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**Mt Kembla Mining Heritage Inc.**

**Annual General Meeting to be held 20th February 2018**

**Mt Kembla Heritage Centre**

**Chairperson’s Report**

### **The Caretaker Committee**

At the last AGM a decision was made to focus on how best to take MKMHI forward in the context of insufficient income, reduced volunteer numbers and a dwindling bank balance. A small Caretaker Committee was formed to oversee the management of the group’s next steps. This Committee’s objective was to explore the possibility of consolidating our assets and operating at lower levels of activity, while digitising MKMHI’s physical collection, and finding and funding appropriate storage. A list was drawn up of recommended activities for the Caretaker Committee that might improve the situation and avoid winding up MKMHI. The following actions were undertaken during the year by the Caretaker Committee, with outcomes:

| **Recommended activities** | **Actions agreed to date** | **Who** | **Report** | **Done** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Consolidate the existing collection from all storage areas | Create a list of all items in the MKMHI collection that are currently stored in the Mt Kembla Heritage Centre and Core Sample Shed. | All ER |  |  |
| 1. Assess all items in the collection for their heritage value (by independent heritage professional) | * Consult National Library Museums Advisor about completing the collection’s Significance Assessment by a professional heritage assessor. N.B. This was partially done in 2009 * Begin the application process for funding through NLA. * Further avenues for funding to be assessed in future depending on outcome. | ER | Not done |  |
| 1. Digitize those items in the collection identified as having heritage value | Explore the digitization process – including:   * photography of items * history of items, * generating provenance statements from above * formatting webpage to ensure public access to collection, * funding for all the above. | ER & Gay Hendriksen –The Rowan Tree Heritage & Cultural Services + team of conservators | eHive program project completed 30/06/17 – WCC cultural services initiative – continuing to fund eHive upgrade for one year  eHive (online cataloguing and publishing for cultural heritage)  Ongoing project – needs more trained personnel |  |
| 1. Post to organization's website with appropriate information | Explore which website to use |  | eHive website:  https://ehive.com/collections/7079/mt-kembla-mining-heritage-inc  https://ehive.com/communities/1122/whs-collections |  |
| 1. Find suitable and safe storage for heritage items and store them appropriately   Consider other venues for a partial exhibition of heritage artifacts. | * Possibility of multiple storage locations. * Contact business/groups in Mt Kembla (Mt Kembla Village Hotel, Mt Kembla Public School, Soldiers and Soldier's & Miners' Memorial Church) to gauge interest in displaying items as semi-permanent displays. If feasible, a loans agreement would need to be established and agreed upon. * Contact storage businesses to find out costs and storage conditions. * Apply for DCEP funding for Heritage Centre for another 12 months to allow for time to complete digitization and packing; * Move items to appropriate storage and attend to any repairs / cleaning in the HC before handing over. (N.B. Check on likely increase in rent for future lease) * New possible option to explore = new, purpose-built container introduced to the Core Sample Shed (includes AC, shelving, lighting, solar panels) – one off cost – self-sustaining – funded by DCEP? | Carol / ER  Phil  ER/All  ER / Chris Jacobsen  To be discussed | Loaned ANZAC Day display to Mt Kembla Village Hotel for limited period.  Quotes for storage units received  Have 12 mths Rent Assistance DCEP Jul 2017 – June 2018  Aug 2017 (no rent increase)  To be considered. |  |
| 1. Explore insurance needed to cover assets if in storage | To check with Council – continuation of sub-delegation of Council function | ER / Jason Hall (WCC) | To be done |  |
| 1. Close Heritage Centre at time agreed and store all display items | Wait for response to application for 12 months funding from DCEP.  Make decision dependent on funding and need. | All | Rental assistance funding received for one year to 30/6/18  Open Days to continue incl tours |  |
| 1. Decide on future of 96 Candles ceremony | * Decide how ceremony to be funded in 2017, with options of   + a DCEP application,   + Council application   + allocating MKMHI resources. * Documentation of activities required to organise future ceremonies. * Appeal made at 2017 ceremony for volunteers for future | All | Group decided to continue this year  DCEP Funding secured for 2017 event and event run – well attended  Future – some interest from a group who might take the event forward, but no clarity at this time. |  |
| 1. Continue to run tours if these are feasible without the Heritage Centre | Consult current tour guides | ER, MB,  PH, NB,  CJ, RV, PG, | Monthly Museum Open Days were continued at a modified rate – guided tours of the mine site were run depending on the interest. The Heritage Centre was closed during tours as insufficient HC visitation to warrant volunteers being on hand.  One larger tour was run with available guides. |  |
| 1. Complete outstanding projects | * WW1 planting and installation of Memorial Tree Plinths; * Publishing WW1 book; * Miners’ Trust Grant (collaboration of MKMHInc & NPWS & WCC) – either implement or return funds. | ER & Marion Beard  All | * Plinths being manufactured * Editing of book underway * Negotiating Grant variation with WCC heritage officer |  |
| 1. Document on how the organisation might be re-activated and by whom |  | ALL | To be completed |  |

