

Coal River Working Party Meeting

3rd June, 2013 1:00pm – 3:00pm

University Council Board Room, IDC Building, University Drive

Minutes

Start: 1:00

1. **Welcome to Country:** Acknowledgement of Country by Gionni di Gravio
2. **Present:** Gionni di Gravio (chair), Ann Hardy (minute-taker), Emeritus Professor John Fryer, Ron Barber, Lesley Gent, Brian Roach, Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling, Russell Rigby, Doug Lithgow, Ruth Cotton, Bob Jones, Keith Parsons, Peter Sherlock, Julianne Tilse, (Professor Howard Dick present briefly)

Apologies: Kerrie Brauer, Ben Greaves, Jane Ison, Dene Hawken, Charles Martin, Robert Watson. Marilla North, Sue Effenberger, Sarah Cameron.

3. **Confirmation of Previous Minutes:** The minutes for 6th May 2013 was adopted after alteration to 6 c) "Cawarra" and 8 c) "Fort Scratchley is planning a facebook page", minutes are a true and faithful representation, moved – Maree Shilling and seconded – Ron Barber.

4. **Business arising from previous minutes:**

(a) A letter was received from Elizabeth Ellis thanking the CRWP and giving praise to the group for research conducted and support during the Macquarie exhibition at Newcastle Art Gallery. Gionni di Gravio tabled the letter.

(b) **Review Macquarie Pier Funds- 'Macquarie 2010' (Gionni di Gravio)** - Gionni informed that the archaeological brief for the proposal had been finalised and awaiting interest. **ACTION-** Gionni di Gravio to liaise with Sarah Cameron and Peter Sherlock and report on progress at next meeting.

5. **Presentations- update computer Models of Coal River (Charles Martin)** gave a presentation on the computer modelling of early Newcastle. His work is progressing well, showing detail of buildings and other features in the landscape such as the detail of the gaol, hospital and Government House. Charles was congratulated for his wonderful work and various sources were suggested to gain further knowledge and assist with interpretation of the landscape and environment. It was suggested that prior to 1788 Australia already had a well developed

landscape, fire stick farming was common, Bill Gammage has written about this in his book 'Greatest Estate on Earth'. Furthermore many of the coastal species of plants are shown in many Lycett paintings and Gianni di Gravio suggested that the wharf at George Street (later Watt St) may have been built on a natural rock shelf. The university has purchased a new computer and money available from the Vera Deacon Fund will employ Charles (two days a week) so he can work further on this project. Finally, Ruth Cotton commented that not only is the end result important but documenting the process and methodology of Charles work is also valuable.

6. Reports and Updates:

- a) **Research of Lycett's Corroboree painting (Gianni di Gravio)** – Gianni advised that he has asked the State Library of NSW to photograph Lycett's Corroboree painting in grids so that there is a good high resolution image of the work, this is essential if it is to be studied further. The painting represents the coming together of two cultures. Of particular interest are the activities and rituals of local Aboriginal people, also of interest is the red ochre pigment used in the painting, it is unknown whether this is traditional artist's paint or a pigment sourced locally, possibly used by Aboriginal people. Further investigation is also needed to locate the ground where the rituals are taking place, it possibly could be where Lieutenant Coke refers to a 'field of battle', a flat amphitheatre. Future x-ray of the wooden canvass may reveal whether any earlier paintings were produced and painted over.

Mulinbah House (Gianni di Gravio) – Mulinbah House stood on the corner of King and Wolfe Streets. Keith Parsons advised that the foundations and stairs of the house were visible 20years ago and likely to be still there. A report that EJE produced shows a copy of a photograph taken from Stockton looking across the harbour towards Newcastle (1868). There is also an engraving that appears to be from the photo. The photograph is in the collection of the Newcastle Library Local Studies, however it has not been able to be located. It is believed to be one of the earliest photographs of Newcastle. **Action-** Ken Shilling was set the task of exploring this further and seeing what other photographs may exist from this era.

- b) **National Trust (Ann Hardy)** - Ann advised that fundraising efforts for a Lost Newcastle App were going well. Firstly good news the NT Vic advised they are not charging the \$4000 license fee, the Hunter Regional Committee National Trust (NSW) will have control of the content. Secondly, the software designers will upload material (photos and written material), although Melbourne has 100 items, unlimited items can be uploaded. A spreadsheet to compile information about each item (historical, social, cultural etc) will begin to be compiled and can be given at a later date to the App designer to upload. Newcastle has many possible of themes, such as Earthquake, Health, Arts, Dreamtime stories, others are being considered. **Action** – A small group will be formed to plan, organise and oversee the content of the Lost

Newcastle App. **Government Domain Committee (GDC)** - Meeting was held on the 20th May at Monets'cafe (James Fletcher Hospital), Robert Evans discussed work of Alfred Sharp who won a design competition for the King Edward Park, AH suggested that Robert revise his work for a short article for the Government Domain blog or other publication. Peter Stevens spoke about his 'garden path' concept, the importance of urban open spaces and government domain could be revitalised with the open space a key focus. AH advised that health services are moving back into the former barrack buildings, however no announcement regarding the future use of the entire site when the court House relocates.

