



**New South Wales Government**  
**Independent Planning Commission**

**TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

RE: GLENDELL CONTINUED OPERATIONS PROJECT (SSD-9349) AND  
MOUNT OWEN CONTINUED OPERATIONS MOD 4 PROJECT (SSD-5850-  
MOD-4)

**BROKE VILLAGE SQUARE TRUST MEETING**

COMMISSION PANEL:           DIANNE LEESON (Chair)  
  PROFESSOR SNOW BARLOW  
  ADRIAN PILTON

OFFICE OF THE IPC:           STEPHEN BARRY  
  CASEY JOSHUA  
  JANE ANDERSON

BROKE VILLAGE                 STEWART EWEN AOM  
SQUARE TRUST                 JOHN BEVAN  
REPRESENTATIVES:           PHILIP McNAMARA  
  ANDREW MARGAN  
  ADAM BELL

LOCATION:                    VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

DATE:                        1.00PM, TUESDAY, 8 MARCH 2022

**TRANSCRIBED AND RECORDED BY APT TRANSCRIPTIONS**

MS LEESON: Good afternoon and welcome. Before we begin I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land from which we virtually meet today, and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. Welcome to the meeting today to discuss the Glendell Continued Operations (SSD-9349) and Mount Owen Continued Operations Mod 4 (SSD-5850) projects, which are currently before the Commission for determination. The Glendell mine forms part of the Mount Owen Complex located in the Hunter coalfields in the Singleton local government area. The application for the Glendell Continued Operations Project would extend the life of the existing operations by establishing a new mining area to the north of the current  
10 Glendell pit to enable the extraction of an additional 135 million tonnes of run-of-mine coal over 21 years, at an increased production rate of up to 10 million tonnes per annum. Coal extracted over the life of the project would continue to be processed at the existing Mount Owen coal handling and preparation plant facilities before being transported via rail in accordance with the Mount Owen consent.

The project involves an associated modification to the Mount Owen consent to integrate with the proposed expansion. While the project would continue to rely on existing infrastructure, including the Mount Owen coal handling and preparation plant, rail loop and existing Glendell mining fleet, it would require the development of a new  
20 mine infrastructure area, including associated infrastructure and services, along with construction of new heavy and light vehicle access. In addition, the project would involve the realignment of a section of Hebden Road, diversion of Yorks Creek and relocation of the historic Ravensworth Homestead.

My name is Dianne Leeson. I'm the Chair of this Commission Panel, and I'm joined by my fellow Commissioners, Professor Snow Barlow, on my right, and Adrian Pilton, on my left. We are also joined by Steve Barry, I think, yes, Steve Barry, Casey Joshua and Jane Anderson from the Office of the Independent Planning Commission.

30 In the interests of openness and transparency and to ensure the full capture of information, today's meeting is being recorded and a complete transcript will be produced and made available on the Commission's website.

This meeting is one part of the Commission's consideration of this matter and will form one of several sources of information upon which the Commission will base its determination. It is important for Commissioners to ask questions of attendees to clarify issues whenever it is considered appropriate. If you are asked a question and not in a position to answer, please feel free to take the question on notice and provide any additional information in writing, which we will then put up on our website.  
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I request that all members here today introduce themselves before speaking for the first time and for all members to ensure that they do not speak over the top of each other to ensure accuracy of our transcript. We will now begin.

So good afternoon again, everybody. We do have the benefit of your names on the screen on each of your visuals, so thank you for that. We have an agenda. We have about 45 minutes to meet with you this afternoon and to go through pertinent issues relating to your Broke Village Square proposal, and I think this agenda has been circulated. We would probably like to begin with handing across to you to take us  
10 through, I believe you've provided us with a presentation which will be shared on the screen. We've not had an opportunity to look through that yet, and we do appreciate that you sent us some things late yesterday, which we haven't managed to get all the way through yet either, so I think perhaps a short overview of those and then we can probably dive into some more detailed questioning from the panel. So I'm not sure who's leading the discussion from the - - -

MR BEVAN: Look, I'm John Bevan. I'll just perhaps introduce our group if that's appropriate.

