In March this year the Heritage Office was incorporated into the Department of Planning as part of a reorganisation of the NSW public service. This will allow us to better coordinate our planning work, with important heritage issues, in a consistent way.

I have already worked closely with the Heritage Office on a number of important matters, including the listing of Braidwood and its surrounds on the State Heritage Register. This was a landmark decision, making Braidwood the first town on the east coast of Australia to be listed.

I was also pleased to exercise a rare legal provision to protect one of Sydney’s significant archaeological sites – the remains of an early 19th century stone cellar and 1790s convict hut in Parramatta.

We have plenty more to achieve this year and I look forward to seeing the State’s heritage and planning experts working side-by-side. This includes the Heritage Council Chair, Michael Collins, and Heritage Office Executive Director, Reece McDougall.

The Department and the Heritage Office now have a combined responsibility to manage the State’s heritage and I know they recognise the challenge ahead.

In particular, the Heritage Office will continue its critical role in developing the State Heritage Register, as well as heritage conservation, incentives and education and promotion. The Heritage Office will remain in its current building at Parramatta and retain its logo and website.
A message from the Chair

Minister Frank Sartor has begun his stewardship of the State’s heritage in fine style with the recent listing of the Rathmines WWII seaplane base and the town of Braidwood in its rural setting. Both listings reflect the increasing sophistication of the listing process. It is no longer sufficient to list individual buildings, but also to consider their curtilage and setting. We now acknowledge that buildings are but one element in a landscape that provides complex and multi-layered evidence of industry and individual lives.

I am particularly pleased that we are also increasingly recognising the major contribution made by government organisations to the history of New South Wales. In recent years the Health portfolio has made some major contributions to the State Heritage Register with the listing of Prince Henry and Kenmore Hospitals. In this newsletter we feature the latest addition, the former Lidcombe Hospital’s heritage precinct. Other nominations are being prepared for the Minister’s consideration.

The increase in listings brings with it an increase of activity in the Heritage Council’s role as a consent authority for major changes to these items. I am convinced that we undertake this role with a sense of great responsibility towards the heritage items we have recommended for listing. And there is also an increasing respect for the growing sophistication of development companies who have accepted the challenges of adapting these historically significant places for new roles in the modern world.

Michael Collins
Chair of the Heritage Council

Sydney Opera House
Nominated for World Heritage List

Australia has nominated the Sydney Opera House for listing on the World Heritage List. The Heritage Office managed the nomination in collaboration with the Australian Department of the Environment and Heritage.

The nomination was delivered to UNESCO in Paris in January. It focuses on the Sydney Opera House site as a masterpiece of creative endeavour and an architectural icon. The nomination includes the creation of a World Heritage Buffer Zone that protects the setting of the Sydney Opera House and the principal views to and from it.

The nomination is currently being evaluated by the World Heritage Bureau. Once it has been evaluated, it is up to the intergovernmental World Heritage Committee to make the final decision. The committee meets once a year to decide which sites will be inscribed on the World Heritage List.

To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one out of ten selection criteria. Australia currently has 16 sites on the list. The Royal Exhibition Building, listed in July 2004, is the only building in Australia on the World Heritage List. The results of Australia’s nomination of the Sydney Opera House will be known in July 2007.

World heritage sites listed in NSW are the Willandra Lakes Region (1981), Lord Howe Island Group (1982), Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves (1986, 1994) and Greater Blue Mountains Area (2000).

The nomination can be downloaded from the Heritage Office website, or a full colour printed copy can be purchased on (02) 9873 8500.

New arrangements for Heritage Office

On the 3 March 2006 the Heritage Office became a division of the Department of Planning.

On welcoming the Heritage Office, the Director General of Planning, Sam Haddad, said, “The merger provides us with a valuable opportunity to achieve better outcomes through improving the integration of heritage and conservation management into our planning system.”

We look forward to continuing our work with communities to conserve the heritage of NSW within the new arrangements.

The Heritage Office will continue to operate from its headquarters at Marist Place, Parramatta, and contact details remain the same.

