



Friday, 22 October 2010

Extra boost for Hunter heritage

Heritage maintenance and conservation in the Hunter is set to receive a \$2 million boost through the latest round of NSW Government heritage grants.

Chair of the Heritage Council of NSW, Gabrielle Kibble, said owners and managers of State significant heritage items are invited to apply for funding under the 2011-2013 NSW Heritage Grants Program for projects that will protect or enhance these important items.

The \$2 million in funding for the Hunter is in addition to \$5.5 million that is being made available under the grants program Statewide.

“The State’s heritage plays an important role in creating a shared understanding of our cultural history,” Ms Kibble said.

“Owners and managers bear an important responsibility to maintain the State’s valuable heritage items, and the Heritage Council is keen to support them through the NSW Heritage Grants Program.

“In addition to the \$5.5 million that is being made available Statewide, this latest round of funding includes a special allocation of \$2 million targeted specifically to conserving State significant heritage items in the Hunter region.

“This was made possible by a contribution from the coal mining company United Collieries related to its 2007 planning approval to mine the under an exclusion zone around the historic Wambo homestead near Singleton.

“At the time, the company committed to provide \$2 million to the Heritage Council of NSW specifically for heritage projects in the Hunter, and with its mining work now complete, the company has followed through on its commitment.

“As a result, the region’s valuable cultural heritage is set to reap the benefits.

“This is money that will be ploughed directly into conservation and maintenance projects on buildings like town halls, residential, commercial and community properties, religious buildings and local theatres in towns and cities across the Hunter.”

The underground mining carried out by United Collieries was located beneath the homestead’s horse stables and mounting yards, not the homestead itself, with subsequent reports showing no significant impact on the heritage values of the homestead complex.

Ms Kibble said the Hunter was one of the first regions beyond Sydney opened up for development, via coal mining in the 1790s and then convict settlement at Newcastle from the early 1800s.

“The early convict history means that there are significant Colonial era properties in the region,” Ms Kibble said.

“As such, part of the funding will be used for a comparative study of early homesteads in the Hunter Valley to identify heritage items, buildings, history and archaeology.

“The study, to be organised by the Department’s Heritage Branch, will gather information relevant to the possible future State heritage listing of some important Hunter Valley properties.”

Hunter Region heritage properties are eligible to apply for grants under the 2011-13 NSW Heritage Grants Program and Hunter Heritage Grants program for the following projects. Applications are now open and must be lodged by Friday 3 December 2010 for:

- conservation, maintenance and adaptive reuse of State significant heritage items – funding available up to \$200,000 per project;
- conservation of local government heritage assets – funding available for State and locally significant heritage items up to \$200,000;
- community heritage projects such as producing interactive websites, touring maps of State heritage sites, and payment towards the cost of a heritage advisory service – funding available up to \$60,000 per project;
- cultural heritage tourism projects for State heritage items such as improved signage – funding available up to \$20,000 per project; and
- conservation management reports for State heritage items – funding available up to \$5,000 per project.

For applications involving the management of local government heritage, there is funding available up to \$50,000 per project, for which a later closing date of Thursday 10 February 2011 applies.

Applications for the following project types may be lodged at any time over the course of the two-year funding period:

- Aboriginal heritage projects – funding available up to \$75,000 per project; and
- urgent projects relating to State heritage items – funding available up to \$10,000 per project.

Also, applications for historical research and local archive projects will open in May 2011 and May 2012, with funding available up to \$5,000 per project.

Despite the existence of an additional source of funding for the Hunter on top of the Statewide funding, applicants in the region need only apply once under the NSW Heritage Grants Program, with successful grants to be allocated from the total pool of funding.

Full details are available on the Department of Planning’s Heritage Branch website at www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/funding

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