



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY
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Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into ACT's heritage arrangements

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Inquiry into the ACT's Heritage Arrangements

Submission by the

Canberra & District Historical Society

ATTACHMENTS

1. Elements of the ACT's Heritage Arrangements.
2. Local government and historical societies: Maximising the value of local history. Federation of Australian Historical Societies.
3. Funding our heritage: Innovative practices for sourcing funding and assistance for heritage in the ACT.
4. Poor coordination: A Tale of Two (scar) Trees.
5. Neglect: Hill Station private neglect.
6. Heritage v value capture: Northbourne housing group.

Elements of the ACT's Heritage Arrangements.

Government

Core elements:

- *ACT Heritage Act 2004*
- Heritage Minister
- Heritage Council
- ACT Heritage Unit within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD)

Related elements:

- The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
- ACT Heritage Library (TCCS/ ACT Library Service)
- Archives ACT (CMTEDD/ Territory Records Office)
- Canberra Historic Places (CMTEDD/ Cultural Facilities Corporation)
- Canberra Museum and Art Gallery (CMTEDD/ Cultural Facilities Corporation)
- Arts ACT (Gorman House, Ainslie School, Power House Glass works, Strathnairn, Lanyon etc)
- *Planning and Development Act 2007*
- Minister for Planning.
- ACT Property Group (management of heritage and historically significant properties).

Non-government

History and heritage societies perform many invaluable functions and operate in a very tight financial environment with limited government support. Some of their functions include:

- Custodianship of significant archives and collections
- Supporting the ACT Heritage Festival
- Undertaking projects funded by ACT Heritage Grants
- Undertaking public programs e.g. talks and tours
- Providing volunteer opportunities for the community, especially for retirees/senior citizens.

The following is a list of history and heritage groups in the ACT. It does not claim to be complete:

- The Canberra & District Historical Society
- The National Trust of Australia (ACT)
- Hall School House Museum and Cultural Centre
- Family History ACT
- ICOMOS (ACT Branch)
- ACT Regional Studies Network
- Canberra and Region Heritage Researchers
- Fire Brigade Historical Society (Canberra Fire Museum)
- Tuggeranong Schoolhouse Museum
- Minders of Tuggeranong Homestead

- St John's Schoolhouse Museum
- Capital Region Heritage Rail (Canberra Railway Museum)
- Australian Garden History Society (ACT Monaro Region)
- Canberra Archaeological Society
- Military History Society of Australia (ACT)
- Naval Historical Society of Australia (ACT Chapter)
- Tidbinbilla Pioneers Association
- St Andrew's Archive and Heritage Committee
- Canberra Modern
- Ginninderry Conservation Trust
- Engineering Heritage Australia – ACT
- Anglican Historical Society of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HISTORY SOCIETIES

Maximising the value of local history

The Value of History

We acknowledge that history shapes our identities, engages us as citizens, creates inclusive communities, is part of our economic well-being, teaches us to think critically and creatively, inspires leaders and is the foundation of our future generations.

Yarra Ranges Council Plan 2021-2025

INTRODUCTION

Local history is our cultural heritage; an asset that is valuable in many ways. Maximising its value to the community requires a strong partnership between local government and history societies. Those local councils which effectively support their community history groups enjoy the benefits, as does the community as a whole.

Local history is an often underused major asset despite its potential to generate considerable economic and social benefits for local governments and the communities they serve. History societies have considerable resources that can be harnessed with relatively small investments by local governments to maximise those benefits. Therein lies the basis for productive partnerships.

Recent natural disasters such as bushfires and floods have demonstrated how much value many communities place on their local history in their ongoing recovery process. There is a strong and deep need to erect memorials, record experiences, restore valued buildings and to recover other aspects of community history.

THE VALUE OF HISTORY AND HERITAGE

A growing body of research has generated hard evidence that history and heritage have significant economic and social benefits for local governments and their communities. Local history groups contribute significantly to these benefits through their extensive knowledge and volunteer input.



This NSW village of Cobargo promotes its historic landmarks as tourist attractions.