Director of the Heritage Office, Susan Macdonald (project director), and Dr Bronwyn Hanna (project manager) with the completed nomination at its official send off at the Sydney Opera House in January.

Photograph by Bronwyn Hanna.
Braidwood: First Town Listed on Register

The town of Braidwood and its surrounds have been listed on the State Heritage Register, the first town of the east coast of Australia to be recognised in this way.

Planning Minister, Frank Sartor, and Member for Monaro, Steve Whan, visited the town for the announcement, saying its iconic status would help to boost tourism and local jobs.

“Braidwood is a rare surviving example of Georgian period town planning,” Mr Sartor said.

“I am happy to list the town, which will guarantee that its unique character is retained. We have struck a balanced decision, to allow heritage to underpin the town’s prosperity”.

Significantly Braidwood’s setting was an important part of the listing. The town retains its views to the surrounding pastoral landscapes demonstrating the original pattern of settlement.

The Minister for Planning, Frank Sartor, issued the following statement on the historic gazettel of the town of Braidwood:

Walking through the streets of Braidwood, you can literally see into the past.

The historic buildings are well preserved, including the Commercial Hotel, the Court House and St Bede’s Roman Catholic Church.

From its early settler years, Braidwood grew to a thriving township, attracting graziers and bushrangers and experiencing the turbulent years of the gold rush.

The State Government’s decision to list Braidwood on the State Heritage Register is a formal recognition of the town’s special significance in our history.

In fact, it is the first town on the east coast of Australia to be recognised in this way.

Other remarkable Australian sites also listed on state heritage registers include the mining village of Hall, in the ACT; the Mt Torrens village in South Australia; Broome Chinatown in Western Australia and the famous Mawson Station in the Antarctic.

Importantly, the State Government’s commitment to protecting the past will be balanced with our plans for the town’s future.

We have developed a strategy to ensure the arrangement is flexible and supports the town’s economic growth and prosperity.

As Minister for Planning, I recognise that Braidwood needs to continue to grow – to support jobs, families and local businesses.

The heritage listing ensures that everyday development can continue without delay, through the normal Palerang Council processes.

More significant development can also be undertaken where it’s demonstrated that it doesn’t affect the town’s unique heritage characteristics.

The Heritage Office will work with Palerang Council on these issues.

A comprehensive package of exemptions to the heritage listing includes:

- current development approvals;
- development applications currently with Palerang Council that have been considered by the Heritage Office;
- any heritage agreement between the Minister and the landholder.

Finally, the heritage listing will become an important tourism drawcard for local businesses.

Thousands of visitors already come to Braidwood each year, to enjoy its food, festivals, gardens and goldmining history. Now they will come to see the first heritage-listed town on the east coast.

A long-term, healthy tourism industry will underpin the town’s future.

So I am happy to support this heritage listing, which has set Braidwood on a unique course for the early 21st century.

While the listing preserves the past, it is flexible and practical to protect the town’s economic development.


Home of Flying Boats Listed

Rathmines Park, the largest RAAF flying boat base in the southern hemisphere during World War II, was listed on the State Heritage Register late last year.

The NSW Minister for Planning, Frank Sartor was at the flying boat base to announce the new honour to the 220 World War II veterans and descendants and hundreds of local enthusiasts who had gathered to celebrate the listing. The highlight of the event was an honorary fly past by a Catalina based in Albion Park.

The Catalina flying boats and their crews were involved in important World War II events. The seaplanes were used to conduct military operations such as reconnaissance bombing, minelaying, troop supply and air-sea rescues.

Leading the veterans at Rathmines to celebrate the listing was Sir Richard Kingsland, a former Commanding Officer of No. 20 SQN. Speaking to Air Force News, Sir Richard said,

“I am proud to join the celebration that Rathmines Park and its remaining buildings are to be protected, so future generations can learn about the important contribution the men and women stationed here made during the war.”

The 61-hectare site was purchased by Lake Macquarie Council in 1963 and most of the site has since been used as a public park.

At Rathmines Park to announce its listing on the State Heritage Register were the Hon. Frank Sartor MP and former Commanding Officer, Sir Richard Kingsland AO CBE DFC.

