ; foreword by Sir David Attenborough. Sydney : David Ell Press : Hordern House, 1988. Drawings by T.R. Browne. For a complete set of images from this recently digitised manuscript

1816 - Joseph Lycett (c1774/75 – 1828). Newcastle, New South Wales, looking towards Prospect Hill. c.1816-1818. [Detail 1] [Detail 2] [Detail 3] A gift by Port Waratah Coal Services to Newcastle Region Art Gallery. Photographed by Bruce Turnbull [Courtesy Newcastle Region Art Gallery]


1818 - Lachlan Macquarie Journal to and from Newcaste

1818 - Macquarie Collector's Chest, ca. 1818
http://image.sl.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/ebindshow.pl?doc=xr69/a1089;thumbs=1

1818 - Walter Preston (fl.1811-1820) Newcastle, Hunter's River, New South Wales. c.1818 -1820 [1.02MB Version] [Detail] Photographed by Bruce Turnbull [Courtesy Newcastle Region Art Gallery]

1818 - Walter Preston (fl.1811-1820) Corroboree, or dance of the natives of New South Wales, New Holland c.1818 -1820 Photographed by Bruce Turnbull [Courtesy Newcastle Region Art Gallery]

1818 - [Corroboree at Newcastle / oil painting by Joseph Lycett] c.1818 [State Library of New South Wales] [Image]

1819 - John Slater's Letter to his wife in Nottingham

1819 - Wentworth's Description of New South Wales

1821 - Lachlan Macquarie's Voyage and Tour of Inspection
http://www.lib.mq.edu.au/all/journeys/1821/1821b.html


The Panorama above is constituted of the following paintings in Sketchbook of scenes of Sydney, Broken Bay, Newcastle and region, New South Wales, 1817-1840, (Courtesy of the National Library of Australia) once attributed to Sophia Campbell, now Edward Charles Close, 1790-1866 (Thanks to Mark Metrikas for identifying this find) The individual paintings that make up this Panorama from the Sketchbook are listed in order from left to right: (1) Commandant’s house from in front of the old gaol, Newcastle, New South Wales, ca. 1828 [picture] (2) Dwellings, fenced land and the windmill on the hill, Newcastle, New South Wales, ca. 1820 [picture] (3) Barracks with Christ Church in the distance, Newcastle, New South Wales, ca. 1820 [picture] (4) Dwellings and buildings in Newcastle, New South Wales, ca. 1820 (5) View over buildings towards the signal mast and Nobby Head, Newcastle, New South Wales, ca. 1820. Reconstructed in 2010 by Gionni Di Gravio. Utilised and discussed in Capturing Time Panoramas of old Australia by Edwin Barnard. ISBN 9780642277503, National Library of Australia, October 2012.

1827 - Threlkeld, L. E. (Lancelot Edward), 1788-1859. Specimens of a Dialect of the Aborigines of New South Wales; Being the first attempt to form their speech into a written language. Sydney: Printed at the Monitor Office, 1827. (1.29 MB PDF) [Archives Shelf Number A 6704 Percy Haslam Collection]

1828. - Mitchell, Sir Thomas Livingstone (1792-1855) Field Book - Port Jackson and Newcastle, 1828 (C 40) 55MB PDF (Courtesy of the State Library of New South Wales)

1828-1830. - Mitchell, Sir Thomas Livingstone (1792-1855) Field, Note and Sketch Book, 1828-1830 (C 42) 14MB PDF Database Picman (Courtesy of the State Library of New South Wales)

1828 - Cross, Joseph. Map of the River Hunter and its Branches (1828)

1828 - Peter Cunningham's Two Years in New South Wales

Cunningham, Peter Miller. (1827) Two Years in New South Wales; New Burlington Street pp.142-161.

1828 - A View of King's Town (Late Newcastle) 1828 Engraver: Joseph Cross

Full Version (1MB)

Small Version (181KB)

Detail (354KB)

Detail2 (171KB)

Published in:

Dangar, H. (Henry), 1796-1861

Title: Index and directory to map of the country bordering upon the River Hunter ; the lands of the Australian-Agricultural Company, with the ground plan and allotments of King’s Town, New South Wales : containing a detail of the annual quit rent and amount of the redemption of the same ; also historical notes upon the tenure and principle of granting lands in the colony since 1810 ; also for the guidance of emigrant settlers, a description of the unlocated country in the vicinity of Hunter’s River ; useful geographical notes on Liverpool Plains ; the present regulations and conditions upon which grants and sales of land are made by government, with observations thereon, with a view of the present state of agriculture in the colony, price of land, advice to settlers, &c. the whole forming with regard to land affairs in that colony, a complete emigrant’s guide / by H. Dangar. Published: London : Joseph Cross, 1828. (University of Newcastle Rare Book Collection) See: http://www.flickr.com/photos/uon/sets/72157623287130929/wid/4349263785/

1828 - Threlkeld, L. E. (Lancelot Edward), 1788-1859. [Manuscript] A Journal Kept By Lancelot Edward Threlkeld, Missionary. [87 MB PDF] This original manuscript Journal of the Reverend Lancelot Threlkeld covers the period from December 1828 to circa February 1846 and is now lost. As it begins on page 63, it presumably formed part
of a series of Journal diaries. It originally was in the possession of an owner in Cattai. Prior to his death, the
manuscript was lent to Mrs Raven, who then lent it to the Mitchell Library who digitised it. The Journal was
then returned to the owner. After his death the manuscript disappeared and every avenue of locating it
pursued by Mrs Raven has come to no avail causing great concern for the fate of such an important historical
document to Hunter Region and Australian history.

We sincerely thank Mrs Marjorie Raven, great grand daughter of the late Reverend Threlkeld for her permission
to publish this important Journal.

1830 - Armstrong, John. Plan of the Town of Newcastle New South Wales shewing it’s present actual state with
part of the adjoining Country, and the coal works of The Australian Agricultural Company from a Careful Survey
in 1830 by Jno. Armstrong.

See: Newcastle in 1830 - http://coalriver.wordpress.com/2013/02/07/newcastle-in-1830/

1832 - NSW Directory 1832
Raymond, James (1966), The New South Wales calendar and general post office directory, 1832. Sydney, Public

1833 - Breton’s Excursions
Breton, William Henry (1833), Excursions in New South Wales, Western Australia and Van Diemen’s Land,
during the years 1830, 1831, 1832, and 1833. London : Richard Bentley. pp. 86-299.

1834 - Lang, John Dunmore (1834), An historical and statistical account of New South Wales, both as a penal

1842 - 1843 Chronology of Ludwig Leichhardt’s Visit to Newcastle. Ludwig Leichhardt in Newcastle (CRWP)
http://coalriver.wordpress.com/2013/01/29/ludwig-leichhardt-in-newcastle/

pp. 368-414.


1849 - Rae, John. Newcastle in 1849. Panorama.(Courtesy of the State Library of NSW)
http://uoncc.files.wordpress.com/2010/05/1849-rae.jpg

1851 - Henderson, John (1851). Excursions and adventures in New South Wales: with pictures of squatting and

1855 - Threlkeld in the Christian Herald, 17th February 1855, Vol.III, p.5-6. [Published in Australian

“At the entrance of Newcastle there is a small high island, called by the English Nobby’s Island. The blacks have
a tradition that it is the abode of an immensely large Kangaroo which resides within the centre of the high rock
that occasionally he shakes himself which causes the Island to tremble and large pieces to fall down.” Rev L.E.
Threlkeld in the Christian Herald, 17th February 1855, Vol.III, p.5-6. [Published in Australian Reminiscences &
Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1974:65


1889 - Holmes, Charles Thomas (1889) Diary of Charles Thomas Holmes (1864-1926) relating to his trip to Newcastle on the 29th March 1889.

Recent Research


2012 - Video. Convict Era Tunnel (c1816) and brick Culvert (1850s) (CRWP) http://coalriver.wordpress.com/2012/05/01/convict-era-tunnel-c1816-and-brick-calvert-c1850s/

2012 – Precis of Seminar. Professor Michael Rosenthal on Edward Charles Close. (CRWP) http://coalriver.wordpress.com/2012/03/08/precis-of-seminar-
professor-michael-rosenthal-on-edward-charles-close/


2012 – Chisholm, Tim. Sir Thomas Mitchell’s Field Notes and Sketches (2011) Sir Thomas Mitchell’s Field Notes and Sketches: An in depth analysis of Sir Thomas Mitchell’s field notes and sketches from an 1828 survey of the harbor and surrounds of Newcastle, NSW, using modern adjustment methods to estimate the accuracy of his survey and instrument(s). [Final Year Project - Discipline of Civil, Surveying & Environmental Engineering] [18.4 MB PDF]


2011 – Di Gravio, Gionni. The Inauguration of Newcastle’s “Tree Spirit” - Are the Laman Street Trees a Memorial for the War Dead?” (CRWP) http://coalriver.wordpress.com/2011/10/17/the-inauguration-of-newcastles-tree-
spirit-are-the-laman-street-trees-a-memorial-for-the-war-dead/


2010 – Walsh, Dr Brian. Was Newcastle the Colony’s first place of secondary punishment?