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Economic Benefit

- Tourism (including hospitality, tours etc.)
- Job creation - directly and indirectly
- Leveraging uniqueness to create special places that attract tourists and a range of economic activity including creative industries
- Creating aesthetically pleasing places that attract people to congregate
- Repurposing old buildings. This also leads to skills development and environmental benefits
- Increased demand for heritage property and consequent price premium

Social Benefit

- Enriching our lives
- Shaping our personal, social identity and sense of belonging to the community
- Supporting social cohesion and strengthening social networks
- Fostering a strong sense of belonging and attachment to place
- Shaping the perception and quality of place
- Increasing the levels of social support (resulting in better social connection and improved mental health) and developing active and skilled citizens through heritage volunteering
- Visiting and engaging with heritage enhances our mental health and wellbeing
- Improving our mental health through outdoor experiences offered by the historic environment
- Engaging with heritage can improve our physical health and support public health goals
- Experiencing heritage stimulates our minds and helps older members of society.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HISTORY SOCIETIES

Maximising the value of local history

WHAT HISTORY SOCIETIES OFFER

Australia has approximately 1,200 community history and heritage societies. These voluntary community organisations operate in every local government area across the nation. They are a remarkable resource which creates significant social and economic benefits for the community for relatively small contributions from governments. They provide significant value for money and a high return on investment.

These societies have deep knowledge of the cultural heritage of their communities. This has been gained by curating local history collections, research and communicating that history.

Those collections often include items placed in their care by local government – a valuable community service.

Knowledge of cultural heritage

Some local governments regularly overlook this local knowledge when it comes to heritage studies, the assessment of what is important to local communities and planning policy, engaging outside consultants and failing to encourage local input.

Yet combining this rich asset of local knowledge with local government's resources to preserve and promote the history and heritage of an area can result in a rewarding partnership.

Despite the valuable resource that local history groups are some local councils do not make best use of that local knowledge.



Sale Historical Society has created four museums including a general museum in the former council chambers and a restored original water tower to tell the story of the town's water supply including its leading role in utilising bore water.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HISTORY SOCIETIES

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Care for collections

It is estimated that more than 90% of societies have a collection of cultural heritage material which contributes to research and local understanding and more than 60% of societies have a museum or some temporary form of historical exhibition.

Local history and heritage groups often provide services to support local government. For example, local governments often pass on records and memorabilia to be cared for by local history/heritage groups.

These groups also possess a deep knowledge of the area and this is a valuable resource for planning.

In return for taking custody of important historical items and contributing to the assessment of local heritage, Local Government often subsidises local history groups to support their operations.

This can include the use of original council or other government-owned facilities as museums, shared libraries or similar archival facilities and the funding of curator and/or administrator positions. However this support is not uniform across the country.

The local knowledge and understanding, hundreds of images and documents collected from numerous local pioneering families and many hours of cataloguing and organising these items, provides a rich resource to properly understand the local area.

Local history groups maintain collections containing millions of items that form a significant part of Australia's cultural heritage and Distributed National Collection.

The societies publish and publicise their local heritage in many forms. They add incalculable social value.



Storage compactus for historical archives.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HISTORY SOCIETIES

Maximising the value of local history

Voluntary work

Collectively, these groups harness the skills and energy of approximately 100,000 members and volunteers who contribute hundreds of thousands of hours of work, conservatively valued at \$144 million per annum.

Where adequately supported by local government, the valuable work done by local historical societies includes:

- Promoting local history and heritage through tours, publications and displays
- Providing information to assist local councils make planning decisions, especially where there are heritage issues
- Curating and conserving valuable collections of local cultural heritage material much of which is irreplaceable

- Operating museums and other displays
- Providing opportunities for volunteers, including many senior citizens
- Recording the experiences of the area's older citizens
- Providing research and direction for descendants of former residents
- Contributing to research and local understanding.

To take advantage of the rich asset of our cultural heritage should be an automatic consideration in planning and development decisions.

Local history and heritage groups also should be recognised in local arts and culture strategies and activities because local history is cultural heritage.



Historical Society events such as this ANZAC day celebration in Parramatta highlight important local people and events.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HISTORY SOCIETIES

Maximising the value of local history

HOW LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAN WORK WITH HISTORY SOCIETIES

Local government is the principal area of government that is served by and is responsible for supporting community history and heritage societies.

The proven economic and social value of history and heritage to local communities, together with the important role played by local historical societies, provides a strong case for local government and those societies to work together.

There is much unrealised potential for partnerships between local government and historical societies.

That potential needs to be better acknowledged and the partnerships optimised. Local tourism, with its many spin offs, is often a major beneficiary.

Local government authorities recognise and support the work of these groups in many ways, although some with more appreciation of the benefits than others.

To operate in a way that assists local governments maximise the benefits of

local history and heritage, local history groups need:

- affordable premises with adequate space for their administrative operations, secure collection storage, museum displays, public meetings, etc. (These premises need to meet minimum standards for museums and galleries (see National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries.)
- funding for essential equipment such as scanners, computers, projectors, storage, signage, display mountings
- funding to cover operational costs such as utilities
- insurance coverage e.g. for volunteers, public liability, buildings and contents
- support for projects to:
 - enhance collections
 - conserve and digitise material
 - curate and present displays
 - publish research and information about their collections



The Cowra Shire Council provides accommodation for the Cowra Family History Group. The historic Cowra Prisoner of War Camp is a major tourist attraction supported by the Council. Photo from Cowra Family History website www.cfhg.com.au. Downloaded 18 February 2022.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HISTORY SOCIETIES

Maximising the value of local history

- o establish and maintain on-line access to collections
- o co-ordinate with other history groups in the local area e.g. through annual seminars.