Photograph courtesy of Lake Macquarie News.
Showground grandstands, steam boats, cemeteries, pastoral estates – even a hermit’s cave – are among the projects to receive first-round funding under the NSW Government’s Heritage Incentives Program.

Minister for Planning, Frank Sartor, announced this month $2.73 million in grants and loans for 92 heritage projects, under the 2006-2008 Heritage Incentives Program. “This is about helping local communities to take a practical and hands-on approach to preserving their history,” Mr Sartor said.

“The grants and loans go to local councils and heritage groups, which provide matching funding. “This package is expected to generate an estimated $10 million in new conservation work. All this work helps to renew the confidence and local pride of rural and metropolitan communities.

“Each dollar which the NSW Government invests in heritage conservation helps to boost tourism and rural and regional jobs.”

Mr Sartor said rural towns received nearly three-quarters of the conservation works funding, for community, local government and privately-owned projects.

“This year, we have expanded the program to include funding for interpretation projects, fundraising appeals and funding for works projects based on owners’ land tax and local rates expenditure,” Mr Sartor said.

“Preserving our heritage is vital to show future generations where we came from. “Australians place a high value on their heritage, including the historical buildings that define a community’s character and identity.

“I am proud that we are helping communities to protect the past, as an investment for future generations.”

A total of $5.4 million is available under the 2006-2008 Heritage Incentives Program.

A full list of the 92 projects to receive Heritage Incentives funding is available from the Heritage Office website at www.heritage.nsw.gov.au

Heritage Incentives Program

$5.4 million for heritage projects in NSW

Photographs clockwise from top:
White Motor Bus 1926 – Courtesy of R. Robinson; Aberglasslyn – Courtesy of Jill Dobler; 1909 pipe organ at Trinity Uniting Church, Strathfield – Courtesy of Strathfield-Homestay Uniting Church; Broken Hill Synagogue – Courtesy of Broken Hill Historical Society; St Hilaire Homestead, Albury – Courtesy of Catherine O’Neill; Quong Sin Tong Monument, Rockwood Cemetery – Courtesy of General Cemetery Necropolis Trust; St John the Baptist Anglican Church, Mudgee – Courtesy of B. J. Hickson; Ayrdale Stables, Ayrdale Dairy Village – Courtesy of Charles Mueller.
Wiradjuri sites honoured

One grave is marked by a stand of carved trees and a marble headstone, the other by a stone axe and a scatter of new trees. Both these burial sites, located in rural NSW, honour the memories of important Wiradjuri men. Now their significance for the whole of NSW has been recognised by their listing on the State Heritage Register.

The Wiradjuri people are one of the largest groups of Aboriginal people in NSW. The Wiradjuri area traditionally covered about one third of NSW. Across these lands the Wiradjuri would carve symbols into living trees adjacent to burial sites to mark respect for an important person.

Today there are very few places where examples of this practice can be seen. It is known to have been carried out, according to the traditional custom, at the grave of Windradyne, a great warrior and leader who was buried near Sofala. And near Molong the burial site of Yuranigh, who guided and befriended explorer Major Mitchell, was commemorated with carved trees.

Yuranigh’s trees can still be seen, the oldest and most numerous carved trees around a grave that are known to exist in NSW. In March this year these highly significant sites were added to the State Heritage Register. Chair of the Heritage Council, Michael Collins, said “These are the first Aboriginal burial sites to be added to the register. The listing of the graves is a tribute to these honoured men, as well as recognition of the importance of these places to Aboriginal people and the history of our State.”

The story of the warrior Windradyne is well known in central NSW. Windradyne was a young Wiradjuri man known for his strength and hunting skill. In 1824 he was thrust into the centre of increasingly violent contact between two cultures when he witnessed the murder of his family on the banks of the Macquarie River.

After the massacre Windradyne resisted white settlers and emerged as a leader and inspiration for Aboriginal people during a period of martial law in the Bathurst region. Supported by other warriors, Windradyne’s campaign for justice led him to a property called Brucedale. However, in this instance, a local settler named William Suttor, who had learnt the Wiradjuri dialect, was able to defuse the situation.