2010 – Motyka, Danylo (Designer) Quest for Macquarie Pier Commemorative Booklet (Web Edition) 6.4 MB PDF


2010 – Radio Broadcast. Local Treasures - A coal trimmer’s diary. Tit-bits [manuscript] : [a Newcastle coal trimmer's diary] by Frederick (Fred.) Roberts of Carrington New South Wales is an authentic handwritten, leather bound diary written by coal trimmer, later crane driver, Frederick Roberts. It spans the years 1901-1915 and describes his family life in Carrington, N.S.W. http://uoncc.wordpress.com/2010/11/16/local-treasures-a-coal-trimmers-diary/


2009 - Di Gravio, Gionni. Notes on Threlkeld’s First Year in Newcastle 1825


2008 - Fryer, Emeritus Professor John. Where was Reverend Threlkeld’s First Mission House at Belmont? A Report prepared for Mr Doug Lithgow, A Freeman of the City of Newcastle. (764 KB PDF) [28 February 2008]


2007 - Kerrigan, Dr Susan. Fort Scratchley Website. Dr Susan Kerrigan has developed a very comprehensive website on the history of Fort Scratchley including seven virtual tours showcasing Fort Scratchley's military, maritime, coal mining and theatrical history and includes stories from traditional land owners, the Awabakal people. The timeline provides access to more than 150 images, 80 documents and newspaper articles, and more than 60 video clips. Congratulations Susan! [7 August 2007]


2005 - Hardy, Ann. John Rae’s Newcastle “A Timepiece of History” (244KB PDF)

2005 - Eklund, Dr Erik. “In Search of the Lost Coal Mines of Newcastle”. Paper presented by Dr Erik Eklund on the 1st April 2005, University of Newcastle, McMullin Building, Room MCLG44, 4pm


1999 - Newcastle’s Coal River Historic Site: Prospectus. (1999), Prepared by the Parks and Playgrounds Movement Inc. for the Rt Worshipful Councillor John Tate Lord Mayor of the City of Newcastle NSW. 20 October.


1989 - Citizen’s Foreshore Committee. Proposed Historic Park and Open Air Museum Newcastle, N.S.W. Newcastle, N.S.W., 1989. [2.79 MB PDF]

References

Angas, George French, (1969), Savage life and scenes in Australia and New Zealand: being an artist's impressions of countries and people at the antipodes, /Adelaide: Libraries Board of South Australia.

Blomfield, Thomas Valentine (1926), Memoirs of the Blomfield family / being letters written by the Late Captain T. V. Blomfield and his wife to relatives in England. Armidale [N.S.W.]: Craigie & Hipgrave.

Brady, E. J. [1918?], Australia unlimited. Melbourne: G. Robertson,


Cunningham, Peter (1966), Two years in New South Wales : a series of letters, comprising sketches of the actual state of society in that colony, of its peculiar advantages to emigrants, of its topography, natural history, &c. &c. Adelaide : Libraries Board of South Australia,

Cunningham, Peter (1828), Two years in New South Wales : comprising sketches of the actual state of society in that colony, of its peculiar advantages to emigrants, of its topography, natural history, &c &c. 3rd ed London : Henry Colburn.


Grantham, Ian ed. (1999), XYZ goes north : "an account of a trip to the Hunter's River", and "a visit to Wollombi and the Cumnaroy". Kulnura [N.S.W.]: Wirrimbirra Workshop.


*New South Wales calendar and General Post Office directory for 1837.* (1837), Sydney: W. Moffitt.

Lang, John Dunmore (1837), *An historical and statistical account of New South Wales: both as a penal settlement and as a British colony.* 2nd ed. with numerous additions, bringing down the history of the colony to the close of 1836. London: A.J. Valpy.


Politer, L. L. [1944], *Dr. Ludwig Leichhardt's letters from Australia during the years March 23, 1842, to April 3, 1848.* Melbourne: Pan.

Barrow, John ed. *Notes and sketches of New South Wales: during a residence in that colony from 1839 to 1844 / Mrs. Charles Meredith. The life, voyages and exploits of Sir Francis Drake: with numerous original letters from him and the Lord High Admiral to the Queen and great officers of state 2nd. ed. abrig.* London: Murray.


Davison, Frank Dalby & Nicholls, Brooke (1935), *Blue coast caravan.* Sydney: Angus and Robertson.


Nicholls, Mary ed. (1973), *Traveller under concern: the Quaker journals of Frederick Mackie on his tour of the Australasian colonies, 1852-1855.* Hobart: University of Tasmania.
Lang, John Dunmore (1852), *An historical and statistical account of New South Wales*: including a visit to the gold regions, and a description of the mines, with an estimate of the probable results on the great discovery. 3rd ed. London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans.


Bingle, John (1873), *Past and present records of Newcastle, New South Wales*. Newcastle [N.S.W.]: Bayley, Son and Harwood.


Clune, Frank [1941], *All aboard for Singapore*: a trip by Qantas flying boat from Sydney to Malaya. Sydney: Angus and Robertson.

Cyclopedia of N.S.W., (1907), *The (illustrated): an historical and commercial review, descriptive and biographical, facts, figures and illustrations; an epitome of progress*. Sydney: McCarron, Stewart & Co.


Inglis, James (1880), *Our Australian cousins / by James Inglis ("Maori")*. London: Macmillan and Co.

Lang, John Dunmore (1875), *An historical and statistical account of New South Wales*: from the founding of the colony in 1788 to the present day / John Dunmore Lang. 4th ed. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low & Searle.


Lang, John Dunmore (1834), *An historical and statistical account of New South Wales, both as a penal settlement and as a British colony*. London: Cochrane and M'Crone.

Lang, John Dunmore (1811), *An historical and statistical account of New South Wales*: both as a penal settlement and as a British colony. 2nd ed. with numerous additions, bringing down the history of the colony to the close of 1836. London: A.J. Valpy.
Mann, David Dickenson (1811), The present picture of New South Wales London : Sold by John Booth.

Newcastle's Coal River Historic Site: Prospectus. (20 October, 1999),Prepared by the Parks and Playgrounds Movement Inc. for the Rt Worshipful Councillor John Tate Lord Mayor of the City of Newcastle NSW.


Thompson, R. W. (1932), Down under : an Australian odyssey. London : Duckworth,

The New South Wales calendar and General Post Office directory, 1835. [1835], Sydney : Stephens & Stokes.

The New South Wales calendar and General Post Office directory, 1836. [1836?]
London : Gazette Office.


Russell, Henry Stuart (1888), The genesis of Queensland : an account of the first exploring journeys to and over Darling Downs : the earliest days of their occupation; social life; station seeking; the course of discovery, northward and westward; and a résumé of the causes which led to separation from New South Wales. Sydney : Turner & Henderson.


Pike, Douglas H. [1952?], John Slater's letter


Other Sources

Archaeological & Heritage Management Services. “Section 87/90 Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit #1098622 for SBA Architects Pty Ltd.” In 684 Hunter Street, Newcastle - Section 87/90 #1098622 AHIP Excavation Report. Sydney, May 2011.


Hunter, Cynthia (2001), *Coal River History Site Stage One, Historical Analysis of Site and related historical and cultural infrastructure*, Newcastle : Coal River Tourism Project.


Web sites

Government

Newcastle City Council
http://www.ncc.nsw.gov.au

Department of Environment and Heritage
http://www.environment.gov.au

NSW Heritage Office

Dangars index and map

University of Newcastle web sites
http://libguides.newcastle.edu.au/aboriginalsourcebook

Pictures/images of Newcastle

Cultural Collections on Flickr
http://www.flickr.com/photos/uon/
Our online repository of over 40,000 images relating to the history of the University and its region including Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and the Hunter.

State Library of New South Wales

Fort Scratchley, Newcastle
http://www.fortscratchley.org/

Newcastle on the Edge, History Week Project 2008
http://newcastleontheedge.blogspot.com

Q11. Are there sensitive issues associated with the place? These may be issues that need to be kept out of the public eye such as matters relating to sacred or religious sites, or the location of rare fossils, plants or fragile places.

If you answer yes, we will contact you to discuss the issues.

An explanation of themes is available in the Nomination Notes. For information on current themes for National Heritage List nominations, visit www.deh.gov.au/heritage or call 1800 020 625.

Q12a. Do the values reflect a National Heritage Theme announced by the Minister?