Some additional initiatives that are particularly useful to support local history societies include:

- Employment of a Local History Officer or Local Heritage Officer to liaise with and assist community history and heritage organisations and provide access to Council heritage advice, collections advice and advocacy
- Ensuring societies are properly prepared for and assisted in disaster preparedness planning, including the provision of suitable emergency/secure collection storage spaces
- Inclusion of cultural heritage organisations in arts and culture strategies and activities
- Communication and promotion of the work of historical societies, such as through Council publications and websites.



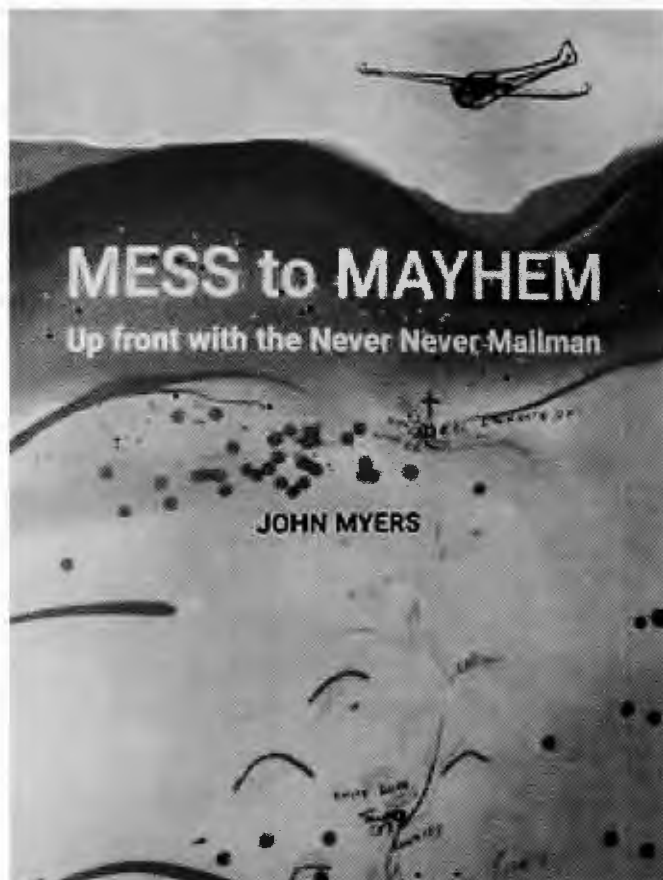
Yarra Ranges and other museums in the shire are supported by a heritage officer.

CONCLUSION

A mutually beneficial partnership between community history and heritage groups and Local Government will produce many benefits, both economic and social.

Relatively small outlays by local government can produce excellent value for money and return on investment.

Such a partnership should be the norm rather than the exception, enabling all Australians to better appreciate their past and for all communities to be enriched both economically and socially.



Local Histories are valuable contribution from historical societies, often compiled by knowledgeable volunteers.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HISTORY SOCIETIES

Maximising the value of local history



Historical Societies across Australia identify, catalogue and archive hundreds of historic images such as this early Kalgoorlie street scene.

RESOURCES

Heritage Council of Victoria

<https://heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/research-projects/the-state-of-heritage-review-local-heritage/>

City of Adelaide

<https://invest.cityofadelaide.com.au/blog/the-economic-value-of-heritage-tourism/>

Perth

<https://heritageperth.com.au/your-heritage/why-is-heritage-important-to-communities/>

Historic England

[\(www.historicengland.org.au/research/current/social-and-economic-research/reports-and-briefings/](http://www.historicengland.org.au/research/current/social-and-economic-research/reports-and-briefings/)

Useful reports from this site include:

- Heritage and the Economy 2019
- Heritage and Society 2020

National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries.

V 1.5, September 2016. This is a collaboration of government organisations in the ACT, Tasmania, South Australia, Northern Territory, Victoria, Western Australia and the Collections Council of Australia Ltd.

This document can be found at: <https://www.amaga.org.au/national-standards-for-australian-museums-and-galleries>



FUNDING OUR HERITAGE: Innovative practices for sourcing funding and assistance for heritage in the ACT.