20 MS LEESON: Thank you.

MR BEVAN: There are five of us here today, so myself John Bevan, Adam Bell, Andrew Margan, Philip, Phil McNamara, and Stewart Ewen, who's essentially led us as a group to, to come forward with this proposal. We're all directors or trustees of the Broke Village Square, and we're all long-term residents and business owners within the Broke area. We have no sort of financial or contractual link to Glencore, your applicant. We had proposed this to Glencore and they have supported us in the development of the idea, but we have no – individually or collectively – any link to them. And we're certainly not seeking any personal reward out of this project from a  
30 beneficiary perspective. We all want Broke – which is a community that has been somewhat hollowed out over the years by mining around us – to prosper into the future, and encourage the development of a community-based square where all of the locals can meet, and also to attract tourists to the area. With that, I will hand over to Stewart Ewen to take us through the details. Stewart.

MR EWEN: Thank you, John. And thank you for the opportunity of meeting today albeit via Zoom. I was a bit disappointed, obviously, that we weren't going to meet face-to-face, so to speak, but the decision to go to Zoom was, proved to be correct. I think we've had about 110 mms of rain here overnight or during the day, and I have to  
40 say to you, the site in question in Broke is dry and not flooded and all is looking quite good.

MS LEESON: I was about to ask just that very question given you've got Wollombi Brook right beside the site. It was top-of-mind question. Thank you.

MR EWEN: Yes, well, I've been here 20 years and some of the others an awful lot longer, and we've never seen that land go, go under. And, anyway, we can come to that later, but I can assure you it's, it's dry and, and looking good. Look, very quickly, John outlined the intent of this, and that is that we've pulled together a team of people who actually are trying to achieve something that is really unique as far as – and I hate using that word “unique” because it is overused, but I've never been in a situation where we've had an opportunity to make major steps in seeing a development of this type go ahead in a regional area that is not to be a cost to government. To me, this is a great step forward in terms of establishing the sort of social, improvement of the social conditions and the economic conditions of regional New South Wales.

We're all going to talk on a number of issues, but I just wanted to cover off with you a couple of points before we just go to your agenda, because your items are quite valid, but I'd like to give a fair bit of background as well. My, my background has been in property per se. I was a member of the Heritage Council for quite a number of years, and I want to sort of – when I looked at the opportunity of seeing historic buildings of this type to be considered to be relocated, it was such an obvious thing in my mind that we bring them into a semi-urban area, and the question of heritage then sort of emerged. And just I'd like you to keep in your mind that we've seen some very, very dramatic changes in heritage and we've seen a real move in the way we've actually handled it, and I'd just like you to keep in the back of your mind the fact that, you know, Cook's Cottage was relocated very effectively down to Melbourne. You probably, all of you are very aware of the Beamish Village in the UK. But more importantly, the Richmond Villas that were in Macquarie Street next to the Old Parliament House that Neville Wran moved in '75, and then they were rebuilt in Kent Street in '77, and 2012 got a Heritage Award. And what we're trying to do is to look at how six very, very worthwhile buildings can be relocated and put to a use that gives them a life for another 100 or 200 years.

The, the work that we've done is, actually goes back over three years. We started this work, work on this sort of scheme and project in early 2019. We've had meetings with government, various ministers who have been very supportive in their time, albeit that it was just these are general conversations to understand policy at the time. We've obviously also met with Singleton Council, and I know you'll, you'll have meetings with them separately, but we, the first time we explained the project to council, albeit that the council members have changed since, members of our group were actually given a, an ovation that I've never seen from council before, that this was a step in the

right direction to see something positive happen in the regions of Singleton and the Hunter Valley.

