

## **Coal River Working Party Meeting**

**4<sup>th</sup> May, 2015 1:00pm – 3:00pm**

**University Council Board Room, IDC Building, University Drive**

### **Minutes**

**Start: 1:00**

1. **Welcome to Country:** Acknowledgement to Country by Ann Hardy.
  
2. **Present:** Ann Hardy (chair), Russell Rigby, Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling, Jane Ison, Peter Bergin, Robert Watson, Chas Keys, Don Seton-Wilkinson, Keith Parsons, Jude Conway, Charles Martin, Peter Sherlock, Lesley Gent, Marilla North, Rob Jones, Ron Barber, Brian Roach, Susan Effenberger, Warren Hardy.

**Apologies:** Gionni di Gravio (chair), Howard Dick, Member for Wallsend Sonia Hornery, Kerrie Brauer, Emeritus Professor Maree Gleeson, Peter Leven, Emeritus Professor John Fryer, Brian Walsh, Tim Adams, Anne Creevey, Bronwyn Law, Ruth Cotton, Sarah Cameron, Dene Hawken, Nola Hawken, Suzanne Martin.

**Visitors: Nil**

3. **Confirmation of Previous Minutes:** The minutes for 13<sup>th</sup> April 2015 was confirmed by Lesley Gent and seconded – Jane Ison.
  
4. **Business arising from previous minutes:** Nil
  
5. **Presentations-**
  - a) **Flood Mitigation – (Chas Keys)** Chas is a flood consultant and former Dep. Director General of NSW State Emergence Services and he presented on the topic of flood mitigation, specific to the Hunter and Newcastle areas. There has been a long history of floods in the area, many residential areas are built on silt up areas, and the recent floods is nature's way of rejecting the extensive changes to the landform, this was particularly the case at Dungog where 50 homes were affected by flooding. Chas' interest in flood management is multidimensional,

including science, psychology and the social impact of flooding. There is a need for further research into flooding, particularly effects on communities when they become isolated, and the economic cost of flooding. Councils need to review areas planned for development, because as seen in recent weeks a lot of pressure was placed on SES to assist. There needs to be much stronger policies associated with flood management in Newcastle and the Hunter Region.

Chas lectures at the Maitland U3A on the many facets of flooding. He has also written a book on flood management and is looking to publish, members of the CRWP suggested approaching publishers such as NewSouth Press and Bruderlin & McLean Publishing Services, and contacting the Tom Farrell Institute for advice about publishing, as this may be an area of interest to them.

**b) Newcastle Industrial Girls' School- (Jane Ison)**

Jane gave a presentation on her research of the girls who were at the Newcastle Industrial Girls School (1867-1871). She has recorded information about the 193 girls at the institution, (located at wiki site <http://nis.wikidot.com/> ). The wiki site was made possible through a grant from the Royal Australian Historical Society. Jane described the various components of the wiki site, each girl (or inmate) has a biography including a lot of social history and information about the legal system and child welfare legislation during the 1860s. The school eventually closed in 1871 after several riots, whereby the community also rallied to have the girls removed from the neighbourhood. Jane has done a tremendous amount of research to document the lives of the girls and members of the CRWP congratulated her on this outstanding work.

**c) Presentation on Newcastle Flagstaff, Newcastle Foreshore plan and - (Russell Rigby)**

At the last meeting the former Newcastle flagstaff and the old post evident in Fletcher Park was discussed (may be associated with early flagstaff). Russell has reviewed various historical sources, including maps, artworks and photographs to find out more about Newcastle's flagstaff. Russell's analysis considered available evidence and concluded that the flagstaff from the early settlement was in a different location to a later one (installed possibly as a commemoration during the late 1800s). The relic that exists in Fletcher Park is likely associated with the second flagstaff and located approximately 50 metres south west of the old flagstaff site that is shown in colonial artworks of the penal settlement.

Russell spoke about the Newcastle Foreshore Plan, also discussed at the last meeting and whether the 'Frog pond' site at Foreshore Park is on reclaimed land. Russell gave an extensive presentation on the historic context of the foreshore, reviewed plans and showed how the shoreline of the Hunter River has evolved over decades and centuries. Russell's survey of historic sources show changes to the harbour and in particular the shoreline that has vastly changed since European occupation. Early plans distinctly show that the 'frog pond' was part of the harbour (under water), and the land in that area has been gradually reclaimed. There has been no long term European historical connection to land in the area of the 'frog pond'.

## **6. Reports and Updates:**

### **a) Updates- (Gionni di Gravio) – NIL**

### **b) Update- CRWP (Ann Hardy)**

- Ann and Russell have compiled an historical Timeline for Newcastle Now who are updating their website and looking for more historical information to broaden their site. Ann will send on to NewcastleNow.

- Newcastle council are putting together a cultural strategy for Newcastle and are planning a workshop for history and heritage groups. An invitation to participate in Cultural strategy consultation has been extended to members of the CRPW. Ann will send further details.

- *Mulumina: Place of Sea Ferns* exhibition will be launched on 6 May 2015. The exhibition explores the history of the Aboriginal people of the Newcastle area and traces their stories. The exhibition will also include the launch of Professor John Maynard's book *Whose traditional land? Callaghan, the University of Newcastle*, all are welcome to attend.

- Artist Diedre Brollo is having an installation at the Lock Up in Newcastle, she has asked to use historical sources and material from the CRWP website, all are welcome to come along to see Deidre's installation at the *Art Bender* festival Friday 8 – 9 May.

### **c) Update- National Trust (Ann Hardy)**

- Heritage walk around King Edward Park led by Keith Parsons and Ann was successful, the theme mostly covered the military use of the area, and other historical facets of the park were also covered.

- The National Trust of Australia (NSW) magazine recently published an article about Newcastle's recent planning issues and this will affect cultural heritage. If anyone would like a copy please contact Ann.

d) **Update – Newcastle Council (Sarah Cameron) - NIL.**

7. **Advocacy - Nil**

8. **General Business-**

a) **Don Seton-Wilkinson (Dalwood House)** – Don is pleased to announce that Dalwood House Restoration Association recently received heritage funding of \$125 000 for conservation works, this was very welcomed news.

b) **Marilla North** – Informed that the Leura Garden Festival is on from Saturday 3 – Sunday 11 October 2015.

c) **Jude Conway-** Informed that Local Studies at Newcastle Library is running a series of monthly talks on specific themes. The next talk looks at historic sources associated with music. Jude will find out more about future talks.

d) **Keith Parsons** – informed that Dr Nancy Cushing and Dr James Bennett will be talking at the next Book Lovers group about the Radical Newcastle book and the process involved in publication. All welcome, contact Ann to RSVP.

e) **Ron Barber-** The latest issue of Hunter Lifestyle magazine features Fort Scratchley. Also the Fort Scratchley historical society has a large photograph showing the Naval Brigade at King Edward Park and may be of interest to those researching the KEP.

9. **Close: 3.10 PM**

**Date of next meeting will be Monday, 1st June, 2015 in the IDC Building, 1-3pm.**