Windradyne and 18-year old William Suttor remained friends and when Windradyne died eleven years later from wounds received in a fight, he was buried on Brucedale. He was given a Wiradjuri burial by his people. He was placed sitting up facing the rising sun, wrapped in his possum skin cloak with all his weapons beside him. Several trees were carved to mark out the grave, but these no longer survive today.

A rare combination of European and Aboriginal traditions mark the grave of Yuranigh, located near Molong. Yuranigh acted as a guide on Major Mitchell’s famous last north-west expedition and gained respect for his knowledge of bush law and ability to negotiate with other Aboriginal tribal groups through whose land the party journeyed. In his journal Mitchell described Yuranigh as his “guide, companion, counsellor and friend”.

On 13 July 1850 Mitchell learnt of Yuranigh’s death at the old Gamboola Station, near Molong, and requested that the NSW Government erect a memorial headstone. Along with the four carved trees that face the grave, these markers of respect from both Aboriginal and European traditions provide evidence of cultural contact and different attitudes to death and remembrance.

The meeting of the two cultures physically represented in this one burial site shows the respect in which Yuranigh was held by both Aboriginal people and settlers.

Other Aboriginal sites on the State Heritage Register include the Brewarrina fish traps, Hill 60 at Port Kembla and the Burra Bee Dee mission site near Coonabarabran.
Historical Archaeology

Saving Relics of Mittagong’s Iron Age

It seems an unlikely place to discover Australia’s beginnings as an industrialised nation, but the new Woolworth’s development at Mittagong will be integrating some of the earliest surviving remains of iron works in Australia.

Woolworth’s role in conserving the nation’s history began when archaeological remains from Australia’s first iron smelter were discovered on the site chosen for the company’s new “Mittagong Market” in NSW’s southern highlands.

Extensive research by Mittagong historians, Leah Day and Tim McCartney, indicated that the chosen site was the original location of the Fitzroy Iron Mining Company formed in 1851. Iron had been found in the area almost 20 years earlier, but the construction of the iron works marked the first commercial smelting of native ore in Australia.

This posed the question: were there likely to be relics still underground? An interim heritage order and two archaeological excavations by Sydney-based firm Godden Mackay Logan turned up some exciting answers.

Extensive relics from the original works were unearthed, including foundations from the iron rolling mills and an associated fly/drive wheel pit; timber dampeners for a tilt hammer, which was used in forging; puddling furnaces, which were used to produce wrought iron; and a number of chimney bases and boiler houses. Together these remains show that with commercial smelting of native ore, the colony had taken its first steps along the path to industry.

Until last year’s discoveries the earliest surviving foundations of the Fitzroy Iron Works were thought to be those of a second processing plant – constructed by the company in 1863-65 about 1km to the east of the original site – commemorated in a public reserve in Mittagong called Iron Mines Oval.

The new discoveries created much interest in the community which was keen to see its industrial heritage conserved. Despite a rainy day, over 200 people came to see the exposed remains at a public open day held by Woolworths in November last year.

The Heritage Office had a number of discussions with Woolworths Limited, the archaeological consultants Godden Mackay Logan and Wingecarribee Shire Council to discuss the future of the site. Working together, the corporate sector and heritage industry has come up with a solution that will see one of Australia’s key industrial sites conserved and managed for the long term benefit of the community.

Woolworths has agreed to integrate the discoveries into the development of the site. In doing so, it will forgo about sixty car spaces to accommodate the relics in a permanent display space, approximately 40 metres by 45 metres, within the underground car park of the Mittagong Marketplace.

They will be conserved ‘in-situ’ and protected during the construction period. Displays will be erected to help people understand the significance of the relics, which will be on permanent view, once the development is completed.

A spokesperson for Woolworths said the company is committed to working with the Mittagong community and the Heritage Office to help conserve the history of the site.

