



# **Robyn Parker MP**

## **Minister for the Environment**

## **Minister for Heritage**

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Tuesday, 25 March 2014

#### **STATE HERITAGE LISTING FOR RENWICK STATE WARD HOME**

The Renwick State Ward Home (also known as Challoner Cottage), part of the former Mittagong Farm Home, will be placed on the NSW Heritage Register, Heritage Minister Robyn Parker announced today.

Goulburn MP Pru Goward, Kiama MP Gareth Ward and Wollondilly MP Jai Rowell welcomed the announcement.

Ms Parker said the home has social and historical significance for the State, with numerous former residents having deep emotional connections to the site.

“Renwick State Ward Home is a key element in the chronological development of major state-run child welfare institution in NSW. It was the first building at Mittagong Farm Home to be designed by the Government Architect’s office and was completed in 1941,” Ms Parker said.

“It is typical of the modernist architectural design approach to accommodation for institutionalised children in the mid-twentieth century.

Ms Goward said thanks to its size and unusual architectural style, the building and its landscaped setting has landmark qualities.

“In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were several large institutions operating as orphanages and reform schools in NSW,” Ms Goward said.

“In the 1870s, Judge Windeyer headed a Royal Commission on Public Charities; its two reports of 1873 and 1874 advocated a ‘boarding-out’ system (similar in many ways to modern foster care) rather than the large orphanages of the day.

“However, some children were considered to need different forms of care and Dr Arthur Renwick, Chair of the State Children’s Relief Board advocated for special cottages to be established for these children.”

Mr Rowell said what followed was the formation of four ‘cottage homes’, early in 1885, two at Pennant Hills and one each at Picton and Mittagong.

“Mittagong Farm Home soon became a popular place to send unwell children as it provided a healthy country environment which was ideal for convalescing. By 1919, there were 230 children, some going to school and others involved in farm training programs,” Mr Rowell said.

Mr Ward said Renwick State Ward Home, one of approximately a dozen cottages on the Mittagong Farm Home site, was opened in the early 1940s and provided dormitory style accommodation for state wards and children who had been removed from their families.

“It was used as a home up until 1994, when Mittagong Farm Home was closed,” Mr Ward said.

“Inclusion on the State Heritage Register ensures that the future management of Renwick State Ward Home is supported with advice from the State’s leading heritage organisation, the Heritage Council of NSW.”

Ms Parker also recognised the role of the Renwick Association in seeking the listing.

“The commitment of the Renwick Association, and particularly its President Ms Leeallison Downie, to recognising this significant part of our State’s heritage is acknowledged and congratulated,” Ms Parker said.