MEDIA RELEASE

15 July 2010

HUNTER VALLEY MUSEUM COMES TO LIFE

Crown Lands General Manager Graham Harding is pleased to announce one of the Hunter Valley region’s most precious collections of historical local artefacts, is emerging as an important, nationally significant museum.

Expert curators will visit the Hunter Valley Museum of Rural Life, managed by the Lake Glenbawn State Park Trust, on Thursday 15 July, to share their skills with a group of dedicated local volunteer caretakers.

“From its modest beginnings in 1966, the museum today rivals that of other regional collections,” said Mr Harding.

“In 2009 the head of conservation at Sydney’s Powerhouse Museum visited the collection, and offered to clean and re-box some of the more delicate items, pro bono, to assist the regional museum.”

“The collection is comprehensive and tells the unique story of the Hunter Valley area from early settlement. It features items from its significant agricultural, industrial, transport and infrastructure developments, and personal artefacts which reveal the stories behind some of the area’s influential families and individuals.”

Internationally trained conservator Amir Mogadam from the University of Newcastle will attend the volunteer training day, together with the curator of the Armidale Historical Museum, Peter Chambers, and Kay and Marcus Holdsworth, who are providing advice on non-toxic pest controls. Community members with direct family and historical links to the collection will also attend.

“Volunteers will learn all about cleaning and caring for the collection, which includes the wedding dress worn by Sarah Campbell, matriarch of the pastoral dynasties at Glenrock, Tugolo and Tomalla Stations during the 1840s.

“Also in the collection is a 1920 Jelbart steam traction engine, 19th century military firearms, a 1929 International Harvester red farm truck, and a wedding parasol which belonged to Agnes Rodd Bell, given to her by her father Sir John Robertson in 1860, a year before he enacted the NSW Robertson Acts allowing free settlement in the colony.”

12 volunteer caretakers, ranging from ages 40 to 90, from Aberdeen, Muswellbrook, Singleton and Scone have also previously taken a TAFE course in ‘Introduction to working in Museums’.

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