1. Introduction

Currently the ACT Government provides two major sources of funding to heritage within our borders:

- Competitive funding programmes under which eligible bodies can apply for specific projects to be considered for funding within a formal round.
Examples of competitive funding are the *ACT Heritage Grants Program*, which is aimed at conserving a wide-range of cultural, and natural heritage values and places; and within this program and *Indigenous Heritage Program* which is aimed at conserving Indigenous heritage throughout Australia.
- Discretionary funding programmes which allocated non-competitive, ministerial approved grants to specific bodies to carry out conservation and repair works (often urgent).

Currently, the diversity and unevenness of funding opportunities adds to the confusion and complexity the community feels when dealing with the heritage registration processes. An **ACT Heritage Strategy** would provide an opportunity for different levels of government and the community to work in partnership to collate and distribute available funding effectively and efficiently.

Tax deductions

Heritage to benefit through taxation incentives:

- Recognise the tax system does play a modest role in supporting heritage conservation.
- Recognise the potential to achieve greater heritage conservation benefits through the tax system.
- Make appropriate recommendations to enhance the role of the tax system in achieving good heritage outcomes for Australia.
- Not making any recommendations without considering the impact on those measures which currently support heritage conservation.

Taxation through a partnership

One example of a tax reduction incentive is the National Trust Conservation Appeals partnerships, which remain a very successful and cost-effective way of offering tax-deductibility for heritage conservation. An example of these partnerships is with the ACT National Trust.¹ This Trust has entered into conservation appeals with three Territory and National Trust listed churches in Canberra: All Saints Anglican

Church, St Andrews Church and St John the Baptist Church. These appeal funds assist in the conservation and restoration of each of the churches, and allow for tax-free donations to be made.

A Green Taxation

A further option for taxation benefits could come from the retention of embodied greenhouse gases/carbon/energy in existing buildings by opting for a policy aimed at adaptive reuse rather than demolition of existing fabric. Such a policy would start to encourage retention of buildings instead of demolition with the inherent energy expenditure required and rebuilding new structures again with the inherent energy expenditures.

At this time it seems that the status quo revolves around a conceptual capital depreciation of aged buildings leading to abandonment ('ghost buildings'), which in turn encourages decay leading to structural instability then to demolition on the premise that a building has become 'beyond economical repair'. Thus, a concept of new building on the site of an old one is the primary, and sometimes only, vision when redevelopment is being planned.

A taxation incentive to retain rather than demolish could be instituted with deductions for adaptive reuse of exiting building and fabric.

Amendments to development planning laws that stop the advent of 'ghost buildings' would be more in the territory jurisdictions but this does not exclude the Commonwealth from developing some funding programs leading to financial benefits.

Heritage Tourism

Partnerships with Travel Agents and Tourism operators.

Much has been written about the links and interface between heritage conservation and tourism as a way to interpret, promote and fund the conservation of places with recognised heritage values. In fact, the literature forms a whole genre of its own – 'heritage tourism'.

NGOs concerned with history and heritage in Australia have long emphasised the need to attract tourists to their properties and have developed tour programs as a major source of revenue raising which can then be utilised in their conservation budgets.

While the heritage tourism literature genre keeps growing with regular input, particularly from academic and professional heritage practitioners; and although these NGOs along with other non-government heritage organizations have tourism

policies and practices in place within their strategic plans, there is a realisation that the process of education and tourism is not reaching expectations. The desired levels of revenue generation are not being achieved even though participation in cultural and heritage related tours and activities by younger, middle and elderly age categories have been predicted to increase in the present decade.

While the reasons for the shortfall in developing 'tourist dollars' are most likely multifarious and specific to types of places, there appears to be an over-riding connection problem between the National Trusts who own the properties and the travel agents who create tours, advertise them in the public area and sign up the prospective tourist into a structured holiday itinerary.

Most Australian historical societies do indeed have local, regional and in some cases overseas tour programs for which they utilise the services of a travel agent, but the relationship between the two is often based on a series of individual tours planned by the bodies themselves.

What is missing from these heritage tourism policies and practices is a close and well-developed partnership with the Australian travel industry. Australia promotes its tourism and tourist destinations widelyⁱⁱ, but there is little or no connection between the various government and corporate agencies and the National Trust.

Unfortunately, there is just no partnership programme between the corporate tourist industry who organise and run the tours, the government tourist agencies who promote Australia as a tourist destination and the non-government bodies. Each entity is aiming at the same target but shooting from different directions. What is needed is a long-term coordinated approach with partnerships between ACT Heritage and local tourist agencies.

A Case Study

Enabling Development

Enabling Development is a policy used by English Heritage to provide and sustain funding for heritage conservation, particularly but not necessarily, for built heritage.

English Heritage defines Enabling Development as 'development that is contrary to established planning policy – national or local – but which is occasionally permitted because it brings public benefits that have been demonstrated to clearly outweigh the harm that would be caused.