A stone cottage at 185 Old Hume Highway, constructed in the mid-1860s, is the only free-standing building remaining on the former iron works site. This is not part of the Woolworths development. The owner has plans for the cottage to be conserved and for its early history to be interpreted in a way that dovetails with the interpretation at the Mittagong Marketplace.

The Heritage Office is now preparing a nomination of the Fitzroy Iron Works complex, including the Woolworths archaeological site, for listing on the State Heritage Register.

By Elaine Stewart

Left: This 1869 etching shows the former tilt hammer at the Fitzroy Iron Works. The Illustrated Sydney News, 18 February 1869, courtesy of the State Reference Library, State Library of NSW.

Below: Tilt hammer and rolling mills from a similar viewpoint looking east. Timber remains in the bottom of the large pit appear to be vibration dampeners for the tilt hammer. Photograph by Anne Mackay.
The changing fortunes of Lidcombe Hospital

For 102 years Lidcombe Hospital and its predecessor institutions served the destitute, elderly and sick. The buildings, the landscape and their evolution over the years reflect changing medical practices over that time.

In 1878 the NSW Government purchased 1340 acres of land at Rookwood, following the development of land around the Sydney to Parramatta railway line. Five years later the government decided to use part of the land for a Boys Reformatory and Model Farm to provide a separate institution for children who were socially disadvantaged, and those involved in criminal activities. The reformatory, which was built but never opened because of a change of government, was designed by Colonial Architect, James Barnet. It included a farm, orchard and vegetable garden.

From 1893 the site became the home of the Rookwood Asylum for the Aged and Infirm to help relieve overcrowding at the Macquarie Street and George Street Asylums in Parramatta. Just a few years later it became the main state asylum for aged men. Accommodation was also added for healthy but destitute men. While administration of this facility was considered enlightened compared to other asylums of the day, the Sunday Times report of 16 February 1896 painted a bleak picture of asylums in general:

It certainly would be a great blessing to poor old people to be at liberty and obtain the pure air instead of being cooped up in these asylums as at present, where they dare not speak, no matter how they are treated….

During the 1890s and early 1900s new pavilion wards were added adjacent to the reformatory to a design provided by the Government Architect Walter Liberty Vernon. This created a central open area dubbed the ‘village green’, providing fresh air and a place for recreation for residents and staff.

Vernon also designed the 1911 home for nurses on the site, which is possibly the oldest purpose-built nurse’s home in Australia.

This bittersweet ode may attest to the fate of some of the former inmates of Lidcombe Hospital but at least it is not the fate of the hospital today. Last month its heritage precinct was listed on the State Heritage Register so that future generations will remember and understand this historic place.

Forgotten soon, thought of no more,
Gone like a passing cloud;
No one to grieve, no one to mourn,
Not missed amidst the crowd;
And others soon will follow him,
For them no one to sorrow,
Remembered only while with us,
Forgotten on the morrow.

Former inmate of Lidcombe Hospital
In 1913 the institution became the Rookwood State Hospital and Home for men. With over 1400 ‘inmates’ it was the largest institution of its kind in Australia. It was also a centre for infectious diseases and in 1919 treated people during the influenza pandemic. By this time the site was 755 acres in size and was providing the inmates (and other institutions) with fresh produce.

In 1929 the asylum became the Lidcombe State Hospital and Home and had 1720 patients. The hospital was treating patients with tuberculosis, surgical cases from military bases, patients with venereal disease, as well as patients transferred to it because of hospital closures. By 1938 the hospital had 1895 patients.

In the early 1950s the hospital’s focus shifted to aged care – around 1957 there were extensive repairs and renovations to the hospital, as well as the addition of new wards, dormitories and kitchens.

With the addition of a nursing school in 1967 Lidcombe developed into a specialist geriatric hospital with special emphasis on activity and rehabilitation therapy. The hospital also became a teaching institution

Interestingly, in the 1960s a practice dubbed ‘underage musters’ was still being carried out in the home section of the hospital. ‘Musters’ were common in the late nineteenth century in asylums to relieve overcrowding. They referred to the practice of periodically discharging younger able bodied men and restricting admissions to the totally infirm.


