

**Village of Hall and District Progress Association Inc**

**ACT Heritage Grants Program 2009-2010**

**Hall School Museum - Conservation Management Plan and Volunteer Training Materials**

**Project Summary**

This project will produce a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the Hall School Museum (the 'Laurie Copping Heritage Centre'), and a Handbook of training resource modules to be used in the training of volunteer guides / interpreters to transmit the heritage values of the Museum for future generations.

**Relevance to 2009-10 Priorities (in priority order)**

This project will contribute to four of these priorities:

- **Conservation Management Plans (egg studies of particular places entered in the ACT Heritage Register)**
- **Projects that prepare to celebrate Canberra's centenary in 2013 and other centenary events.**

The centenary of the old school building that houses the Museum will be in 2011. We view this as a wonderful stepping stone towards the Centenary of Canberra in 2013. Completion of a CMP, and the planned establishment of a Board of Trustees in 2010, will enable the Hall School Museum to play a purposeful and prominent role in these two centenary celebrations

- **Community projects that promote heritage through education**

The Volunteer guide / interpreter training program and Resource Materials component of our proposal in particular addresses this priority. The principal role envisaged for the Museum is an educational one.

- **Projects that fill a thematic gap in the ACT Heritage Register (egg 20<sup>th</sup> century heritage, rural and contact history...)**

The Hall Progress Association itself is 106 years old. Hall school opened in 1911 and remained a rural one-teacher school until 1960. Large families from the region formed a close-knit and supportive rural community, and the village of Hall became a vital part of the new Canberra in 1913.

This history is reflected in the intact building and large range of artifacts and early school furniture within the building. Hall school is a rare window through which the settlement history of the district and its twentieth century development can be exposed to view. Family descendants of those who lobbied Sydney for the school, and whose children were early students there, and still living in the district. (See letter from Southwell Family Society of Australia Inc).

## Project objectives

This Project will build solid foundations for the future development of the Hall School Museum through production of a **Conservation Management Plan**, and creation of a **Handbook of training materials** for volunteer guide / interpreters.

We will engage a heritage conservation consultant to complete the CMP in accordance with the ACT Standard Brief. We intend to engage **Kim Morris (Art & Archival)**, an expert heritage conservation consultant who is familiar with the Museum.

We have interest and support from the **Donald Horne Institute for Cultural Heritage** at the University of Canberra, and intend to develop an ongoing relationship with that program. (see letter from Assoc Professor James Warden). Kim Morris is also a part time teacher in the program, and is happy to help us to explore opportunities for developing links between the program and the Hall School Museum.

In addition, with advice and assistance from the **Australian National Museum of Education (ANME)**, we will develop a Handbook of Resource Materials about the Museum, its significance and its contents, for the training of volunteer guide / interpreters.

We will have all of this work completed by August 2010, ready to hand to an (interim) Board of Trustees, who will assume responsibility for the implementation, over time, of the CMP's recommendations.

## Product(s) or activities

The main products will be:

- (a) a **Conservation Management Plan** for the Hall School Museum collection, based on the Standard Brief, and
- (b) a set of modular **Resource Materials** to support induction training of volunteer guide / interpreters, and become a Handbook for them.

We will produce at least **ten** such modules, focusing on such subjects as:

1. Settlement of Hall and district
2. History of Hall Primary School
3. Hall - heritage village
4. Hall School Museum - the collection - Print materials
5. Hall School Museum - the collection - Artifacts
6. Hall School Museum - Conservation policies and priorities
7. Managing small community museums
8. One teacher bush schools
9. Managing small community museums – Resources
10. Hall School Museum and its district - a Bibliography

The modules will be modest in size and scope – around four to six A4 pages equivalent. We propose high quality design and layout, setting a standard for future publications, but limited initial print production. Some elements of the materials will be laminated and housed at the Museum as interpretive resources for visitors.

This work will also generate some valuable material for promotional publications, and could be extended in the future.