Normally such development would not be permitted, but it is considered in special cases where conservation costs are high and could not otherwise be achieved and where it can be demonstrated that the current and future benefits to the public outweigh the negative impacts of the development.

Consideration on allowing an enabling development should meet the following criteria.

The proposed development:

- will not materially harm the heritage values of the place or its setting.
- avoids detrimental fragmentation of management of the place.
- secures the long-term future of the place and, where applicable, its continued use for a sympathetic purpose.
- is necessary to resolve problems arising from the inherent needs of the place, rather than the circumstances of the present owner, or the purchase price paid.
- must satisfy a requirement that sufficient subsidy is not available from any other source.
- it is demonstrated that the amount of enabling development is the minimum necessary to secure the future of the place, and that its form minimises harm to other public interests and
- must demonstrate the public benefit of securing the future of the significant place through such enabling development decisively outweighs the dis-benefits of breaching other public policies.

If it is decided that a scheme of enabling development meets all these criteria, English Heritage believes that planning permission should only be granted if:

- the impact of the development is precisely defined at the outset, normally through the granting of full, rather than outline, planning permission.
- the achievement of the heritage objective is securely and enforceably linked to it, bearing in mind the place concerned is repaired to an agreed standard, or the funds to do so are made available, as early as possible in the course of the enabling development, ideally at the outset and certainly before completion or occupation.
- the planning authority closely monitors implementation, if necessary, acting promptly to ensure that obligations are fulfilled.

Heritage Disaster Fund

Over the past few years, Australia has probably seen the greatest number of natural disasters in its recorded history: floods in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, bushfires in Victoria, Western Australia, and most relevant here in the ACT, together with long-term droughts across the whole country. Yet the loss of cultural capital from these disasters has received little attention. There is a pressing need for funding for emergency heritage responses to natural disasters as well as longer-term assistance for recovery.

However, there is an opportunity to develop a Heritage Disaster Fund as a partnership between the ACT government and the insurance industry. Having the insurance industry involved in such a fund would be an important part of its sustainability. It would be made very clear that the purpose of the fund is not to replace insurance or alleviate insurance companies of some of their responsibilities, but to work with insurers to get the best possible outcomes.

Establishing a Heritage Disaster Fund on its own could be difficult and costly to administer, but if it was part of a larger Territory Heritage Fund, then resources could be available at very short notice if need be.

The benefits of a Heritage Disaster Fund would include:

- Getting heritage professionals on the ground as early as possible after a disaster to help make informed decisions and the future of damaged places and collections.
- Being able to fund the difference between the insurance cover and the cost of repairs to make retention viable in marginal cases; and
- Funding for disaster management training (for example Museums and Gallery Services in Queensland run disaster management courses for small museums).

Blue Shield Australia

The Blue Shield organization is the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross. It is an international committee, working to protect the world's cultural heritage threatened by armed conflict and natural disasters. It is made up of a network of committees of dedicated individuals across the world that is committed to the protection of the world's cultural property, and is concerned with the protection of cultural and natural heritage, tangible and intangible, in the event of armed conflict, natural- or human-made disaster. The name Blue Shield comes from the UNESCO 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which specifies a blue shield as the symbol for marking protected cultural property.

**An example of non-compliance of ACT Heritage Act
and lack of communication
between government agencies.**

A Tale of Two Trees

Peter Dowling,

Nick Swain

(Published: *Federation of Australian Historical Societies Newsletter* January 2019, No. 46 pp. 7-9.)

When we nominate a place of cultural significance to a government body under a legislative act, we do so with the anticipation that the place will be afforded protection. When the government body accepts the nomination, recognises its heritage significance and inscribes the place on to a register of heritage places with legal protection, we gain a strong expectation that the place will be protected and conserved for our present and future generations. This is what the various state and territory heritage registers are for. But what happens when the protective mechanisms of the heritage act fail, and the place is unexpectedly destroyed? This is what has happened here in Canberra when two heritage significant trees displaying evidence of past Aboriginal cultural practices were deliberately felled. One was felled in 2017 and the other in 2018.

In June 1991, a small team of experts comprising two archaeologists, a botanist, an arborist and a member of the local Aboriginal community carried out a survey in one of Canberra's southern suburbs. They were examining the old growth eucalyptus trees which had survived the rural clearing of land and later the urban development. In the suburbs of Wanniasa and Kambah there are many of these trees scattered in what are now front yards, playgrounds, school yards, reserves and road verges. They are the remnants of a pre-European society. Some of the trees bear the scarring of deliberate bark removal, a long-standing practice by Aboriginal people who used the bark slabs for shields, coolamons, shelter and canoes. It was these trees that the small team were looking for. They identified a clustering of seventeen of these trees, recorded them and nominated them to a Commonwealth heritage register (the former Register of the National Estate). Later, following legislative changes, the trees were transferred to the ACT Heritage Places Register. The group of trees was also Classified by the ACT National Trust.