As a generalisation, the buildings, to relocate them to Broke has got some huge advantages in terms of the state as far as access, because of, we've got Singleton and we've got Cessnock as major towns, and it actually represents a major step forward and a broadening of industries in the Hunter. You know, the Hunter's been dominated for years by mining, albeit that the wine industry goes back 200 years. You are aware that, obviously, mining is a declining operation economically, that over the next  
10 probably 50 years we're going to see some major changes. And wine tourism for the state actually contributes for the, from the Hunter, something like \$660 million a year. Now, Broke is all part of that. We have a very active wine tourism area that Andrew will talk on shortly. And so we see this as a major step forward. The one thing we do not want is, if I take you back on a journey of, say, 10 years ago, we had a very similar situation with the Wambo Homestead up in the Hunter, and that in the end was left on a site to deteriorate, and it has deteriorated to the point that it was, it's of no value anymore. We don't want a Wambo situation happening again. We, we actually think that you, as the three Commissioners, are sitting with an opportunity to do something that is really a fabulous step forward for a number of, a number of issues, both from a  
20 heritage point of view, a social point of view and an economic point of view.

If we could, could we move then to your four, your points on the agenda, and the first item is the re-use options for the historic buildings. Now, we've taken advice from a number of people in the property market on this, and there's obviously limitations of what we could do because it's not a real project, we don't have a real timetable. But what we're trying to do is to create a town square, a village square, where probably 40 per cent of the space would be handed over to, can I describe it as being community space, exhibition space, museum space that brings people to, to the, to the region. There's a tremendous amount of available data and items in the Indigenous world that,  
30 that was, you know, can be displayed here, and we've got the support of one of the very important Indigenous groups here, and I understand you'll be talking to them. We see the opportunity to put restaurants, cafés, and, and activities that promote the agricultural operations in and around Broke. Obviously for, you know, for wine tourism, we've got a multitude of cellar doors that, again, Andrew will make reference to. So we have got to a point where we've appointed a very good architect. We've got spaces sorted out. We understand what parts of the building can be changed to accommodate uses in a meaningful manner and where associated buildings could be put in the senses of kitchen areas and toilets and everything, because one of the things one can't do is to put wet areas into old buildings in a manner that makes them, makes  
40 them, you know, work properly, and I think that's well shown in some of the drawings and information we sent through.

The social and economic impact, I'll start off by dealing with the social impact. We have forwarded to you letters of support that come from all the associations involved in our region. That's the Hunter Valley Wine Tourism Association, the Broke's Residents, the Indigenous Association, and the Broke Fordwich Wine Tourism Association. They're all unanimously supporting what (not transcribable) been, what we've put up, and are very, and I think a number of them will want to be in contact with you.

- 10 From an economic impact, we have, we've employed Morrison Low, an economics advisory entity. They are well into a, a report that we will table. We don't have, have the documents yet. We anticipate that we'll have them during your period of public exhibition. We'll give you the full documents of what, how they envisage the economic impact on, on Broke, that the Broke Village Square will have.

- The, a quick summary again on the, the next item, which is really funding and ownership of the venture. Firstly, we as a group have entered into draft documents with Glencore where they will fund 100 per cent of the relocation, and they have given us estimates that that's probably something in the range of about \$20 million. With  
20 building costs today, we don't know what that's going to end up at, but that's really a small part of what, of the overall project that they're involved in.

- They've also, at our request – and when you do get a chance to review our documents, you'll see that we prepared, I will use the words very loosely, a feasibility analysis done, you know, three years ago, where we looked at how, what the costs would be of running the square, what the revenues might be, and a projection that we believe we will break even in terms of cash flow out of the town square in around about three years. To cover any, the costs of getting the project into a positive cash flow, Glencore are looking to contribute something around a million dollars to meet that and  
30 to give the venture the right amount of support to make it a viable operation.