If you answered yes, please state which theme:

Q12b.
Your details are needed in case we require more information on the nominated place. Your identity is protected under the Federal Privacy Act 1988 and will not be divulged without your consent or as allowed for under that Act.

Title: Mr  
First name: Gionni  
Family name: Di Gravio

Are you nominating a place on behalf of an organisation?  
NO ☐  YES ☒

If you answered no, please complete the address details below, if yes, please name the organisation and your position in it and then complete the address details for the organisation below:

Organisation: Coal River Working Party, University of Newcastle  
Position: Chair

Address: c/- University of Newcastle's Coal River Working Party  
Cultural Collections  
Level 2 Auchmuty Library  
University of Newcastle  
Callaghan NSW 2308  
Australia

State: NSW  
Postcode: 2308

Telephone: 02 49 215819  
Fax: 02 49 215833  
Email: Gionni.DiGravio@newcastle.edu.au

FINAL CHECKLIST

Before signing and dating your nomination form, please make sure that you have:
☒ completed name, location, boundary, significance and criteria questions  
☒ attached and labelled the location/boundary map and/or site plan  
☒ attached and labelled any photographs and supporting evidence or extra information.

Signature of nominator  
Date

Send your completed nomination form and attachments:

By mail to:

The Nominations Manager  
Heritage Division  
Department of the Environment and Water Resources  
GPO Box 787  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

If the person making this nomination is, or is representing, a small business (a business having fewer than 20 employees), please provide an estimate of the time taken to complete this form.  
hours  
minutes

Please Include
The time spent reading the instructions, working on the questions and obtaining the information; and
The time spent by all employees in collecting and providing this information.

---

2 Lieutenant John Shortland of the *H.M.S. Reliance* named and charted the River on the 9th September 1797 whilst en route to Port Stephens. The letter to his father reporting the discovery is in *Historical Records of NSW*, Vol.3 pp481-82.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

List of Owners

- City of Newcastle, Ken Gouldthorp  
  Acting General Manager  
  City Administration Centre,  
  282 King Street, Newcastle, NSW, 2300

- Hunter New England Health, Michael DiRienzo,  
  Chief Executive  
  Locked Bag 1 New Lambton Hts NSW, 2305

- Crown Lands Division, Ms Alison Stone  
  Executive General Manager  
  NSW Trade & Investment  
  PO 2185 Dangar NSW 2309  
  alison.stone@lands.nsw.gov.au
APPENDIX B

Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain have the earliest coal mines in Southern Hemisphere and first discoveries of Coal in 1791 by escaping convicts (See: James Martin (fl.1786 - 1792) Memorandoms: Escape from Botany Bay, 1791 : being 'Memorandoms' by James Martin ; introduction and notes by Victor Crittenden (Canberra : Mulini Press, c1991 pp.2-3) and 1796. According to the 1930 Royal Commission into the Coal Industry (p.50):

“The discovery of good quality coal dates from the earliest period of white settlement in Australia… During early exploration of the coastal belt outcrops of coal were found near Newcastle in 1796 and at Coal Cliff, near Wollongong in the following year. The importance of the discovery was not overlooked at the time, although there was no knowledge then of the immense extent of these coal beds, which have been by far the most productive of all that have been discovered in Australia and have exercised a powerful influence upon the development of New South Wales.”

It was from Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain that there was the first export of Coal in 1799. Coal Cliff proved unworkable, yet Newcastle (Coal River) proved to be the site of the first export:

“We have also some hopes that coal with which the country abounds will be of much Colonial advantage. A ship lately returned to Bengal loaded with coals, and it gave no small satisfaction to every person interested in the prosperity of the colony to see this first export of it; and I am hopeful from these advantages that New South Wales, however contemptible it may at present appear in the list of our colonies, may yet become an acquisition of value to the mother country. - 1799, September 8.” (Mr John Thomson to Captain Schanck, H.R.N.S.W., Vol. III, pp. 716 - 718)

Governor King to The Duke of Portland in a letter dated 21st August 1801 in speaking about the first export from Coal River says:

“I have established a small post there, consisting of a trusty non-commissioned officer and eight privates, with twelve prisoners to collect coals for such Government vessels as can go for them. Since the Lady Nelson went there, two Government vessels have brought 45 tons of coals which has been bartered with the master of the Cornwallis for articles for the public use. This being the first natural produce of the colony that has tended to any advantage, I have enclosed the Commissary’s statement of that exchange, being more a matter of curiosity than of consequence. At present several boats are employed getting coals for the Cornwallis, and a prize brig, belonging to an individual, is now at the Coal Harbour lading with coals and timber for the Cape of Good Hope. By the inclosure your Grace will observe that I have made the coals and timber an article of revenue. How far it will be productive must depend on events.- Governor King to The Duke of Portland, H.R.N.S.W., Vol. IV, p. 477.

Coal River was also the site of the first return (or profit) made in the fledgling colony of New South Wales, (2 pounds, 5 shillings) and was recorded by Governor King in a letter to Sir Joseph Banks in August 1801

“The first cargo of coals brought from the Coal River in a Government vessel I exchanged with the master of the Cornwallis, who goes to Bengal from hence for iron, which he gave at 30 per cent. Profit for our coals at two pounds five shillings per chaldron. I believe this is the first return ever made from New South Wales.” (Governor King to Sir Joseph Banks (Banks Papers.), H.R.N.S.W., Vol.IV, p. 359).
APPENDIX C

http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2012.706620
Australian Convict Sites and the Heritage of Adaptation: The Case of Newcastle's Coal River Heritage Precinct

David Andrew Roberts & Erik Eklund


To cite this article: David Andrew Roberts & Erik Eklund (2012): Australian Convict Sites and the Heritage of Adaptation: The Case of Newcastle's Coal River Heritage Precinct, Australian Historical Studies, 43:3, 363-380

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2012.706620

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.
Australian Convict Sites and the Heritage of Adaptation: The Case of Newcastle’s Coal River Heritage Precinct

DAVID ANDREW ROBERTS & ERIK EKLUND

The Australian Government’s successful nomination of eleven ‘convict sites’ for World Heritage listing has again highlighted complex relationships between history and heritage. This article considers one convict site excluded from the nomination—the Coal River Heritage Precinct in the heart of Newcastle (NSW). While the site falls short of fulfilling conventional heritage criteria, the material remains having been so seriously eroded, its historical significance is nonetheless considerable. In fact, its significance lies in what has been destroyed, as much as in what has survived, because the site evidences a process of adaptation and transformation over time. This theme of adaptation, we argue, is an instructive reflection of the legacies of Australia’s convict past, but is not so well embodied by the successfully-nominated convict sites. Drawing on the lessons from this particular case study, we suggest that more progressive and adventurous approaches may be needed to adequately reflect the historical significance of Australia’s convict inheritance.

The Australian Government’s 2008 nomination of eleven ‘convict sites’ for World Heritage Listing acknowledged the impressiveness and potency of those particular places, and also the broader, global importance of Australia’s convict history (see Table 1).1 The nomination addressed a conspicuous disparity in Australia’s World Heritage profile, which until the listing of Melbourne’s Royal Exhibition Building (2004) and the Sydney Opera House (2007) contained no sites concerning the nation’s post-contact heritage. The nomination of convict sites to fill that gap was all the more remarkable, given the complex and problematical role which convict heritage has played in Australian culture and identity over the last two hundred years. However, it does suit a modern fascination and identification with convict heritage among many Australians—an interest that has in some measure been stimulated and shaped by iconic places such as at Port Arthur and Norfolk Island.2 The eleven sites were successfully evaluated by the International Council on Monuments and Sites and added to UNESCO’s list of World Heritage sites in 2010.

