

Coal River Working Party Meeting

2nd December, 2013 1:00pm – 3:00pm

University Council Board Room, IDC Building, University Drive

Minutes

Start: 1:00

1. **Welcome to Country:** Acknowledgement to Country by Gionni di Gravio.

2. **Present:** Gionni di Gravio (chair), Ann Hardy (minute-taker), Sarah Cameron, Ron Barber, Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling, Keith Parsons, Charles Martin, Brian Roach, Russell Rigby, Doug Lithgow, Jane Ison, Marilla North, Emeritus Professor John Fryer, Ruth Cotton, Robert Watson, Howard Dick, Brian Walsh, Damien Egan, Lesley Gent

Apologies: Professor Maree Gleeson, Kerrie Brauer, Dene Hawken, Nola Hawken, Sue Effenberger, Coralie Watson, Bob Jones, Cynthia Hunter.

3. **Confirmation of Previous Minutes:** The minutes for th November 2013 was adopted by John Fryer and seconded – Maree Shilling.

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

5. **Presentations-**
 - a) **Visit to ANU Noel Butlin Archives, Canberra (Russell Rigby)** – Russell recently went to the Noel Butlin Archives to look at maps and plans associated with Newcastle and the Hunter. The archive has a very good catalogue of maps from the AA Company records. Russell was able to report on some of the Newcastle maps held in the extensive collection, shared visual sources that date from about 1855 to early 1900s. There was particular interest was a map showing the coal mine at Tighes Hill. Russell.

 - a) **Computer Models of Coal River (Charles Martin)** – Charles updated the CRWP with a presentation of computer modelling of early Newcastle. He is currently adding further

detail to the digital format. If anyone has further information about detail of buildings, landscape features of early Newcastle please let Charles know.

6. Reports and Updates:

- a) **Annual Report 2013-** (Gionni di Gravio) – Gionni delivered 2013 CRWP Annual Report. It has been a very busy year for the CRWP, with many projects completed and some still underway. Most of the group's achievements are outlined on the CRWP blog. The media in Newcastle has been particularly supportive, the ABC Radio and Newcastle Herald regularly provide information to the public about work of the CRWP. The Chair thanked members of the CRWP and other supporters, as well as the Tom Farrell Institute for their continued support. Copy of Annual Report will be sent out with the minutes. Ruth Cotton praised Gionni for his positive and effective relationship with local media and the work that he does raising public awareness of Newcastle's cultural heritage. Others suggested that the CRWP input to the Draft Plan of Management for Fort Scratchley, as well as support for dual naming of several Aboriginal places should also be included in the Chairs annual report.
- a) **National Nomination – (Gionni di Gravio)** - Gionni advised that he had received a letter via Prof Erik Eklund from Nigel Routh (Department of the Environment) to advise that the National Nomination for Coal River was unsuccessful. Gionni responded to the letter by writing to Minister Greg Hunt, Minister for the Environment, about Newcastle being written out of the Australian story. Both letters are available on the Coal River blog. Sarah Cameron advised it is important that nomination addresses national heritage criteria and suggested that the nomination be reworked. Other suggestions was for a delegation to meet with the Minister to discuss the nomination.
<http://coalriver.wordpress.com/2013/10/31/newcastle-rejected/>
- a) **National Trust (Ann Hardy)** – Ann advised that The Hunter Regional Committee of the National Trust (HRCNT) had its AGM on Sunday 23 November 2013, and a committee was again elected with Keith Parsons as Chair once again. As mentioned the National Trust Heritage Festival theme next year is 'Journeys' and the committee are in the process of organising several events. The National Nomination for Newcastle was unsuccessful, it did not meet the 'Priority Assessment List for 2014'. Members discussed

next step in terms of gaining support for listing. Other suggestions were to contact Federal member Sharon Claydon and other local members about National heritage significance of the Coal River Precinct and Newcastle Government Domain.

- b) **Update from City of Newcastle (Sarah Cameron)** – Sarah advised that the CRWP is invited to the Victoria Lifeboat sculpture launch organised by the memorial committee. This is a NCC place making initiative to interpret the Victoria Lifeboat, people associated with the boat and their family and friends. In the afternoon after the main ceremony the Dean of Christ Church Cathedral will conduct a service in commemoration of the Victoria Lifeboat victims, survivors and families. Lastly, the period for public comment on the ‘Draft Fort Scratchley Plan of Management’ has ended and the plan will go to council for adoption next year.

7. **General Business**

- a) **Mystery Object-** There was discussion about a mystery object found at Dudley. A photograph of the object was circulated, it looked very much like the entrance of a well, is round in shape, bricked and has been rendered. It was suggested that it may be a water cistern or tank, apparently there is a similar one at ‘Lady Smith’ near West Wallsend, and tank is bottle shaped. These underground water cisterns were quite common during the 1800s, some dating from 1830s and used to capture water before above ground tanks become popular.
- b) **Fort Scratchley- Ron Barber** from Fort Scratchley Historical Society informed the CRWP that a Smart Phone guide will soon be available for download from the Fort’s website.
- c) **ABC open object stories project** - Anthony Scully from ABC Open has invited the CRWP to take part in the ‘Object stories project’. Workshop is to be organised in early 2014. The workshop will include further discussion about the project, tips on writing up stories and photographing objects. **ACTION:** Several members advised that they are interested in attending workshop. Ann Hardy will contact Anthony early in the New Year to arrange date, venue and time. For further discussion at February meeting.

8. **Close: 3:00**

Date of next meeting: Monday, 3rd February, 2014 in the IDC Building, 1-3pm.