- Now, the next item, again, and again we'll jump around because there's people, we all would like to make some, you know, contribution to today's meeting. The financial grants, what we were looking at there was that once we have a positive cash flow from the operation, that the, the community around, in and around Broke would be invited to make application for grants to come from this, this operation, where we would be looking to bring together funds that we can then take on, we can grant to, to the associations that I've mentioned before, the Broke, the residents' committee, the Broke Fordwich Wine and Tourism Association. We can actually fund, whether it be  
40 some infrastructure issues or whatever, the money is to get recycled back into the, into

the local economy and make a major contribution. We think that's a very unique opportunity that we certainly don't want to miss.

MS LEESON: Can I just ask one quick question there?

MR EWEN: Sure.

MS LEESON: Sorry, sorry to interrupt you. I missed where you said that source of funds for the grant process was coming from. Was that part of Glencore's  
10 contribution or - - -

MR EWEN: No, that, what, what we, in our documents you'll see that we believe that we will have something like 60 per cent of the space available for commercial activities. That might be activities that would be restaurants, cafés, stores promoting the cellar doors and the wine activities and other agricultural products, the olive industry. We're looking at a series of uses there that would generate positive cash flow to make the whole operation, you know, an active entity.

MS LEESON: That's the piece I'd misunderstood, so it's really the commercial  
20 success of those which will underpin the grants process?

MR EWEN: Correct.

MS LEESON: Thank you.

PROF. BARLOW: So, Stewart, Snow Barlow here. The grants would be to whom? Who would apply for them and what would they be for?

MR EWEN: Well, we would be encouraging the local associations and, and groups.  
30 Landcare groups is a good example where you've got, there's a very active Landcare group out in the Broke Fordwich area. Now, they need funding, whether it's, you know, landscaping projects, it could be the local school, you know, it could be the sporting entities for doing things within promoting local, whether it's the football or the cricket or, or such things. We see it very much being grants that can be available to local associations to further develop activities in and around Broke. We don't have limitations on it. It might be, you know, an area where there's Indigenous, a need for grants to do certain things. One, one of the Indigenous groups we spoke to were very keen to see, for example, a nursery of native plants that might produce product that goes to local restaurants. That's just one, one example. You know, we, we, that might  
40 be a proposal that we deal with in time.

We, you know, we haven't gone out and publicised this yet until we know that we've got a project and we're actually going to do something but that's certainly in the back of our minds that we are intending that any grant be to the benefit of the, of the area.

PROF. BARLOW: Thank you.

MR EWEN: Just continuing on on that last point, the planning requirements. Well, look, quite obviously, any, any overall approval from State Government on this requires a, a DA to be lodged. That then has to be dealt with through Singleton  
10 Council. We've had meetings with Singleton Council, along with Glencore, where they've looked at, if we are successful in this, how we would handle issues such as drainage, sewerage, power, water and the like. We've, those operations have been, you know, sort of ongoing and they've, you know, obviously got a long way to go but one would be hoping that we would be in a position to lodge a DA, you know, in the third or fourth quarter of this year. If we're, if, if we are successful, that then obviously involves a whole series of technical operations and then we are looking at the form of land tenure. In early discussions we had with Minister Pavey when she was in charge, I'll just, and, and obviously we've got to go back to square one with any form of government on this. We made reference to the fact that we would either  
20 look to enter into a management agreement through Singleton Council over the Crown land or they, or we would look to have a, a long-term lease situation. And the minister actually at that time made the statement that she thought it would be relevant that we had a lease in perpetuity or the land be sold to the trust for a dollar on the basis that it then takes full responsibility and, and runs it.

Now, look, they're, they're loose words but they were part of the discussions that we had at the time to overcome this. And I know that Philip will have some words 'cause we've taken a lot of advice on the issues of, of land tenure. But we see that as just another step that has to be taken to bring this project into fruition. They're my quick  
30 sort of summary of the points in your agenda. So if I can, could I ask that, firstly, Andrew might give you, I've lost, yeah, so give you a summary of, of, of the wine tourism activities in Broke and then for Phil McNamara to make some further comments 'cause Phil has been, is a long-term resident of Broke. He's lived here all his life and he's got some thoughts that he'd like to be able to pass on to you, as well. So, Andrew, can you take the microphone, so to speak.