The recognition of eleven Australian convict sites overshadows the thousands of identified convict sites throughout Australia, some of which are struggling to obtain suitable recognition and protection. One such example is the

complex of historic remains within the so-called Coal River Heritage Precinct (hereafter ‘Coal River’ or the Precinct) at the entrance to the port of Newcastle, New South Wales. The Precinct covers some of the sites and remnants of the Newcastle convict settlement (1804–1823), as well as numerous other important natural and cultural landmarks, set within the very heart of one of European-Australia’s oldest and most significant settlement sites. The Precinct was deemed unsuited to the series-nomination of sites for World Heritage listing, despite earnest efforts for its inclusion. We cannot suggest that this was unjust, given what is demanded by the very strict World Heritage assessment guidelines. However, it does cause us to reconsider prevailing ideas about what constitutes ‘heritage’, and what is considered worth conserving, because although heritage values are at least partially articulated in terms of natural, cultural and historical importance, what is privileged and preserved ultimately rests on measurements of the ‘authenticity’ and ‘integrity’ of surviving physical fabric. This has long been a primary issue in heritage discussion, constituting a key tension between heritage philosophy which seeks to articulate cultural and historical values, and heritage practice with its overriding emphasis on fabric. The problem is especially relevant to Australia’s convict heritage because the surviving material evidence barely matches the subject’s historical and cultural importance. As Denis Gojack has argued, what has survived, and what has hitherto drawn the attention of heritage scholars and practitioners, offers only a very partial picture of Australia’s convict heritage.3

In this article we consider the case for ‘Coal River’, setting it against the sites now recognised on the World Heritage list. We are not suggesting that the Precinct ought to have been included in the World Heritage nomination. Rather, our aim is to posit the Precinct as representing a different set of heritage values to the World Heritage convict sites, or indeed any site evaluated in terms of the completeness of surviving physical fabric. The Precinct and many comparable Australian convict sites embody what we call a ‘heritage of adaptation’, where what is evidenced is a history of transformation rather than preservation. The idea owes more to the subjective and nuanced notions of ‘living’, ‘cultural’, ‘intangible’ and ‘inclusive’ heritage which, internationally, have broadened the scope and definition of heritage, especially in the wake of UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003). These innovations in heritage studies and management have been unevenly adopted on national levels,4 and seemingly the assessment of Australian convict sites has not kept pace. Indeed, the World Heritage nomination, which required the articulation of ‘international significance’ but in fact rested more prescriptively on evaluations of material fabric, possibly exacerbated the issue. We are not heritage

---

practitioners but academic historians, which may explain our focus on the intangible and our articulating of heritage values largely in terms of historical significance. But historians seem well placed to appreciate that what is required to establish ‘international significance’, both rhetorically and materially, fails to do justice to the history and legacies of Australia’s convict past on a national level. Australian convict sites, we argue, require more progressive and adventurous approaches to heritage that adequately reflect the true legacies of Australia’s convict inheritance.

Convict Newcastle

From its earliest colonial moments, Newcastle was intimately associated with industry and exile. The first extractions of coal from ‘Colliers’ Point’ (at the base of what became ‘Signal Hill’, now Fort Scratchley) were undertaken in 1801. These efforts likely represented the first commercial coal mining undertaken in the Southern Hemisphere, and marked Newcastle as the birthplace of Australia’s coal mining industry. The colonial authorities ordered a permanent settlement at what was then called Coal River in April 1804. Until the establishment of the Port Macquarie settlement in 1821, Newcastle operated as the colony’s main receptacle for recidivists, a place of exemplary punishment where extreme isolation and hard labour could be orientated around the extraction of precious resources such as coal, salt, cedar and lime.

Newcastle was thus a formative and notorious example of the nexus between punishment and profit that underlined the early history of New South Wales. It was the prototype for a network of secondary settlements that became central to the reinvention of the convict colony as a place of terror, and which left a powerful and lasting impact on popular memories of the convict period. As a place of punishment and industry, Newcastle also served as a logistical and administrative platform for the expansion of British power and influence across the hinterland of the Hunter Valley—a process that ultimately diminished Newcastle’s usefulness as a place of exile, resulting in its formal closure as a penal settlement in 1823. In a manner that reflected the broader transition from convict colony to free society, Newcastle then developed as a more regular settlement. Convicts worked alongside emancipists and free emigrants in the service of the public, the Australian Agricultural Company, and numerous smaller commercial and mercantile operations and attendant industries. This transition from a convict to a free society provided what is now a key element of the heritage values embodied in ‘Coal River’.

Post-convict Newcastle emerged as a place defined by European industry, especially the production of coal. The Hunter River (named after Governor John Hunter), long remained known as Coal River. The settlement, originally ‘King’s

---

Town', soon became Newcastle. It was named after Newcastle upon Tyne, the capital of British coal-mining and the scene, as put by one contemporary, of so ‘many laborious and dirty branches of business ... above and below ground’ that ‘the constant use of soap [was] indispensably necessary’. During the nineteenth century, coal was extracted from seams throughout the district and exported from the port at Newcastle, which became the world's fifth largest port by the turn of the century. With the 1915 opening of the Broken Hill Proprietary Steel Works and the attendant rise of subsidiary manufacturing activities, the ‘Coalopolis’ became the ‘Steel City’, consolidating Newcastle as the largest regional industrial and manufacturing centre in Australia—the ‘Workshop for the [Australian] Commonwealth’—and an increasingly important port for the exporting of raw materials, steel products and agricultural produce.

Newcastle’s early development as a place of hard labour and exile thus marked the beginnings of a trajectory, fermenting both a legendary history of struggle and adversity and an enduring sense of neglect and marginalisation. Coal, and industry more generally, provided Newcastle with the tainted image of a ‘Problem City’—a place of pollution and privation, and of practices and pursuits that are viewed with some ambivalence and scorn. Newcastle seemed ‘practically hidden from view’, as one commentator noted in 1927. While he was being literal, referring to the impenetrable smoke that billowed from collieries and coking ovens, the observation referenced a broader sense of Newcastle’s position on the nation’s cultural periphery. While the convict contribution to the city’s development and history remains poorly understood, those origins have never been entirely forgotten or shunned. Rather they have tended to seem somehow coherent, absorbed within a proud and parochial sense of place.

Convict Newcastle survives not only within the historical memory and identity construction of the city, but also in an array of historical and archaeological remains that mark the city as an important convict site, and a particularly instructive one. There are problems however, in that the material remnants are partial and concealed, while the intangible historical traditions and social memories inspired by ‘Coal River’ are vague and subtle, posing

---

6 J. Baillie, An Impartial History of the Town and County of Newcastle upon Tyne and its Vicinity (Newcastle upon Tyne: Vint & Anderson, 1801), 522.
considerable problems for recognition under prevailing heritage practices. This circumstance is actually typical of much of Australia’s most important convict heritage, but we argue that it also defines what is significant about the site in terms of its local and national heritage values.

Recovering Convict Newcastle

Historical archaeology constantly reminds us that where fledgling settlements were levelled and overlaid by urban and industrial development, giving way to modern cities, the earliest evidence was not always obliterated. Even in the heart of modern Sydney it was possible in 1983 to discover the remains of the house built a matter of months after the arrival of the ‘First Fleet’ in 1788. In the 1990s, excavations in Australia’s oldest urban precinct, The Rocks, unearthed the material evidence for new insights on early convict culture and its role in laying the foundations of a modern metropolis. The story is similarly revealing in the smaller regional centres of eastern Australia. At Port Macquarie, archaeological excavation of the ‘Glasshouse’ site on Clarence Street in 2006 uncovered the well-preserved remains of convict-era buildings, including a rare brick barrel drain and numerous artefacts. Today, the Hastings Council’s ‘Remembering Our Convict Heritage Walk’, an interpretive trail that leads pedestrians around thirteen important archaeological and historical convict sites, is a commendable example of contemporary heritage practice, particularly enlightening in the manner in which it contrasts the contemporary structures of the present with the fragmentary remains of the past. That contrast admits the impermanence of the past and confronts the conceit of the present, and tells a poignant narrative of adaptation and growth over time. It witnesses Australia’s founding endeavours, but also evidences development and transition, connecting penal origins with the present day. These lessons and values are perfectly communicated in the case of Newcastle’s ‘Coal River’.

In Newcastle, some relics of the convict-era could never be demolished or forgotten. The Commandant’s Bath or ‘Bogey Hole’, hewn by convicts from a secreted rock platform, survives as an iconic cultural landmark and a haunting reminder of the city’s past. The most visible and functional piece of infrastructure is Macquarie Pier that links Nobby’s Island to the mainland, a remarkable engineering feat initiated with convict labour in 1818 to ensure the commercial viability of the port of Newcastle and its dependant industries. It is justly valued as one of the very few pieces of early-colonial infrastructure that remains vital and useful in today’s society. Most physical remains of the convict

settlement, however, were quietly ravaged by time, accident and redevelopment. By 1900, it was noted that ‘few relics of the old buildings still remained’, and that ‘modern buildings for the most part occupied the sites that had for so many years in succession held the strong and substantial edifices which dated from the early days of the past century’. Some original material was preserved in the creation of new structures, and new buildings were constructed, some still standing today after numerous additions and alterations. The original coal mines under Signal Hill, abandoned in the mid-1820s, were covered over in the 1880s as the imposing walls of Fort Scratchley were built, ‘their entrances . . . finally blotted out of sight forever by a deep thick wall of concrete and masonry’.16

However, throughout the twentieth century, the mines reappeared due to land subsidence. In 1906, a ‘creep’ that caused extensive wreckage to homes and gas and water pipes, and emptied 500,000 litres of water from a subsidiary reservoir, was popularly attributed to the shallow mines built during the convict era.17 In 1943, subsidence on the grounds of the James Fletcher Hospital revealed a convict mine-shaft, traced to a visible adit on the side of a nearby cliff.18 In the late-1970s and 1980s, amid plans for the large-scale redevelopment of the inner-city and the industrial waterfront, the discovery of partially collapsed tunnels beneath the Newcastle police station, the Royal Newcastle Hospital and the city morgue, served as a reminder that Newcastle and its surrounding suburbs was honeycombed by some 300 mines, many of them unmapped and forgotten.