While each of the trees bearing the cultural marks left by the Aboriginal population are individually important enough to be inscribed on a heritage register, the team recognized that they were associated within a specific landscape formation. Each of the trees was located on the slopes above natural drainage lines which in the past flowed as ephemeral waterways

leading from the higher land into the Tuggeranong Valley and eventually into the Murrumbidgee River. The group also recognized that these drainage lines had been used by Aboriginal people as corridors as they moved in and out of the Tuggeranong Valley. They were the areas where it was easy to walk through the valley. On their way they would stop when needed and carefully remove bark from trees to build shelters, or coolamons to carry their infants or the equipment they needed. They expertly removed the bark slabs, just enough for what they needed, but not enough to kill the trees. The trees identified by the team in 1991, are the physical evidence of this cultural practice which with the settlement by Europeans now no longer exists. And it is this that makes these trees culturally and historically important in understanding the human past of Canberra.

So why were two trees deliberately chopped down when they had been on a heritage register for over twenty-five years? The trees were Blakley's Redgum (*Eucalyptus blakleyi*), a smooth bark tree common to the area. One tree, located, within the playing fields of a primary school, bore a 'shield' size scar and was a favourite of the young students who had learnt about its Aboriginal connection. Because it had a distorted trunk it also made a good climbing tree. The other tree, much larger, was located about one-hundred metres away in a small reserve and bore a large 'canoe' type scar. We have been unable to ascertain why they were cut down, perhaps it had something to do with health and safety reasons. But the real question to be asked is why were they not recognized as heritage listed trees by those responsible for cutting them down? This was the question that was put to the ACT Minister for Heritage.

An investigation by the Minister's Department concluded that it was not 'malicious activity' that resulted in the removal of trees, but rather a 'genuine and unintentional administrative error'. By whom has not been specified. However, the ACT Government has taken the issue seriously and at the time of writing were in the stage of 'ongoing investigations. So, what have we lost? We have lost two individual culturally important trees, both heritage listed. The Indigenous people of the ACT have lost more physical reminders of their culture. Archaeologically, we have seen a diminution in the marked trees as a complex marking the targeted use of this species of trees along a former communication corridor through the valleys of southern ACT. But also, importantly, we have lost confidence in the legislative processes and compliance to the Heritage Act in protecting our heritage places.

The removal of the trees is of serious concern to local indigenous groups as well as the National Trust (ACT) and the Canberra and District Historical Society. The unauthorised removal of these heritage trees raises serious issues about the adequacy of existing administrative mechanisms - clearly these mechanisms have failed, and the heritage loss has been significant. This situation could be seen as part of a wider malaise in heritage protection - poor and under resourced administration which, through lack of capacity and/or will to enforce heritage protections, results in the loss of the community's heritage. Much improved practical and fail-safe protections are needed, and it is the government's responsibility to implement such protections.

The protectors have simply failed to protect. An unfortunate and 'unintentional' error twice done, to be sure, but not ones that should be accepted by the public or those responsible.

(Dr Peter Dowling is an archaeologist and was part of the 'team' referred to in the text. He is a Council member of the Canberra & District Historical Society.

Nick Swain is the President of the Canberra & District Historical Society)



A heritage listed tree bearing an identified scar formed by the removal of bark by First Nation peoples, deliberately felled by an ACT Government body, Wanniasa, ACT. (Image P.Dowling 2019).



Letter Minister
Heritage trees.docx



Letter from minister
trees.pdf

Hill Station, Hume by Babette Scougall

Once again the old *Hill Station* homestead in the industrial estate of Hume is being neglected. As these photos show, the garden has already taken over. It has stood empty since 2009 when the last restaurant closed. It is privately owned and is up for sale.

According to an article in the *Southside Chronicle* of 20 May 2014 [a copy is held at the Society] the future of this heritage-listed homestead is at risk. Earlier this year, a prospective new owner appeared and plans were underway to transform the property into a one-stop wedding venue, including a dress shop and suit and hire car business. However, the offer to restore and maintain the buildings was withdrawn because of a clause in the lease contract, which required the lessee to not object to any development applications for the adjoining block of land. To make any business in this homestead viable, it needs to be surrounded by a compatible landscape setting, not hard up against workshops or warehouses.