MR MARGAN: Andrew Margan, Margan Wines. So I've been in, in here in Broke about 30 years and started my business, Margan Wines, about 25 years ago. I'm in - -  
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MS LEESON: I'm sorry to interrupt, Andrew. The audio's, a bit of an echo there. I just want to make sure that the transcription service can pick you up okay.

MS JOSHUA: It might help if everybody who's not speaking is on mute. That may help with the echo.

MS LEESON: Thanks, Casey. If we can ask everyone to put on mute? Try again, Andrew. Thank you.

10 MR MARGAN: Is that, is that better?

MS LEESON: That is a bit better.

MS JOSHUA: Transcript are fine with the audio. As long as you can hear, Di, Adrian and Snow, we're good to go.

MS LEESON: If we have trouble, we'll let you know.

20 MR MARGAN: Okay. Yeah, okay. So, yeah. So 25 years ago, I started Margan Wines here. So we farm 100 hectares of vineyards here in Broke. Now, Broke's been growing wine grapes for a hundred-odd years now. But it's only really been recently that wine tourism has, has come to Broke in any substantial form. I'd say, so 15 years ago, we built our cellar door restaurant onsite. And if I look at the last 10 year figures, in particular, we've, we've tripled the amount of cellar door sales and doubled the amount of retail between the restaurant and cellar door in the last 10 years. We've gone from having one full-time in the cellar door to having five full-time employees running the cellar door. The restaurant's gone from about seven people to about 15 people employed.

30 And it's really been in the last five years, there's been a new influx of, of people buying into vineyards in this, in the Broke Fordwich subregion and putting a lot of new energy into the marketing and forming what we call the Broke Fordwich Wine Trail. I think there's 12 producers on that trail now. And if you Google "Broke Fordwich", you can have a look at how much work's been gone into marketing the area. And all of that marketing and all of that energy is off the back of just this amazingly new influx of, of wine tourism visitors to the area. The, I think the initial economic forecasting that's been done around what we're doing shows something like revenue at around 7 million a year and jobs of about 40-odd people a year. And what we haven't got at the moment is anything beyond just the 10 cellar doors here for  
40 people to come and, and see. Like, there's only two restaurants really in the, in the area. And we have all these people coming here. We've got all this accommodation.

So this, this square having tenancies around hospitality would be perfect timing and be a great thing for, for this area, given that coal isn't our future and wine tourism quite possibly can be our future.

MS LEESON: Thank you.

10 PROF. BARLOW: Thank you. Andrew, can I ask you just a question? What is the route of the people who, you know, it's probably a hard question but what is the route of the people who visit the cellar doors? Do they come through Wollombi or do they come through Cessnock?

MR MARGAN: Well, having driven that Wollombi Road all my life, it's getting incredibly busy. So there's a lot coming from there and, and the great thing about if we were to relocate the sandstone buildings and make a town square is it's very much aligned with Wollombi as a village, which is also very much celebrates that sandstone, colonial building history. But, look, at the end of the day, the numbers around tourism into the Pokolbin area are, you know, getting up around that one and a half to 2 million visitors a year. So we, we have been, and that's, you can say in some cases that maybe a little bit too many, that Pokolbin's becoming a little bit too crowded so, you know, that one of the prime reasons that people come here is to have a country getaway with wine and that's still the Hunter Valley and, if it's too busy, Pokolbin.

30 What people are finding is that the discovering of our subregion, the Broke Fordwich subregion, is, is something new and exciting and, and we're getting, really getting the right sort of wine tourism business if, if you know what I mean? I mean, we, there are right ones and wrong ones. The ones who are high yielding and who understand wine and get the offer and, and appreciate being looked after and, and being looked after by the right people. So it's not just a bar where people are just pouring wine across the bar. You're actually being looked after by owners and winemakers and, and people who care about their product. And I think that's very much what Broke Fordwich is offering and it's really resonating with, with, with these tourists.