The most significant rediscovery of convict Newcastle was made in 1986 when University of Newcastle lecturer and celebrated local historian, Dr John Turner (1933–1998), found a convict-era brick on a vacant block of land adjacent to the Newcastle Railway station. The site, then an unsealed car park owned by the State Rail Authority, was identified as the location of the former ‘lumberyard’, also known as the ‘coal yard’ and later the ‘convict stockade’. The large allotment on the eastern edge of the settlement had been used for storing and processing cedar and coal, and was the site of ‘the common and coarser mechanical operations’,19 including the forging of the tools and materials required for public work programs. Excavations in July 1987 uncovered the remains of a convict-built brick drain and an industrial kiln or forge, a rich result from a ten square-metre sample of the site. Subsequent excavations unearthed abundant artefacts, including evidence of pre-contact Aboriginal occupation, such that the site was deemed to provide ‘substantial evidence . . . of the major themes which generated the development of Newcastle’.20 Damaris Bairstow

15 Sydney Morning Herald, 29 May 1905.
16 Newcastle Morning Herald, 29 January 1885.
17 Sydney Morning Herald, 17 May 1906 and 14 February 1908.
18 Newcastle Morning Herald, 21 July 1943.
(who had recently worked on the Coal Mines Historic Site in Tasmania, now on the World Heritage register) acclaimed the Newcastle lumberyard as ‘the only known site in Australia to retain evidence of early convictism on a broad scale’. 21

The land was only narrowly and fortuitously saved from sale for high-rise development. However, it was another decade before the Newcastle City Council and the State Government embraced its heritage significance. An interpretive park was opened in September 1999, at which time it was acclaimed as ‘Australia’s first industrial site’ and Newcastle’s ‘newest and most unusual tourist attraction’. 22 The symbolic importance of the lumberyard site was at that time enhanced by anxieties surrounding the closure of the BHP steelworks, a traumatic event that unsettled Newcastle’s industrial identity. Agitation for the conservation of the lumberyard site corresponded with demands for the preservation of some steel works structures, the two asserting an historical continuity that emphasised Newcastle as ‘The Birth Place of Australian Industry’. 23 Today the lumberyard site is a local heritage icon, ‘Our Buried Treasure’, although one that is under-utilised as a tourist attraction. 24

The unearthing of the lumberyard demonstrated that convict-era remains had not been entirely obliterated from the Newcastle CBD. Actually, the development of Newcastle had caused surprisingly little subterranean disturbance. Local geography and topography, and the problems of land subsidence from nineteenth-century mining, combined with a raft of economic and commercial factors to impede the development of the CBD, such that Newcastle was, at least in the late-1990s, considered ‘a substantially intact nineteenth century city both above and below ground’. 25 Archaeological surveys identified over 177 local sites associated with the convict period. It was estimated that seventy-five to eighty per cent of the total land area of the Newcastle CBD likely contained archaeological relics, a survival rate ‘far greater’ than in Sydney (five to ten per cent), or Melbourne (twenty to twenty-five per cent). On these grounds, Newcastle was deemed a ‘considerable archaeological resource’. 26

The importance and extent of Newcastle’s archaeological record has been further borne out by more recent developments, notably the rediscovery of the original convict coal mines, long-held to have been destroyed during the development of the Newcastle CBD. The uncovering of contemporary documents provided important contextual evidence of the beginnings of a ‘bord and pillar’ style method of mining, indicative of an early, tentative step to apply European and North American industrial techniques in the southern

---

26 Ibid., 29.
hemisphere. Documents also assisted researchers in locating numerous ‘drifts’ or entrances to the mines of ‘Collier’s Point’ beneath Fort Scratchley. Ground penetrating radar analysis and subsequent drilling at three locations in September 2005 demonstrated that ‘extensive workings are present in the coal seam’.27 Other work is in progress, including further study on the Commandant’s Residence, and renewed efforts to examine the convict-built foundations of Macquarie’s Pier.28

Assessing the Precinct

The convict lumberyard, Macquarie Pier and the coalmines and adits that perforate the coastal cliffs form the key convict-era components of ‘Coal River’, but importantly the zone contains much more than convict-era sites. It includes, for example, Fort Scratchley, famously the only coastal military installation in New South Wales to have fired in anger during a time of war, as well as Nobby’s Lighthouse, Signal Hill, and the Art Deco Club House on Nobby’s Beach. The Precinct encompasses a great number and range of commercial and residential premises that showcase both the definitively Victorian character of the city as well as its most modern architecture. Collectively, and by way of contrast, these landmarks and structures mark a series of important transitions in the life of the city, reflecting also Australia’s journey from convict colony to free nation. Moreover, ‘Coal River’ is a functional precinct, a living zone, a scene of business and recreation and dwelling, providing a remarkable fusion of heritage and the everyday.

The case for the recognition and protection of Newcastle’s Coal River Heritage Precinct is championed by the Coal River Working Party (formed in 2003), a collective of commercial, community and professional parties based at the University of Newcastle, whose combination of expertise and enthusiasm demonstrates the merits of heritage appreciation and activism at the grass roots level. The Working Party successfully nominated the Precinct for the New South Wales State Heritage Register in 2003, making the case for its historical, associative, aesthetic and social significance under state heritage criteria. It was determined that the Precinct revealed a concentration of ‘the whole story of the development of New South Wales’ first and most important industrial centre’, and evoked a raft of themes central to the foundation of modern Australia.29

The Working Party’s case for including ‘Coal River’ in the series-nomination of convict sites for World Heritage listing was, however, rejected, occasioning

comments on the ‘often ... uphill battle to get recognition for the role the Newcastle region played in our nation’s history’. The Working Party then nominated ‘Coal River’ for the National Heritage Register, in recognition of its exceptional natural, Indigenous and historic values. It was argued that the Precinct was a witness to ‘the critical moments in Australia’s development as a nation’, and that it met what was, at that time, a key National Heritage requirement of providing a ‘living and accessible record of the nation’s evolving landscapes and experiences’. Despite the enthusiastic backing of the local Member of Parliament and the National Trust’s Hunter Regional Committee, that nomination was unsuccessful.

Since Newcastle’s ‘Coal River’ represents an evolved landscape, where the integrity of original fabric has been substantially eroded, it was never seriously considered for inclusion on the Australian government’s series-nomination of convict sites for World Heritage Listing. The long and ponderous path towards the 2008 nomination began in the early-1990s when the then Department of Environment, Sport and Territories commissioned a ‘Study of World Heritage Values Convict Places’ from Michael Pearson and Duncan Marshall. That report culminated in a shortlist of eight sites considered worthy of nomination for World Heritage Listing on account of ‘their authenticity and degree of protective management’ (Table 1). A sound case was made for the shortlisted sites (although the shortlist was revised over the following decades, as explained below). The more problematic outcome, however, was an inventory of around 200 ancillary ‘convict places’, which noted the condition and ‘special features’ of each. This was the most difficult task, and the least immediate in that few if any of those sites stood out clearly as meeting the World Heritage criteria for ‘international significance’. In what was necessarily a broad-brush exercise, thousands of sites were overlooked, and many of those included were under-appreciated.

Newcastle warranted only a passing reference in the Pearson and Marshall report. In a contextual account of ‘Convicts in Australia’, it was noted that Newcastle was established ‘to mine coal and to manufacture salt and produce lime, and as a place of secondary punishment’, and that the ‘penal settlement was transferred [sic] to Port Macquarie in 1823. Here the report did marginally better than the 2008 World Heritage Nomination, which only conceded the existence of convict Newcastle by listing ‘Coal River’ among a number of ‘important penal settlements in NSW and VDL’, without even acknowledging where ‘Coal River’ actually was. Pearson and Marshall did acknowledge the rediscovery of the former lumberyard, citing a short research note published

33 Australian Government, Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Nomination, 212.
several years earlier which had actually said very little about the initial and
limited excavations conducted in 1987 (it was primarily about the enormous
media interest in the excavation and attempts to fast track the sale of the site).34
Pearson and Marshall did not cite numerous other archaeological projects and
historical investigations conducted over several years,35 and were uncertain
about the status of formal management and interpretation guidelines covering
the lumberyard site.36 The authors concluded that ‘no other substantial remains
of the convict period are known to survive’, and certainly none suitable for
World Heritage listing.