[NOTE: VHDAP has formally requested that the 1911 Museum **building** be subject to inspection and appropriate refurbishment as part of the Community Facilities Project currently being managed by the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (David Collett). We are awaiting confirmation]

### **How will the heritage of the ACT benefit?**

Hall School Museum has been identified (2007, 2008) by the **National Trust** as 'at risk' amid on-going uncertainties about the Hall Primary School site following closure of the school in 2006. The threat faced is identified by the National Trust as "neglect and devaluation of heritage values":

#### **"Significance:**

*Hall village demonstrates a range of physical characteristics resulting from its historical role as a rural (1882) village. The school, along with other identified specific places of value within the village precinct, is important in defining a 'sense of place' for the Hall community and is closely linked to the pastoral history of northern Canberra. Significant as one of only two examples associated with the end of the period of rural schooling in the ACT.*

#### **Risk:**

*The recent closure (December 2006) and non-occupancy of this school leaves open the question of its future use and threatens the conservation of the existing fabric, particularly the 1911 structure. Not only has the closure of this school begun to erode the historical, heritage and social values of Hall Village, it has been a loss to the ACT as a whole.*

#### **Desired outcome:**

*The school to be reopened for educational use and the fabric, particularly the 1911 building, be appropriately conserved in accordance with Conservation Objectives 1.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4 outlined in the Hall Village Heritage Precinct entry to the ACT Heritage Register."*

This Project will help secure the Museum and lay down strong foundations for its future development.

Although predominantly an educational museum, Hall School Museum is embedded in the pre-Federation and early twentieth century rural history and heritage of Hall and its district. Many of the pioneering families are still well represented in the district.

As a small rural settlement preceding the creation of the Australian Capital Territory in 1913, and the subsequent development of Canberra as the national capital, Hall has a particularly valuable role to play as a link with the district's past. This project will enable to Hall School Museum to play a significant role in the Centenary of the original school itself (1911), and in the Centenary of Canberra (1913)

## Who will benefit in the ACT Community?

In the nature of such cultural heritage projects, society at large is a beneficiary, insofar as important aspects of our past are conserved and made available to future generations.

Particular groups of beneficiaries from this project will include:

- Visiting **school students** from the ACT and surrounding district who will again be able to have a lived experience of schooling as it used to be.
- **History teachers**, who will have better access to the collection and its teaching / learning possibilities.
- In relation to its responsibilities for heritage, the **ACT Government** will benefit from having an up to date professional conservation planning assessment of the Museum and its future potential.
- **Participants in Cultural Heritage programs at the University of Canberra** (and other teachers and museum practitioners in training) will benefit from easy access to a young and developing Museum close to their place of study
- **Residents of Hall and district** will benefit from further development of the heritage status and values of the village, with the Museum as a local resource and focal point for on-going heritage work.
- **Visitors to Canberra** will have the possibility of accessing a specialized small museum illustrative of early twentieth century schooling in Australia.
- Those who will choose to join the planned '**Friends of the Hall School Museum**' will benefit from being involved in the challenging and rewarding project of supporting the future development of the Museum.

## Why do you think there is a need for your project?

The future of the Hall School Museum and its collection has been uncertain for some time, but particularly since the closure of the Hall Primary School in December 2006. An inventory undertaken by the **Australian National Museum of Education** has established the high value of the collection, and the 1911 building itself is heritage listed. [see letter from ANME attached].

The longer term future for the Hall Primary School site is still being determined. Funding of this project will ensure that the importance and relevance of the Museum can be firmly established, that its conservation will be of high standard, access to the Museum can be maintained, and opportunities to present and develop the collection can be taken.

The 1911 Centenary of Hall School represents a golden opportunity to celebrate the school and its history, and to promote the Museum. This will be an invaluable stepping stone towards the Centenary of Canberra celebrations in 2013.

The task of firmly establishing the nature and significance of the Museum and setting out priorities for conservation and compatible further use and development therefore has to be undertaken in 2009-10.

**Attachments to the application:**

1. Letters of support for the project from:
  - Property Group, Department of Territory and Municipal Services
  - Alistair Coe MLA, Member for Ginninderra
  - Meredith Hunter MLA, Member for Ginninderra (signed letter direct to Heritage Unit)
  - Australian National Museum of Education
  - National Trust of Australia (ACT)
  - Southwell Family Society Australia Inc.
  - Donald Horne Institute for Cultural Heritage, Canberra University
2. Letter of undertaking from President, VHDPA re cash and in-kind contributions
3. Expression of Interest and quote from Kim Morris, Art & Archival Pty Ltd
4. Art & Archival Pty Ltd – Business description and CV
5. CV – Alastair Crombie (Project Coordinator)
6. Insurance Certificate – VHDPA Inc

