

## DRAFT

### PROPOSED DONATION OF THE ARCHIVES OF THE FRIENDS OF KATOOMBA FALLS CREEK VALLEY (1989 – 2016)

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#### ISSUE

The donation of the archive of The Friends of Katoomba Falls Creek Valley (FKCV) to the Blue Mountains Historical Society (BMHS) and is subject to a number of conditions.

#### BACKGROUND

The Friends of Katoomba Falls Creek Valley (FKCV) established in 1989 is a not-for-profit local residents group located in Katoomba and was founded by Katoomba resident Neil Stuart. It was wound-up in September 2016.

In summary and according to the Public Officer of FKCV (as outlined in his letter to BMHS dated 19 September 2016), the aims of FKCV included but were not limited to protection of the natural environment of the Upper Kedumba River Valley from damaging development and pollution, and to respect and acknowledge the past Aboriginal and European settlements and their histories and activities in the Valley (now known as the Gully, Katoomba). The area was declared an Aboriginal Place in 2006.

The Archive represents the FKCV work over a continuous period of 27 years (1989 – 2016) and holds written and pictorial documentation, maps, photographs and oral histories covering the work of the FKCV over its period of operation.

Various persons well known to the Blue Mountains community, have over the lifetime of the FKCV, assisted it, or used its archive including Dianne Johnston (author of *Sacred Waters: The Story of the Blue Mountains Gully Traditional Owners*), Jim Smith, John Low and Eugene Stockton to name a few.

#### APPROACH BY FKCV TO BMHS

The BMHS has been approached by Des Barrett (the Public Officer of the FKCV). The approach was initially made by letter dated 19 September 2016. The Public Officer stated in his letter

“The archive is an outstanding record of the environmental and settlement history of the Valley/Gully, Katoomba ... “

The matter was raised at the BMHS Management Committee meeting on 30 September 2016 and the committee agreed that Stefan Indyka, Ted Szafraniec and other interested representatives from BMHS meet with the Public Officer of FKCV to appraise the archive.

#### BMHS SIGHTING AND APPRAISAL OF THE FKCV ARCHIVE

On 11 November 2016 BMHS representatives Stefan Indyka, Peter Brownlee and Ted Szafraniec met with Des Barrett (Public Officer FKCV) and John Rule (Executor of Neil Stuart's Estate) at 19 Waratah Street, Katoomba.

An overview of the FKCV, its wounding-up and the associated archive was given by Des Barrett and John Rule. Essentially FKCV was wound-up after the recent death of its founder and Katoomba resident Neil Stuart in 2016.

The archive consists of

- 1) approximately 70 volumes of arch-lever folders of written documentation in chronological order (such as correspondence, minutes of FKCV meetings, reports, documents etc) – see figure 1
- 2) approximately 0.5 cubic metres of other associated 3-D material and ephemera (such as photographs, maps, display boards, posters, banners etc) – see figures 2 & 3

BMHS representatives accessed various arch-lever volumes randomly to assess the archive material as well as sighting a selection of photographs, maps, display boards and posters.

### FKCV ASSESSMENT OF THE ARCHIVE

John Rule advised that Neil Stuart had drafted an outline on the possible future use of the FKCV Archive (this is also part of the Archive). John is the executor of the Neil Stuart Estate and it was the wish of Neil Stuart that the Archive be kept intact and stay locally.

Des Barrett and John Rule considered the archive is a very good record of the environmental and settlement history of the Katoomba Falls Creek Valley including The Gully (proclaimed an Aboriginal Place in 2006) which incorporates areas such as Frank Walford Park, McRae's Paddock, Katoomba Falls Reserve and the old Catalina racing circuit. It is considered to be a unique case study of environmental activism and aboriginal land management.

Both Des Barrett and John Rule indicated that the archive be a repository and stored locally to be used by researchers. They considered a number of locations for it to be housed including the Blue Mountains Conservation Society (too restricted to environmental issues and don't have an archive) and with the Blue Mountains City Council Library Local Studies at Springwood (controversial as the archive contained material critical of BMCC and also space would be an issue). They thought that BMHS would be the best location for the archive since it fulfils all the conditions for the Archive.

### CONDITIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FKCV ARCHIVE

Des Barrett and John Rule indicated the donation and receipt of the FKCV archive would be conditional on the following requirements:

1. The name of the Archive be the "Neil Stuart Archive"
2. The Archive be kept together
3. The Archive be kept locally in the Blue Mountains Region
4. The Archive be accessible to researchers and the public

Because John Rule was the executor of Neil Stuart's estate the above requirements may end up being legal requirements.

The following associated matters also were raised during discussions for further consideration:

5. Funding was available for the Archive (following the wounding-up of the FKCV approximately \$3,500 was available to support the Archive and used as required)
6. The trellis purposed built to display the Archive was part of the donation

7. Access to Aboriginal history of The Gully through Ms Lyn Stanger (who was a member of FKCV and still has aboriginal connections to The Gully)
8. Possibility of living members of the FKCV be available to help with the future accessioning and maintenance of the Archive
9. Access to FKCV members for further historic research of the area covered by the FKCV
10. Once accessioned the Archive should be publicised

#### BMHS ASSESSMENT OF THE FKCV PROPOSAL

Much of the arch-level volumes appeared to be in very good condition as was the 3-D material and ephemera that was sighted. The size of the Archive was noted and that an appropriate location within the BMHS would have to be found for it.

It was further noted that the donation came with promised substantial funding of around \$3,500 following the winding up of the FKCV. Although significant time and resources may be needed to service the Archive, access to former FKCV members and promised funds associated with the donation would go a long way in dealing with these issues.

The BMHS representatives particularly noted that the current BMHS Collections have little material on the aboriginal occupation and settlement in the Blue Mountains so the Archive would go some way to filling this gap in the BMHS Collections.

The three BMHS representatives at the discussions with Des Barrett and John Rule on 11 November 2016 agreed unanimously that the Archive was unique and relevant to Blue Mountains history and so there was merit in locating it with the BMHS.

#### BMHS RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended the BMHS accept the donation of the FKCV Archive and its associated conditions.
2. Ensure that any funding associated with the donation be included as a separate line item in the BMHS budget and to be identified as the "Neil Stuart Archive" (or something similar).

Stefan Indyka & Ted Szafraniec  
BMHS Accessioning Working Group  
Dated 15 November 2016



Figure 1 approximately 70 volumes of arch-lever folders of written documentation

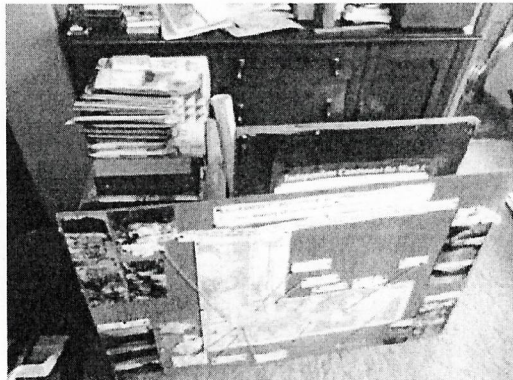


Figure 2 approximately 0.5 cubic metres of associated 3-D material and ephemera



Figure 3 approximately 0.5 cubic metres of associated 3-D material and ephemera