We are not condemning the perfunctory treatment of Newcastle’s convict
heritage in Pearson and Marshall’s report, which was clearly a broad-brush
effort. Their key aim was to locate pre-eminent sites that were obvious and
impressive enough to demand serious consideration for World Heritage listing.
Nevertheless, the 1995 report played a role in subsequent decisions on the
heritage values of Australian convict sites, including those sites that were too
obscure to be considered for World Heritage listing. For example, the federal
government publically explained the omission from the World Heritage
Nomination of the Albany Old Gaol in Western Australia in terms of its failure
to ‘meet the rigorous technical requirements of a World Heritage place’ and its
not having been listed as significant by Pearson and Marshall, thirteen years
earlier.37 Pearson and Marshall’s report has also been referenced extensively in
the literature on Australian convict sites and throughout the National and State
heritage databases. The Historic Houses Trust in Sydney used the report as a key
source for its ‘Convicts: Sites of Punishment’ exhibition which opened in June
2005, and which omitted significant reference to Newcastle. Despite its limited
and specific brief, the report has been influential, given its pioneering nature and
broad dissemination. Actually, what the report demonstrated, and in fact directly
acknowledged to some extent, is the need for more wide-ranging research into
the places and physical remains of Australia’s convict past. Our knowledge of
convict sites is evolving and dynamic, and new discoveries necessarily cause us
to re-evaluate their significance and worth. That much is evident in the
subsequent deliberations over which sites were to be nominated for World
Heritage listing.

Newcastle Lumber Yard: Recent Discovery of Convict Remains’, Australian Society for Historical
35 J. W. Turner, The History of the Lumber Yard/Stockade Site (Newcastle: Newcastle City Council, 1989);
Walker et al., The Convict Lumber Yard: Godden Mackay Pty. Ltd, ‘Convict Lumber Yard Site:
Archaeological Assessment and Heritage Conservation Advice’ (unpublished report, 1992);
S. Lavelle, ‘Report on Archaeological Monitoring of Works at the Convict Lumberyard/Stockade
Determining ‘Pre-eminence’

There were substantial adjustments made to the selection of sites for World Heritage listing, between the time of Pearson and Marshall’s initial recommendations, the submission of a ‘Tentative List’ of sites to UNESCO in 2000, and the final 2008 Nomination. These adjustments tell us something of the evolving political and management issues surrounding the determination of which sites were best suited to UNESCO’s guidelines. However, they also serve to underline how certain prescriptions for assessing heritage value can perhaps distort the messages and meanings of Australia’s convict history.

Two sites shortlisted by Pearson and Marshall—Norfolk Island and Cockatoo Island—had to be temporarily omitted from the proposed nomination, owing in the first case to problems in securing inter-government agreements, and in the second case to the absence of conservation management planning. Both reappeared in the 2008 Nomination once these issues were resolved. The Coal Mines Historic Site, which Pearson and Marshall initially coupled with Port Arthur, was soon after listed separately, although they had in the intervening period been brought under the same management authority (they are discrete sites, but historically connected). The Old Government House at Parramatta, initially overlooked, was added to replace the First Government House Site in

Table 1. The ‘long and ponderous path’ towards the 2008 nominations by the Australian Government of eleven ‘Convict Sites’ for World Heritage Listing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kingston (Norfolk Island)</td>
<td>First Government House Site</td>
<td>Kingston (Norfolk Island)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Arthur</td>
<td>Hyde Park Barracks</td>
<td>Old Government House and Domain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fremantle Prison</td>
<td>Great North Road</td>
<td>Hyde Park Barracks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Government House Site</td>
<td>Darlington Probation Station</td>
<td>Cockatoo Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great North Road</td>
<td>Port Arthur</td>
<td>Old Great North Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ross Probation Station</td>
<td>Coal Mines Historic Site</td>
<td>Brickendon-Woolmers Estates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyde Park Barracks</td>
<td>Ross Female Convict Station</td>
<td>Darlington Probation Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockatoo Island Convict Station</td>
<td>Fremantle Prison</td>
<td>Cascades Female Factory,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Port Arthur Historic Site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the Sydney CBD, which, like the Newcastle sites, contains important archaeological remains but no extant structures. The Brickendon-Woolmers Estates at Longford, which were the very last of the items to be added to the World Heritage nomination list (in January 2007), were not mentioned by Pearson and Marshall at all, but are now instrumental to the Nomination as an exemplar of the convict assignment system.

The Darlington Probation Station on Maria Island was not originally shortlisted in 1995, at which time the condition of its existing structures was ‘unknown’. However, further investigations of the site later established its enormous importance as a consummate and largely intact example of a convict probation station. Similarly, the Cascade Female Factory in South Hobart prevailed over the previously preferred Ross Probation Station in the Tasmanian Midlands, largely because of the former’s significant associations with the confinement and punishment of convict women. Originally overlooked for its relatively poor state of survival, the case for the Cascades was supported by several years of extensive historical research and archaeological excavation, by the purchase and acquisition of various allotments with funds provided by government and private benefactors, and by the application of the necessary levels of conservation management planning and protection. The result would have pleased the late Kay Daniels, who thought the initial list of sites recommended for nomination blandly emphasised the incarceration of men and threatened to perpetuate convict women as ‘marginal figures’.

The eleven convict sites chosen for World Heritage Listing were deemed to be of exceptional and universal value as monuments to the global forced migration of convicts and the evolving ideas and practices of punishment and reform during the modern era. They were singled out as ‘the most representative’ or ‘pre-eminent’ of an estimated 3,000 other sites ‘distributed across several States and Territories’, on the grounds that they provide ‘a complete representation of all the significant elements’ of Australian convictism, including penal stations, gang labour, assignment, female factories and the Tasmanian probation system. The case for their universal significance is coherent and compelling, but it is also somewhat rhetorical, or is at least more persuasively applied to some items than to others. Ultimately, they are pre-eminent in the extent to which they maintain high degrees of ‘integrity’ and ‘authenticity’, with strong ‘elements of wholeness and intactness’, as demanded by the UNESCO’s Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

As such, the Australian convict sites that now enjoy World Heritage listing are testaments not only to the times of their construction and use, and to the

---

44 UNESCO 2005, paragraphs 87–89.
combination of accident and wisdom that allowed their preservation, but also to the heritage criteria that assessed them. They document the formative elements of our history, but also the development of conservation practices in more recent times. These sites have long been protected under some form of management and legislation. All are now National Heritage Places and are further embraced within the *Australian Convict Sites Strategic Management Framework*.45 Their historic and heritage values have been comprehensively studied and articulated, their protection and conservation is relatively well funded by government, and they are interpreted, managed and audited by some of the world’s finest heritage professionals. Moreover, most remain set within natural surroundings that have retained their ‘visual integrity’. Port Arthur and Kingston on Norfolk Island are especially lauded for their ‘landscape settings that have changed little since the convict era’, a landscape that ‘evocatively captures the atmosphere of the convict experience’ and induce ‘a strong sense of place and character’.46

In short, the big eleven are pre-eminent because they seem sealed in time. They are places of the past, ostensibly frozen in the present. Indeed, in many cases this effect has been deliberately curated by the removal of evidence of subsequent re-use—‘Reconstruction’ as defined by the Burra Charter, or the process of ‘returning a place to a known earlier state’—winding back the clock, as it were, to enhance the site’s authenticity. However, in this sense they are exceptional because they are anomalous. Without denying their obvious and extraordinary value on these grounds alone, we might nonetheless consider the effects of the preservation and perceived primacy of these particular sites in terms of the possible meanings they communicate in the present. A strong sense of place and character, however enlightening and powerful, can deceive us on at least three levels.

First, although some sites exude the ‘atmosphere of the convict experience’, that experience can seem strangely marinated. Port Arthur, for example, with its damp cells and moody weather, invites us to imagine the noise and dust of a bustling settlement and sense the grim horrors of convict life, yet the ambience is now unavoidably that of a quaint and quiet spot perfumed by the sweet smell of freshly-cut grass. Whereas isolation and discomfort were once its essence, car parks, motel accommodation and a state-of-the-art interpretive centre now convenience the site. This does not necessarily diminish a site’s historical and educative value, notwithstanding the tourism-driven tendency to package it as an authentic conduit of past experience—a chance to know the past as it actually was, or as we are told or wish it to be.48 Indeed, such apparent paradoxes may be

---

far less stark than we believe, and can still be appreciated and mediated in site interpretation, particularly as they reflect changing practices and site use.\(^{49}\) However, by being seemingly sealed in time they do not really capture the sense of transition and development, or provide that story of material adaption and socio-cultural change over time, that is in our view so critical to understanding the legacy of convict Australia.