From 1973 however, geriatric care was being integrated into the community and away from specialised institutions. This trend ultimately led to the closure of the institution in 1995.

The site was later modified in readiness for its use by about 5000 representatives of the international media at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.

In 2002 the NSW Government sold the present site, which is 44 hectares, to Australand.

Both the local community and Australand have supported listing the historic precinct on the State Heritage Register.

A significant core of the original hospital is included in the listing and includes historic roadways, hospital buildings from all decades up to, and including, the 1960s and the most significant landscape features, including the village green.

Raema Walker, Secretary of the Lidcombe Heritage Group, which had lobbied to retain the hospital said she was pleased that the heritage significance of the oldest buildings on the site and the village green had been recognised.

Raema worked in administration at the hospital for ten years from 1967-77 and has fond memories of her time there.

‘We would have liked to retain the entire hospital as an aged care facility for the community but this outcome is really the best we could have hoped for, considering all the later buildings have been demolished for a housing development,’ she said.

‘The original entry with gatehouse has just been reopened after landscaping and looks lovely.

‘The security measures put in place by Australand have really helped to protect the heritage precinct,’ Raema said.

Australand is proposing to adapt the heritage precinct for new uses. These will be assessed by the Heritage Council and Auburn Council.

A gala day at the bowling green in 1931. Part of the village green at the hospital was used by residents and staff for lawn bowls competitions.

Photograph courtesy of the Lidcombe Heritage Group.

Two other hospitals designed by Walter Liberty Vernon have also recently been added to the State Heritage Register: Bloomfield Hospital at Orange and Kenmore Psychiatric Hospital at Goulburn.

By Elaine Stewart

Left: The Lidcombe Hospital precinct has been listed on the State Heritage Register. View towards Ward 20.

Photograph by Claudine Loffi.

Ward 6 at Lidcombe Hospital viewed across the village green.

Photograph by Claudine Loffi.

Nurses at Lidcombe Hospital in the 1950s. The buildings in the background are pavilion wards designed by Walter Liberty Vernon, which were added in the 1890s and early 1900s.

Photograph courtesy of the Lidcombe Heritage Group.
Meet NSW’s Heritage Heroes

The dedicated volunteers behind some of the State’s most innovative heritage projects were honoured last year at a ceremony at Parliament House. The Hon. Frank Sartor MP, Minister for Planning, presented 27 NSW Heritage Volunteer Awards to people and groups across NSW for their work in conserving our rich cultural history.

**John Alker-Jones** is committed to conserving and promoting the heritage of the border area near Albury. He has been a driving force behind the development of a commemorative centre at Block 19, a remnant of the Bonegilla Reception and Training Centre in Victoria which was the first home for many post-war immigrants.

**Viola Brown and Carol Ridgeway Bissett** are members of the Maaiangal clan of the Worimi Aboriginal community. As custodians of the Worimi lands, the sisters have worked extensively with Port Stephens Council, encouraging staff to work in partnership with Aboriginal people on environmental and heritage issues.

**Jack Delaney** has dedicated the past 30 years to researching and documenting the history of the Hunter. He has recorded 497 oral history interviews to capture this area’s mining heritage, a valuable collection now housed at the Newcastle Regional Museum. Jack has also published widely on the history of the area.

**Friends of Old Moama** were formed less than two years ago but have already notched up a success with the saving of the Old Telegraph Station from demolition. Now the volunteers hold monthly open days and tours of this historic 1840s building.

**Kevin and Dorothy Gillis** share a passionate interest in the heritage of the Illawarra and Shellharbour region and raise awareness through their research, education, conservation projects and leadership of the Tongarra Heritage Society. Kevin has prepared 12 nominations for the State Heritage Register, a mammoth achievement in its own right.

**Professor John Glastonbury AM** has steered 3801 Limited to a remarkable success story. The company is held in high regard by the heritage movement, professional rail organisations and the general public. Through his chairmanship, patronage of the Australian Railways Historical Society and his position on boards and committees, John has brought professionalism and enthusiasm into the rail heritage movement.