In 2012, *Hill Station* was given heritage status as a significant example of a 19th and 20th century rural station with strong links to early settlement in the Canberra area, and also links to 20th century political figures. The property dates back to the earliest land grants in the district [1830s], a small slab building adjoining the homestead has been dated back to the 1860s and the pisé main dwelling back to 1912. Some of the trees and shrubs in the surrounding garden appear to be very old, possibly dating back to the same period.

For much of its early history *Hill Station* was simply an outstation of the larger *Woden* station, with only an overseer and convicts living there, consequently no large homestead was built. It wasn't until Alexander and Morton

McDonald inherited *Hill Station* on the death of their father [1908] that it became a working farm in its own right and a homestead built there a few years later. The original homestead is a rare example of rammed earth and has been enlarged and altered over many years, changing with each new owner. Examples of this kind of domestic rural living are now rare in the Territory.

The following timeline outlines the property's sequence of ownership, showing links to other grazing properties and people in the surrounding district, and also to prominent 20th century political figures. If any reader could add further details to this timeline please contact Helen Digan at the Society's rooms in Curtin (email: admin@canberrahistory.org.au).

1832 - Francis Mowatt was granted Lot 12 [of 2650 acres], Parish of Queanbeyan, County of Murray. It was the first land grant in this area. He called his property *Jerrabomberra*. The *Hill Station* land was part of this 2650-acre grant, but it was run as an unnamed outstation.

1837-56 - Sold to Dr James F. Murray who renamed the property *Woden*. He died in 1856, possibly leaving it to his brother Terrence Murray of *Winderadeen*.

1857 - *Woden* was sold to Thomas Rutledge. Luke Culverwell of Queanbeyan was tenant.

1858 - Charles and Martin Byrne acquired *Woden* and probably the still unnamed outstation. They bought an extra 1270 acres. [Mary Byrne aged 14 died at *Woden* 1868.]

18?? - Sold to Frederick Arthur Campbell.

c1862 - Date given to the old slab dwelling on *Hill Station*. In Val Emerton's book, *Past Images, Present Voices*, one of her interviewees, Bob Norgrove, said that the old slab house

Attachment 5



The appalling state of Hill Station, Hume
(Photos: Babette Scougall, 2014)



had been shifted from *Tralea* land [where airstrip is now] to *Hill Station*.

1871-90 - George Thomas Campbell ran *Woden* together with Duntroon.

189?-1908 - John McDonald of *Uriarra Station* owned *Woden*.

1908 - John McDonald died, leaving the *Hill Station* part of his large estate to two of his sons, Alexander and Morton. The land they inherited included part of what is now *Tralea*.

1912 - Gilbert McInnes built the pisé homestead for A. & M. McDonald. Meat-house built about the same time.

1914 - Alexander McDonald took out a 14-year lease on *Mugga Mugga*. Extra land.

1918 - McDonald brothers sell to Hilary Blyth. They are there until 1920, then moved to the Gilgandra district.

1920s - Garage built.

1924 - *Hill Station* [still freehold] put up for sale by Hilary H. Blyth. Land now subdivided into 6 blocks, totalling 4,700 acres.

1924 - *Hill Station* sold to James Heaton of Gurrundah.

1925 - Compulsory acquisition by Commonwealth Government. *Hill Station* land lies across ACT/NSW boundary.

1925 - The ACT blocks are now leasehold and known as *Woden* 155 of 343 acres.

1925 - Leases *Woden* 155 and *Lanyon* 11 transferred from Mrs Amy Gwendoline Halloran [wife of Henry Halloran] to Thomas Henry Tyson.

- Not everything in good working order. Lease conditions tougher. All repairs and maintenance to be at lessee's expense.

1929 - New lease of *Woden* 155, *Lanyon* 11 & 11a transferred to Sir Henry Gullett. He wrote Volume 7 of *Official War History* [WW1] while here.

1932 - Part of *Woden* 155 [13 acres 2 roods] containing homestead and outbuildings made a separate lease. Lands of 155 and 11 now a separate 1412 acre lease.

1933 - New separate 25-year leases. Lessee had to purchase all improvements [homesteads, outbuildings, fences etc.]

1934 - Gullett sells to Robert and Catherine Corkhill of Riverview, who graze their stock at *Hill Station* but do

not live there. [August 1940, Sir Henry Gullett dies in air crash at Fairbairn.]

1944 - Small section of boundary land to Morrison of *Tralea*.

1944 - *Hill Station* homestead on 412 acres of land leased by James William [Bill] Prowse. 2044 acres of land kept by Corkhill.

1945 - Timber permits granted to Bellchambers, Ross and Doyle. Lease to be reappraised in 1951 [expires 1958].

1950 - Bertrand Russell visits *Hill Station*.

1950 - Lease of *Hill Station* transferred to Ruth Antill Fairbairn of *Dunravin*, Holbrook. Prowse brothers purchase *Big Tinderry*.