Second, while these sites confront us with immediate and integral evidence of the convict system, they also potentially provide a comforting barrier by disengaging the convict era from the experience of contemporary Australia. They do so by suggesting a history that occurred at certain demarcated spots, mostly isolated and long-since abandoned, rather than a history that laid the foundations for European economy and society in a more evidential and observable sense. They help us imagine a world dislocated and far removed from our current realities, rather than a history that is truly constitutive of modern Australia. They promote a disembodied sense of heritage, a safe heritage, and one that, conceived this way, accords with the general means by which Australians have always dealt with their ‘Birthstain’—as something made safe by remoteness and seclusion, by being discrete and detached, both temporally and spatially.

Not all of the nominated sites are, or ever were, isolated and momentary products of the convict era. The Cascade Female Factory and Fremantle Prison squat amidst evolving urban landscapes. Hyde Park Barracks and the Old Government House at Parramatta were used as offices and residences until very recently. Parts of the Great North Road remain in use today (although much of it was never used as a major thoroughfare, which obviously contributed to its preservation), and the Brickendon-Woolmers Estates continue to operate as working farms. But it seems telling that while the Nomination describes Australia’s convict history as internationally unique, forced migrants having made ‘a major contribution to European settlement and development of a continent that later became a nation’,\(^{50}\) the point is barely explored, as if conceding that it is not amply illustrated in the choice of sites. It is easier to imagine and insinuate the trajectories between the convict era and contemporary Australia than it is to locate and observe them physically. As far as it would involve evidence of re-use and development, and an attendant diminishing of ‘integrity’ and ‘authenticity’, such trajectories are poorly suited to the requirements of heritage protection.

Third, while the nomination aimed to cover ‘all the significant elements’ of Australia’s convict system, the chosen sites were in fact heavily weighted towards the themes of incarceration and/or exemplary punishment. Notwithstanding the variety of past policies and populations they represent, the chosen sites mostly evoke captivity and hardship, and are thus amenable to the lucrative

---


phenomena of ‘thanatourism’ or ‘dark tourism’. Carceral institutions were enormously important to the administration and experience of the convict system, but then Australia was quintessentially an ‘open gaol’ where prisoners were generally not institutionalised but integrated into the social and economic structures of colonial society. The special significance accorded to these sites potentially distorts popular perceptions of the convict past, tempting us to over-emphasise their significance as exemplars of convict life in the nineteenth century. Rather, they are places that, on account of their particular function, were necessarily solid and substantial and thus more likely to have survived physically. What is necessarily omitted from the World Heritage nomination are those ‘elements’ that by their nature did not bequeath substantial fabric. For example, the common and quintessential experience of convict stockmen, lodged in makeshift bark huts on the pastoral frontiers, was a quite different aspect of the assignment system than is represented by the Brickendon-Woolmers Estates.

The World Heritage criteria does not accommodate such evolved landscapes as ‘Coal River’ where heritage values are not so obviously embedded in material fabric. Moreover, it is difficult to argue the Precinct as having obvious ‘outstanding’ and ‘universal’ significance, as fraught and contested as that concept is. But certainly, what is required to satisfy definitions of Outstanding Universal Value under UNESCO’s Operational Guidelines, both rhetorically and materially, do not necessarily reflect the nature and importance of Australia’s convict heritage, especially on a national level. Rather, the World Heritage criteria potentially exalt one type of heritage at the expense of others that seem more apt to communicating the legacies of convict Australia.

A ‘heritage of adaptation’

Newcastle’s ‘Coal River’ stands for a rather different concept of heritage—one that applies a different set of values than those demanded under World Heritage criteria, and which communicates other messages more befitting the legacy of convict Australia. It represents an adaptable heritage, or a heritage of adaptation, one that illustrates the vibrant interactions between natural and cultural forces over time. It embodies a series of transitions between convict and free society, communicating a sense of origin while tracing a long and complex history of economic and industrial transformation. It evidences the layering, co-existence and associations of different phases of history, and reveals the dynamic and ongoing interrelationship between past and present. The ‘Coal River’ is no

---

isolated, ‘intact’ site, but a place where the story of convictism is located within a broader narrative of Australian history. That story is told through the evidence of transformation, rather than the providence of preservation.

Australian heritage legislation promotes ‘a cautious approach to change’, conceding that items must be cared for and made ‘useable’, but preferring they be changed ‘as little as possible’ in order to retain ‘cultural significance’.52 However, heritage practitioners are more expansive in understanding that ‘heritage places are the result of a layering of history, of use and change, and [that] it is the values related to this layering which is important’.53 We ask if the idea can be extended to sites without substantial or visible remains, where the ‘layering’ and evidence of ‘use and change’ is critical to their cultural and historic significance, even if, or in fact because of, the very partial survival of physical fabric. On this level, the very circumstances of erosion and development which diminished ‘Coal River’ in terms of the ‘authenticity’ and ‘wholeness’ of its tangible remains, arguably serve to enhance its value as a cultural landscape, for the very reason that it more accurately records the nation’s evolving environments and experiences. In Taylor and Altenburg’s words, it is illustrative of ‘the way people create places’ over the years, ‘offering a sense of continuity, a sense of the stream of time’. It offers ‘a cultural context for cultural heritage’.54 Contrary to the conventional emphasis on materiality, this is an insight induced by how much fabric has been removed, rather than by how much has survived.

Although its heritage values are not entirely intangible, ‘Coal River’ perhaps evokes some of the more inclusive and nuanced meanings of ‘cultural heritage, associated with values that are communal, shared and developed across generations, ‘constantly recreated’ by changing responses to environment and history, but providing a sense of ‘identity and continuity’.55 Certainly, it is associated with collective memories and traditions that are both pivotal to the national story and conducive to expressing and sustaining identity on a local level. However, ‘Coal River’ struggles to gain recognition as a convict heritage site because of the relative paucity of its tangible remnants and the concomitant subtly of its heritage values, and it lacks the long history of professional appreciation, protection and promotion accorded to other sites. There has also been a broader pattern of disinterest in the history of early Newcastle, which some may feel reflects a general cultural angst about the city itself, as if those who do not know the city or its history cannot grasp the notion that Newcastle could offer something of core value to the nation’s cultural heritage.

Iain Robertson has identified a tendency in the United Kingdom to devalue or sanitise industrial and working-class heritage, or ‘heritage from below’, in preference for a heritage that sanctions the cultural and social values of the

52 Australia ICOMOS 1999.
55 UNESCO 2002, article 2.2.
elite. Studies of Australian heritage have found a similar situation here, despite the efforts of particular scholars and activists in landmark sites such as the Midland Government Railway Workshops, the Eveleigh Railway Workshops, and the tangible and intangible working-class heritage at Broken Hill. Convicts, however, the most maligned of Australia’s working-class, long provided an unsettling and undesirable heritage that many Australians fought to expunge and overcome. However, the cultural values and meanings associated with convict history have changed, such that it is now generally recognised as unique and formative, although there remains a tendency to associate that history with those ‘secluded’ and ‘detached’ physical remnants which are now on the World Heritage register. In this sense, ‘Coal River’, with its convict-era fabric and the later structures which evidence transformation, combined with the intangible stories and traditions that are associated with it, provides an important cultural and historical landscape, one that is perfectly amenable to the type of stimulating, dynamic and inclusive engagements with history and heritage that are elsewhere positioned at the cutting edge of heritage practice.

Newcastle has long been a frontline in the seemingly innate ‘battle’ between the interests of heritage and development. The skirmish over the fate of the Newcastle lumberyard site in 1987 presaged a longer conflict that escalated dramatically after an earthquake in December 1989, when the immediate damage to heritage buildings was compounded by enthusiastic demolitions and an aggressive campaign against heritage advocates. More recently, minor acts of resistance to the examination and promotion of sites within ‘Coal River’ were evidenced by delays and interference with geotechnical fieldwork, and in instances of support for development applications within the Precinct that appeared to sidestep its status as a State Heritage registered site. Development within the Precinct is not inherently unsustainable, as it is with those sites nominated for World Heritage listing, and of course, adaptation is integral to its history and value. What is required and applicable here, as Michael Turnpenny has noted, is not ‘static, ossifying protection but rather a commitment by practitioners to explore, record and consider wider values in the

---


management process’.\textsuperscript{60} Protective heritage management, however, ought to ensure that such development accords with and contributes to the heritage values of the Precinct, and the failure to extend protection obviously serves the interests of those who would wish to elude such obligations.