**Glen Innes and District Historical Society** took over the lease of the old Glen Innes Hospital in 1968. Their efforts have not only ensured the survival of a major heritage item – which is now on the State Heritage Register – and a significant regional museum, but preserved a remarkable collection of historical artefacts and documents.

**Colleen Godsell’s** energy, motivation and determination have guided the campaign that raised over $200,000 and saved “The Barn” in Mosman. This heritage-listed stone building is Sydney’s only remaining maritime industrial structure dating from the early colonial period and the oldest building on the lower North Shore.
George Gyorfi’s keen interest in archaeology led him to establish the Nepean District Historical Archaeology Group in 1978. The work of this group is almost unique in NSW and they have prepared over 100 reports on local sites. For the past decade they have focussed on the area of the Penrith Lakes Scheme.

Cathy Jones’s interest in the built and social heritage of Strathfield is not surprising with her family’s links to the district dating back to the 1880s. She has made an enormous contribution to historical research and heritage-related activities in Strathfield.

Marion McCarthy has dedicated 20 years membership and service to the National Trust of Australia (NSW). She is perhaps best known as the face of Cooma Cottage, the National Trust property at Yass, and has been a guide there since it officially opened in 1988.

Marion McGuirk is the driving force behind the Toongabbie and District Historical Society and their achievements in researching, compiling and indexing historical records. Her research has resulted in several publications, most notably The Battle of Vinegar Hill – Our Pioneers.

Neville Merritt is a Gamilaraay man from Gilgandra and a tireless advocate for the conservation, promotion and protection of Aboriginal heritage. He was the driving force behind a Department of Environment and Conservation initiative known as the King Togee Project, that pays respect to a great leader of the local Butheroe Aboriginal people.

Miliapinka Heritage and Tourist Association have transformed the small town of Miliapinka in the far north west of NSW. This small but hardy band of volunteers rallied to save this outback town from oblivion, and in doing so saved its most significant heritage buildings as well as creating a near self-sustainable tourist attraction.

Graham Nelson has a passion for the conservation of the convict built road in the Mangrove Creek area. He played a major role in the discovery and clearing of Simpson’s Track, a major convict built road dating back to the 1830s and a branch of the Great North Road.

Brenda Niccol has devoted her life to the heritage of the Nepean region. Her greatest contribution has been as a volunteer worker, archivist and adviser on the life, work and residence of the distinguished 20th century artists, Margo and Gerald Lewers.

Ian Nowland has a genuine love of colonial history, perhaps partly explained by family links as a direct descendant of Government Farm, which he now proudly oversees as part of a community committee. He is also the current President of the Hills District Historical Society.

Patricia O’Brien is well known in the Holroyd area for her role in the Friends of Linnwood and Friends of Mays Hill Cemetery. In 2005 she launched Unmarked Graves in Western Road Cemetery Mays Hill, a legacy of ten years exhaustive research. Patricia had a pivotal role in the Save Linnwood Campaign.

Trevor Pascoe has been President of the Millthorpe and District Historical Society and Museum for 16 years. Trevor is an innovator and a motivator, driving the developments of the Golden Memories Museum which preserves the heritage of the district.

Peter and June Poland together form a formidable heritage team – particularly in their campaign to preserve heritage sites in the Woollahra area. For 25 years June’s efforts have ensured that heritage issues remain at the forefront of the community’s attention. Peter has received international recognition for his detailed historical research into George Rose, after whom Rose Bay was named.

Janet Tate was one of the first volunteer guides at Vaucluse House 24 years ago. She is the co-ordinator and spokesperson for the Vaucluse House Volunteer Guides Group and has assisted the Historic Houses Trust in developing its volunteer policies.

Uralia Historical Society members are affectionately known as “the mob at McCrossin’s Mill”. Over the past 25 years they have initiated and sustained an extraordinary commitment to heritage conservation. Their most recent project was the 1881 McCrossin’s chaff shed.

Jeanette Wilson is a descendant of one of the Warialda district’s pioneering families. She has spent endless hours researching the history of her family and other pioneers. She has compiled a comprehensive photographic collection and her research has benefited the whole community.