1952 - Much of *Hill Station* burnt during January bushfire [timber building mainly].

1954 - Fairbairn's added a new kitchen and bathroom. Homestead consists of 6 timber rooms and 6 pisé rooms with adjoining kitchen, plus separate slab hut and brick bathroom.

1956 - Lease transferred to Richard and Cynthia Hyles. 408 acres lease for 50 years from 1 January 1956. Possibly also leased by their daughter.

1970s - Rural leases withdrawn. Hume Industrial Estate established. *Hill Station* offered as a site office. Declined. Homestead occupied by a group of young people. Vandalised. Theft of internal fittings. Homestead offered to a ranger, who declined. Water cut off.

1970s - Department looking for an approved association to take over property. Advertised homestead for community use. Interested parties include: Blue Folk Community Arts Association, Historical Society, National Trust, Tuggeranong Amateur Players, Pegasus, ACT Nudist Club, Girl Guides, and others. No takers.

1978 - Advertised as a Restaurant, Tavern and Residence for lease for 50

years. Purchaser has to restore and maintain at own expense.

1980s - Ian Black restored neglected homestead and opened restaurant in December 1980.

1990 - Paul Smith & Derek Lyall took over restaurant. Closed 1993. Claimed tenancy terms made it impossible.

1993 - Brian & Judy Williams of Sydney purchased *Hill Station*.

1995 - Karin Kennedy and family purchased *Hill Station*.

1997-2009 - Mrs Lydia Kirkinen & husband, Keijo Kirkinen of Domain Constructions take over *Hill Station*.

2014 - Presently leased by Hume Vision P/Ltd [Tony Commisso, co-director and secretary]. *This once lovely pastoral home is again vacant, neglected and deteriorating.*

A query, privately forwarded to the ACT Heritage Unit, Environment & Planning Directorate, regarding the condition of *Hill Station*, received this response:

Hill Station is privately owned and, as such, its maintenance and care is the responsibility of the owners. ACT Heritage administers the ACT Heritage Grants program and has discussed the possibility of heritage grants with prospective purchasers of *Hill Station*.

ACT Heritage understands that the restriction on commenting on development applications on the adjoining block of land was part of the contract of sale from Hume Vision Pty Ltd who also own the adjoining block of land.

ACT Heritage is also concerned about the condition of *Hill Station* and looks forward to the opportunity to assist either the current or future owners with the conservation of this place.

Heritage v Value Capture.

This extract from a *Canberra Times* article provides a succinct summary of some of the issues involved in preserving significant heritage in the face of strong development pressures, lack of creative solutions and deliberate neglect.

The Canberra Times

Bauhaus architecture buff Martin Miles mourns Northbourne redevelopment

By Primrose Riordan

Updated April 23 2018 - 9:57pm, first published June 7 2014 - 7:32pm

Mid-century architecture archivist and museum staffer Martin Miles is standing by his love of the Bauhaus-inspired flats along the Northbourne corridor that are destined for redevelopment under the ACT government's light rail plans.

Mr Miles said the Northbourne Housing Group and the Allawah, Bega and Currong flats in Braddon "are run down and sit on valuable inner-city land, so it's just a matter of time". He said it was "a great pity that, of the really quite small number of such places, we don't seem to have the imagination to do something with them".



Martin Miles, a champion of Canberra's heritage architecture, bemoans the fate of the Bauhaus-style Northbourne flats, which will be knocked down under the light rail redevelopment. Photo: Elesa Kurtz

The flats sit along the Northbourne Avenue corridor in the area set to be declared a special precinct to allow the Capital Metro rail link from Gungahlin to the city to go through.

Designed by Ancher, Mortlock and Murray for the National Capital Development Commission in 1959, the Northbourne Housing Group was built in 1962.

On his website, Mr Miles, who does not live in a heritage building, writes that the flats were "Canberra's and probably Australia's first and only true example of the rationale of the Bauhaus principles used for public housing".

END CANBERRA TIMES ARTICLE

The Heritage Council was keen to place the whole precinct on the ACT Heritage Register. However other parts of government saw this as locking up a valuable piece of real estate that would provide extensive value capture to help fund the Light Rail project.

There were ongoing negotiations and eventually an agreement was reached to place on the ACT Heritage Register a representative sample of dwellings. More information, including maps of the whole precinct and the representative sample, can be found at:

[https://www.environment.act.gov.au/ data/assets/pdf file/0007/798901/Norrbourne-Housing-Precinct-Representative-Sample-Background-Information-November-2015.pdf](https://www.environment.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/798901/Norrbourne-Housing-Precinct-Representative-Sample-Background-Information-November-2015.pdf)