The Caretaker Committee also connected with other community groups and businesses in Mt Kembla and Kembla Heights and together organised a Community Meeting on 19 November in the Kembla Hts Community Hall with 32 people attending. The Meeting’s objectives were:

* To start a conversation between community organisations in the villages
* To share information about
  + the DCEP
  + the activities undertaken in the villages – both commercial and recreational
  + the community organisations active in the villages
  + local issues that matter to people
* To generate some ideas for community projects that would fit the criteria for DCEP funding
* To check the level of interest in working as a community to access DCEP funding and, if the interest is high, to consider ways to work together.

A report of the meeting outcomes was circulated to a list of 50+ people and a survey undertaken of possible next steps. There was some enthusiasm for continuing the conversation at another meeting in early 2018.

### **Other** **activities**

**Annual events:**

*96 Candles Ceremony 2017* We made a last-minute venue changed to the Kembla Hts Community Hall due to inclement weather. Surprisingly good turn up despite the weather. Considered a safer, more comfortable venue for older people. The audience was informed that this event needed a new group of people to manage it for 2018. Some interest was shown by a small group of residents but there is no clear way forward at this time.

*The heritage display in the Mt Kembla Public School* building was combined with the P&C’s `Day on the Lawn’ event which had several different themes using Heritage Centre temporary displays to lessen the work load. The Mt Kembla genealogy collection used in former years has been donated by Clare Curtis to the group for safe-keeping.

**Heritage Centre Tours**

We led 3 tour groups with 73 visitors and 2-day field study Y9 Holy Spirit College Bellambi, with 165 students (down from last year due to the end-of-year date). Thanks to tour guides Russell Viles, Neil Bott, Phil Grant, Caz Jervis, Marion Beard & Elizabeth Roberts for their dedication on those two days – no mean feat – 4 sessions each day.

**Monthly Open Days**

Variable attendance over the year. Thanks to Phil Hartley and Neil Bott for taking small groups to the mine site. Neil has created a wonderful diorama of this area to help people visualise what it used to look like. And thanks to Marion Beard, Caz and Elly Jervis, Carol Berry and Ruth Rodgers for managing the Heritage Centre on those days.

**Funding**

* The DCEP has funded 12 month’s rental assistance ($12,480) for the Heritage Centre to enable us to decide our future.
* Museums & Galleries NSW has awarded us a Small Grant ($2,000) for Trove (National Library of Australia) to digitise the Lysaght’s Diary and the Mt Kembla Mine Horse Register. This will be a partnership allowing them to place the work online for all to see and we keep the originals. The Mt Kembla Mine Rent Register may also be included in this work.

**Ongoing projects**

* Yesterday Stories (Why Documentaries, Sandra Pires) – filming and editing are completed and to be launched early 2018.
* Miners’ Trust Grant – Egg-ended Boiler conservation – partnership with NP&WS – ongoing slow negotiations.
* WW1 book of Mt Kembla’s soldiers is Marion Beard’s project. Thanks to Helen Gaps for editing the document. Funding will be sought for its production and a sign.
* The last of the 1917/18 WW1 plaques & trees were installed on 30th July at the Mt Kembla Memorial Pathway (Stage 2) with a member of the RSL in attendance. Thank you Neil and Dawn Bott for producing and installing the plinths; and Jennifer and Col Meharg, Ian and Elizabeth Roberts for the planting, tree guarding and ongoing watering.

### **Our** **future**

We’ve achieved much since the first meeting to organise the Centenary Festival in 2002. The reality is that our volunteer numbers have declined and sadly there are fewer younger people able to commit to the running of both the group and the Heritage Centre.

The future of the collection is of utmost importance and still to be decided. Its significance has been recognised by many in the museum world.

We must decide within the next month whether to close the Heritage Centre at the end of June and to wind down or wind up MKMHI. The group could continue to meet informally in homes to complete the work of documenting, digitalising and housing our physical collection of mining and village memorabilia.

I am standing down as Chairperson. My situation has changed, and I need to attend to family matters. I will be limited to continue working remotely on the collection. My sincere thanks to the outgoing committee members and the regular volunteers for their support.

Elizabeth Roberts, Chairperson, February 2018