Setting aside the quandaries we have identified in the elevation of certain select convict sites within the rigid criteria of the World Heritage Convention, the successful listing of the pre-eminent eleven will justly ensure their acknowledgement and preservation, while asserting the broader, global importance of Australia’s convict history. It is to be hoped, however, that the narrow prescriptions for assessing heritage value, epitomised by UNESCO’s World Heritage guidelines, are not extended to determine what constitutes value and importance when assessing some of Australia’s ancillary convict sites, such as those within ‘Coal River’. While such sites may be less iconic, they are often hardly less significant in national or even universal terms. However, incorporating them into the national map of Australian convict history will require some substantial revision of what constitutes heritage—a definition that recognises adaptation, and which extricates the idea of ‘evolving landscapes and experiences’ from the conventional emphasis on materiality. Historians certainly have a role to play in critiquing the prevailing formal notions of heritage as encoded in various state and federal legislation. The acknowledgement and protection of Australia’s convict heritage will be well serviced by our conceptual and evidentiary rigour, as well as our particular disciplinary emphasis on context, meaning, and transformation.

\textsuperscript{60} Turnpenny, ‘Cultural Heritage, an Ill-defined Concept?’, 301.
APPENDIX D

Aboriginal

The uniqueness of this culturally significant place and its association with Aboriginal and historic heritage themes are important to consider together because of the emergence of new knowledge, research and fresh interpretations of the place. Recent work has provided a greater understanding of Aboriginal culture and resources that they used in the area. Aboriginal people of the area are believed to be the only Aboriginal Tribe to discuss coal in their legends (Threlkeld in Gunson, 1974, 65).

Furthermore, Aboriginal culture was quite sophisticated and the mining of coal was common practice, long before European occupation. There is a strong theme of Aboriginal economy, with sites that include shell middens, grinding areas, clay digs and stone tools. Chert, is still present at the base of Nobbys head and was a major source of raw material for the fashioning of stone tools. It is very rare for such material to be found so close to a large regional city (Walker et al, 1989, 25). ‘The area today, known as Newcastle was an industrial and trading centre long before white intrusion.’ (Maynard, 2003, 250).

The Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain holds great meaning and significance to the Awabakal peoples and local Aboriginal community because it is associated with Dreaming stories that depict the laws of the land and signify how people should behave in regard to the environment. The Awabakal people lived in this area enjoying its rich and varied environment. Despite extensive changes, evidence of Aboriginal occupation can still be found in the Landscape. Reverend Lancelot Threlkeld, a ‘Missionary to the Lake Macquarie Aborigines’ between 1824 and 1859 was coached in his interpretations by M’Gill, an Awabakal chief, also known as Biraban meaning ‘eaglehawk’. Places along the Newcastle coastal environment are important to the Awabakal people, Whibayganba or Nobbys Headland is one of these places, and it is a Dreaming place for the Awabakal people and represents a site of fundamental importance to Aboriginal people. Also significant is Yi-ran-na-li a cliff face at South Newcastle Beach and is within the Government Domain Precinct. (Albrecht) This was a ‘fearful’ place where it was Aboriginal custom to be silent when passing the cliffs due to the occurrences of rock falls, believing that speaking would invariably make overhanging rock and stone fall to the ground.

Whibayganba or Nobbys Headland is a significant and spiritual Aboriginal place that tells the Dreaming story of the giant kangaroo. It is also related to the history of earthquakes in the region. This Awabakal Dreamtime story has been written about by various people as told by the Awabakal people. These recordings signify the important associations that were formed to increase understanding of Aboriginal culture and of the special relationships that existed between Aboriginal people and migrants of the area. A fresh interpretation of our cultural history is providing new knowledge of Aboriginal culture that is in need of extensive examination. The story of the ‘giant kangaroo’ (first published in the Christian Herald, 17th February 1855, Vol.III, p.5-6) tells of the codes of behavior that are significant to an understanding, and sophistication of Aboriginal culture in terms of Aboriginal lore/law (of the Kangaroo being chased by wallabies for a wrong deed and finding refuge on Nobbys Island, becoming trapped inside). The kangaroo was thought to put “desire before code of behaviour” after attacking a female wallaby. This “conflicted with the laws governing kinship pattern of survival based on the purity of blood lines. It destroyed the totemic structure, so strongly emphasised in the Bora teaching.” (Percy Haslam Papers, A5410(i) leaves 7). This illustrates a strong Awabakal culture and highlights the association that the Awabakal people had with nature and the environment. The Dreaming story of the ‘Giant Kangaroo’ is of historical importance to the Nation because it shows the continued link that people have with the Mulubinba landscape.

There is also evidence that Corroborees took place in and around the Government Domain, these events are documented in many written and visual sources (Percy Haslam Papers. A5410(i) leaf 7). Governor Macquarie’s visit to Newcastle in 1818 where he was entertained on the evening of the 6th August by Burigon (alias “Jack”), King of the Newcastle tribe along with about forty men, women and children who performed a “Carabrae” (Corroboree) at the rear of Newcastle’s Government House. (Macquarie’s Diary - Journal to and from Newcastle 27 July 1818 - 9 August 1818) This event was probably illustrated in Plate 6 of James Wallis’ An historical account of the colony of New South Wales and its dependent settlements : in illustration of twelve views engraved by W. Preston from drawings taken on the spot by Captain Wallis (London : Printed for R. Ackermann by J. Moyes, 1821) entitled “Corroboree or Dance of the Natives of New South Wales New Holland”. This book was a tribute to Governor Macquarie, from Captain James Wallis, and his engraving of the corroboree has a
grinning or laughing Burigon (Buriejou) sitting in the foreground as a charming memento. The site of Prospect Hill or Obelisk Hill was a place where feuds and punishments between tribes were resolved. A actual duel is recorded as occurring in November 1801 at the very dawn of European settlement in Newcastle. (see ‘A Native Duel in 1801 in Newcastle’ in Huntington, H. W. H. (Henry William Hemsworth) “History of Newcastle and the Northern District Number XXXVIII” from *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate*. 14th December 1897).

A panorama painting by Edward Charles Close circa 1821 also portrays Aboriginals in corroboree at the site of the windmill, which later became the present Obelisk site. See Panorama of Newcastle 1821. Panorama of Newcastle : watercolor drawings by Edward Close. Call No. PXD 576 (State Library of New South Wales) Lycett also depicts Aboriginal people in his paintings, portraying the human story that connects the Awabakal story of Nobbys and the convict colony at Newcastle. The painting by Lycett “Aborigines resting by a campfire near the mouth of the Hunter River, Newcastle, New South Wales” shows Nobbys in the background and structures on Colliers Point. It was the Aboriginal connection to the site of the Government Domain that led Newcastle first chair of the Chamber of Commerce, John Bingle, to foresee the King Edward Park Recreation Reserve as a place where petty feuds and squabbles among his fellow Newcastle citizens could be resolved, just as they had been for thousands of years prior among the Aboriginal people. In his memoirs published in 1873 as *The Past and Present Records of Newcastle, New South Wales*, he said that his fractured and bickering community was at its best at times of patriotism (pp 45-46). It is interesting that the King Edward Park reserve later becomes a focal point for marches and commemorations after the war years prior to the formation of Civic Park. The Wattle Day League in celebration of Arbor Day would initiate commemorative tree plantings, and the processions would wend their way from the Newcastle Post Office up Watt Street to King Edward Park. Another reflection of the influence of Aboriginal culture and place on European culture and place.
APPENDIX F

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM AWABAKAL TRADITIONAL OWNERS ABORIGINAL CORPORATION FOR COAL RIVER (MULUBINBA) AND GOVERNMENT DOMAIN NATIONAL NOMINATION
1 March 2013

To Nominations Manager,

Re: Letter of Support for the Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain National Nomination

The Awabakal Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (ATOAC) who are Registered Native Title Claimants within the area, take great pleasure in supporting the National Nomination 'Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain' which is to be submitted in March 2013 by the University of Newcastle's Coal River Working Party.

The Awabakal People are members of the Coal River Working Party, who work collaboratively together to inform and preserve the Aboriginal and Colonial Histories of the Newcastle regions.

We believe that the collective and shared history of the Coal River (Mulubinba) region is an important aspect of the National History of the Australian story, which holds immense meaning for Indigenous and Historic Heritage and Values for our Nation.

In closing, we have received confirmation from Shane Frost (ADTOAC) giving his full support of this response.

In the spirit of a greater understanding of Aboriginal Culture and Historic Heritage,

Yours sincerely,

Kerrie Brauer
Director | Administration
APPENDIX G

COAL RIVER (MULUBINBA) AND GOVERNMENT DOMAIN - PHOTOGRAPHS
COAL RIVER PRECINCT

Coal River Precinct - Nobbys Headland
NEWCASTLE GOVERNMENT DOMAIN

KING EDWARD PARK

King Edward Park- Bogey Hole
James Fletcher Hospital
BOGEY HOLE
FLETCHER PARK
Government Domain- Adit at cliffs, South Newcastle Beach