- c) **National Nomination submitted 8th March 2013 (Ann Hardy)** – No news.
- d) **Update from City of Newcastle (Sarah Cameron)** – No report this meeting.
- e) **Feedback from Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) workshop (Doug Lithgow)** - Doug Lithgow provided feedback from EDO workshop that discussed the New Planning System for NSW and the White Paper. The workshop was held at the University of Newcastle on 21 May 2013. The new planning system white paper provided the opportunity to ask EDO to hold a workshop on the Draft Bill and thanks to Prof. Tim Roberts from the Tom Farrell Institute sponsored the workshop. It was a very successful workshop with about 50 participants. EDO solicitors Rachel and Nari conducted the workshop and guiding participants through the White Paper and proposed Bill. Planning has always been a moving feast and it takes constant energy to keep on top of the data and issues. Well done and thanks to all who attended. The white paper proposes more emphasis on regional strategies. The White Paper adopts 6 themes:
Delivery Culture 2. Community Participation 3. A Strategic Planning Focus 4. Streamlined Development Assessment and Approvals 5. Provision of Infrastructure 6. Building Regulation and Certification. The main problem is that there is a need for the more embracing objective of Ecologically Sustainable Development. The rather narrow definition in White Paper only considers two of the ESD principles in the existing ESD legislation. Ecologically Sustainable Development requires the effective integration of economic and environmental considerations in decision-making processes. The Community Participation Charter is excellent but made difficult to enforce. Additional Appeal Rights are needed. Checks and Balances are important and it will be difficult for the community to make merit objection once Strategy is set.

Four Levels of Strategic Planning Proposed:

1. State Planning Policies: 12 overall policies may be developed.
2. Regional Growth Plans: 20 year plans setting vision, objectives and policies, Housing etc underpinned by an evidence base.

3. Subregional Delivery Plans: Delivery Framework, Identify precincts and zoning, Integrate with infrastructure and set building envelopes, Strong community Participation. Tested to achieve Economic viability and facilitated by Subregional Planning Boards.

4 Local Plans: The main legal document delivering the Strategic Vision, Facilitating assessment with Development codes. Development Guides and give local effect to the State Environmental Planning Policies.

Problems that may affect the community - Strategic Planning Principles: Prioritise economic growth at expense of social and environmental outcomes. No reference in planning principles to natural or environmental resource management or cultural heritage. State Planning Policies are not strategic instruments subject to parliament or subject to judicial Review.

Environmental and Natural Resources are introduced at Regional Plan level but discretionary. Plan may include environmental targets. Parallel plans have already commenced eg. Lower Hunter Strategy over the next 20 years -discussion paper Exhibition concluded last Friday 28th.

No legal provision seems to have been made for Environmental Studies even though evidence based plans are proposed.

Requirements for interagency concurrence and approvals are reduced and could effect consideration of Heritage. There is no discussion of Heritage in the White Paper.

For further information please visit: EDO website <http://www.edo.org.au/edonsw/site/default.php> and make a submission to the Department of Planning <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au>

Clearly CRWP must continue to pursue its goal 2 to ensure our legislative frameworks are working effectively for our heritage. Special thanks must go to Professor Tim Roberts and the Tom Farrell Foundation for hosting the workshop.

- f) **Hidden Hamilton (Ruth Cotton)** - Ruth Cotton has developed 'Hidden Hamilton' blog and shared her experience with the CRWP. There have been interesting and diverse stories from the community and Ruth is happy to receive feedback from the CRWP. Ruth has also tracked down Peter Murray who has written about the history of Hamilton. To view blog see <http://hiddenhamilton.blogspot.com.au/>

7) **General Business**

- (a) **Fort Scratchley**- Ron Barber advised that 'Newcastle Now' will be opening Nobbys Headland every Sunday. Fort Scratchley will be open on Monday of the long weekend.

- (b) Newcastle Port** - Doug Lithgow asked what impact the potential privatisation of the Newcastle port will have on the cultural heritage values of Coal River. For further discussion.
- (c) Pelton Colliery documents**- John Fryer donated to Cultural Collections the Pelton Colliery Manager's Report (1889 – 1895), the historic work was handed over to Gionni di Gravio.
- (d) State Heritage nomination King Edward Park**- Ann Hardy advised that the CRWP had received a letter from Heritage Branch advising that SHR nomination is progressing well for KEP.

9) Close: 3:00

Date of next meeting: Monday, 1st July, 2013 in the IDC Building, 1-3pm.