Royal Botanic Gardens Volunteer Guides are a dedicated and professional band who are passionate about plants and the gardens. Working on behalf of the Botanic Gardens Trust, the volunteer guides play a paramount role in enriching the experience of local, interstate and international visitors.

State Records of NSW Volunteer Team comprises 46 dedicated men and women who for 20 years have maintained, preserved, interpreted and developed a collection to showcase the hospital’s evolution and diversity. Together they have served the community from a nursing perspective and now celebrate the heritage of the hospital with pride and humility.

Below: Award winner Kevin Gillis (right) and guest join the vintage bus provided by the Historic Commercial Vehicle Association after the awards ceremony. Photograph by Paramount Studios.
New on the Register

The following places have recently been listed on the State Heritage Register:

**Rathmines Park**, once the largest RAAF Flying Boat Base in the Southern Hemisphere, was used for the defence of Australia during WWII. It is the only flying boat base in NSW that remains with much of its physical fabric intact. The Catalina was one of the most successful flying boats produced. Catalinas from Rathmines took part in important WWII missions, including the mining of Manila Harbour and the Battle of the Coral Sea.

**The Roxy Community Theatre** in Leeton was built in 1929 and designed by noted theatre architects Kaberry and Chard. With an art deco design as theatrical as its name, the Roxy captures an era before television when going to the flicks was a weekly pastime for most Australians. Of the 351 country cinemas operating in the mid-20th century, the Roxy is one of only 11 remaining. When the Roxy was threatened in 1970 the community undertook a massive fund-raising appeal to save the theatre that had been a part of Leeton’s entertainment landscape for the last 75 years.

**Yuranigh’s grave**, near Molong, bears the marks of two cultures to honour a man for his bravery, loyalty and honesty. Yuranigh acted as a guide on the last expedition to the north-west of Australia by explorer Major Mitchell. At Yuranigh’s gravesite stands a marble headstone erected by the NSW Government in 1852, and four trees carved by local Wiradjuri people to commemorate Yuranigh. The site is the only known example of a grave in NSW showing such bi-cultural respect for an important man.

**Braidwood** is the first town to be listed on the State Heritage Register. This beautiful town still retains much of its Georgian town plan. Construction of Braidwood began in the 1840s and boomed in the latter half of the 19th century following the Gold Rush. With its fine collection of 19th century buildings and streetscapes, as well as original views of the surrounding pastoral landscape, Braidwood is a living record of a colonial town.

**Windradyne’s grave** marks the burial site of a respected leader of the Wiradjuri people. Windradyne’s determined and forceful defence of his land and people is still respected by Aboriginal people today, who revere him as a great warrior. Windradyne was buried in 1836 in the traditional custom with all his weapons. His gravesite on the Suttor family farm, Brucedale, at Sofala, also tells of the friendship between Windradyne and William Suttor.

**Mountain View Homestead and General Store** at Wisemans Creek is probably the only two-storey wattle and daub building in NSW, if not Australia. It was built by settler David Todd and finished in 1894. Crude construction methods and simple materials from the land did not deter its imaginative owner from building a grand two-storey dwelling with artistic features in the French Renaissance style. Next to his elaborate home, the entrepreneurial Todd ran a general store which was built of timber slabs.

**Bloomfield Hospital** is the last of the large hospitals built in NSW for the treatment of mental health. Work on the hospital began in 1923 and its design expressed the enlightened ideas of the time for the care of the mentally ill. With a village-like layout, gardens, playing fields and domestic scale buildings, Bloomfield was a place of recovery, rather than confinement. Today the site remains largely intact and is a landmark in Orange.

**Lidcombe Hospital Precinct** in Sydney’s inner west features an impressive collection of architecture and landscapes dating back to the late 19th century. Its array of Victorian, Edwardian, Interwar and 20th century buildings carries the signatures of the leading colonial, government and private architects of their eras. The hospital operated between 1893 and 1995 as a major State Asylum for the aged and the infirm and was an important State teaching hospital.