

Coal River Working Party Meeting

2nd November, 2015 1:00pm – 3:00pm

Tomago House, Tomago Road, Port Stephens

Minutes

Start: 1:00

1. **Welcome to Country:** Acknowledgement to Country by Kerrie Brauer
2. **Present:** Gionni di Gravio (Chair), Ann Hardy (Minute taker), Kerrie Brauer, Sarah Cameron, Robert Watson, Peter Sherlock, Howard Dick, Charles Martin, Julieanne Tilse, Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling, Ron Barber, Ziggy Szyda, Russell Rigby, Brian Roach, Alan Baynham, Ian Eckford, Keith Parsons, Suzanne Martin, Jude Conway, Bronwyn Law, Lesley Gent, Ken Thornton, Bernadette Drabsch, Kris March, Jude Conway, Helen Denzin.

Apologies: David Dial, Tim Davidson, Tim Adams, Anne Creavey, Emeritus Professor Maree Gleeson, Member for Wallsend Sonia, Emeritus Professor John Fryer, Peter Leven, Marilla North, Robert Jones, Jane Ison, Ruth Cotton, Dene Hawken, Nola Hawken, , Don Seton-Wilkinson, Doug Lithgow, Julie McIntyre,

Visitors:

3. **Confirmation of Previous Minutes:** The minutes for 7th September 2015 was confirmed by Ron Barber and seconded – Russell Rigby.
4. **Business arising from previous minutes:**
5. **Presentations- NIL**
6. **Reports and Updates:**
 - a) **Updates- (Gionni di Gravio)** – Conference Update- Gionni gave an overview of the conference paper recently presented at a recent Urban Planning Conference in Chicago, Newcastle was used as a case study, and the Australian Indigenous perspective was well received, for overview of paper see <https://coalriver.wordpress.com/2015/11/03/indigenising-the-city/>

Communication Student Project - Gionni, Ann and Robert will meet with Communication students this Wednesday to receive recommendations that the CRWP can use to improve communication strategies and help relaunch and re-brand the CRWP. Other members are welcome to attend. Feedback will be given at next meeting.

Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB) – Gionni has had contact with a representative of the ADB about updating existing biographies, it has been decades since many of the biographies were conducted. Nancy Cushing has kindly offered to talk to CRWP further about this at next meeting.

Aboriginal heritage – Gionni introduced Dr Bernadette Drabsch who spoke about a course starting next year in cultural heritage mapping, offering research and cross faculty collaboration opportunities. Including students from history, natural history illustration, School of Wollotuka, geology and other disciplines. Gionni described how cultural history/heritage is starting to reach business groups, an example is the work of Natural history illustration students who worked on the mural in a recently completed Watt Street development. Suzanne Martin has seen the interpretative work and was very impressed.

Victoria Theatre- there is a current campaign to buy the historic Victoria Theatre in Perkins Street, Newcastle, it will be auctioned in November. Ideally it would be good to see the building restored as a theatre to be used by the community and other creative organisations.

- a) **Update- (Ann Hardy) – Margaret Henry Oral History** - Ann acknowledged that since last meeting Margaret Henry had sadly passed away, our thoughts are with her partner Keith Parsons, daughter Catherine Henry and family. The Margaret Henry Oral History Archive funded by the Vera Deacon History Fund is now digitised and available online, there are over 200 oral history tapes and written sources (by Open Foundation students in the late 1980s). Available <https://uoncc.wordpress.com/2015/11/10/margaret-henry-oral-history-archive-2/> or by theme <https://uoncc.wordpress.com/2015/09/17/margaret-henry-oral-history-archive/> or SoundCloud <https://soundcloud.com/uoncc/sets/margaret-henry-oral-history>

Ann also advised that the Property Council of Australia (Hunter Chapter) is launching their submission shortly about Newcastle's revitalisation. Ed Crawford (Chair of Chapter) would like to liaise with this group to discuss Aboriginal and cultural heritage matters, as well as urban planning ideas, they are very interested in retaining and creating public spaces and establishing a cultural heritage centre. Ann will arrange a suitable time to meet with representatives of the CRWP.

Update- National Trust – Ann advised that the 2016 National Trust Heritage Festival theme is ‘Discovery and rediscoveries’ See <http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/nsw/Heritage-Festival>

b) Update – Newcastle Council (Sarah Cameron) – Sarah advised that the Council is exploring further the process of a National Heritage nomination for Newcastle, and on 14 October of heritage delegates and members from Newcastle council discussed this further. As noted in the last minutes several members of CRWP addressed Newcastle Councillors in a public voice session. It is likely that two resolutions will go to local council on the 8 December – the first to support a budget item to be put forward in the 16/17 management plan to prepare a heritage master plan to present the CRP in a cohesive way, the second, Council resolves its in-principle support for the inclusion of the CRP on the National Heritage List. Sarah also mentioned Shepherd’s Hill cottages and the storm damage that occurred there in April, authorities are working together to repair the buildings. An Aboriginal Heritage Management study is also underway, and advised that the Guruki Committee is currently in recess. Question was raised whether there was any news about dual naming of Newcastle sites. No announcement has been made.

7. Advocacy – NIL

8. General Business-

- a) Publications-** Howard Dick raised the issue of ‘Coal River’ publications and pointed out that there are members of the CRWP involved in research and history of the region- with material that could possibly be published. Several post graduates are members of the CRWP and have a wealth of knowledge. Will be put on the agenda to be discussed February 2016.
- b)** Ken Shilling advised that on 10 November there will be a service to commemorate the life Private Albert Leslie Stewart the first WWI digger buried at Sandgate Cemetery.
- c)** Gionni thanked Jenny le Mont of Tomago House for providing the venue and afternoon tea, as well as Lesley Gent for her assistance today. He suggested that the occasional future meetings could be held in historic locations, possibly Fort Scratchley or Nobbys Headland – other suggestions welcome.

9. Close: 3.00 PM

Date of next meeting will be Monday, 1st February, 2016 in the IDC Building, 1-3pm.