40 MR EWEN: And could I add just a quick comment on that one. In terms of access to the valley, we've seen a major change, and I, I sat on the Planning Committee for Cessnock Council for quite some time. The government, when it did the extensions to the freeway and then spent something like 20 million on the upgrading of the Hermitage Road, what it's, it's, it's caused a dramatic change in, in how transport actually works in the valley. We're, we're now seeing far less people going through Cessnock. The, the majority of people now are coming up the freeway, turning left onto Wine Country Drive or Hermitage Road, which brings them straight down into

the centre of the valley. They've then got a choice of turning left and going into Pokolbin or turning right and coming out to Broke Fordwich. So the work that government have done has dramatically opened the exposure of the Broke Fordwich area, which has been really of great value.

PROF. BARLOW: Thank you.

MR EWEN: Could Phil McNamara, we're very conscious of time and we want to maximise our time with you, but very keen that Phil can speak to you in terms of his  
10 view on what is happening in Broke and the history of it. Phil, you're muted.

MR McNAMARA: Good afternoon.

MS LEESON: Afternoon.

MR PILTON: Afternoon.

MR McNAMARA: How are you? I'm going to try and share the document that I sent  
20 to you.

MS LEESON: Thank you, we do have a hard copy here, but if you could do it on the screen, that would be good.

MR McNAMARA: Let's see if it works. Can you see that?

MR PILTON: Yes.

MS LEESON: Thank you.

30 MR McNAMARA: Okay. So, introduce myself, Phil McNamara. I'm, I'm quite local in Broke. I'm fourth generation in the family. The property I live in has been owned by the family for about 110 years. I went to primary school at Broke Public School. Went to high school in Singleton. I was born in Singleton Hospital. So I've, I've seen Broke through some really hard times and, and some lean times, and I, and I see a great future for it, and I see this as a great opportunity, that Broke Village Square presents a great opportunity to bring something of distinct value to Broke. So I thought, well, how can I put some thoughts together and try and present something as a bit of an overview from the perspective of someone who went to a primary school  
40 that had a total, total number of students of 12 or 13 people at times.

So I thought I'd start with the Great North Road. I don't want to give a history lesson here, just quickly that the Great North Road best describes where it came from and why, from Sydney. The important point is at the end it says one branch continues to Warkworth via Broke and the other goes to Cessnock and on to Newcastle. That's from Wollombi. And so, so Broke's been, you know, linked into that North Road for all of that period of time. The next slide shows just some images of Bucketty, along the Wollembi Road, where so many people drive, and from Broke that's always been my preferred and direct route to go to Sydney. And on the right there's a little memorial that was built at Monkey Place Creek Bridge, just to the north of Broke.

10 This was done about 15 years ago. It, it sits there, it's a little bit sort of orphaned and forgotten, but it shows the North Road going, the Great North Road going through Broke and continuing North.

The next map, the Google Earth image, I just put this here to show the link between Broke and Ravensworth. You can see Broke there in a circle at the base, and then you can see Warkworth, where it was mentioned in, previously that the road went to Warkworth. From Warkworth there was a crossing and there's a bridge there that, built later that was washed away in the 1950s, I believe. But from Warkworth there's a road goes across to Ravensworth. As a kid in, in Broke, there was a school at

20 Warkworth, there was one at Ravensworth, Jerrys Plains, Milbrodale. And at Warkworth there was a sports ground where the annual sports carnival used to occur with all of these Central Hunter small schools. Most of the villages that used to participate in that, that sports carnival, have disappeared over time because of mining. Broke survives because the geology lends itself to meaning that mining of coal right at Broke or to the south of Broke, right around Broke, is not economic just simply because of the geology of the coal seams.

I'm a mining engineer by profession. I've worked as a mine manager for 15 years in my career. I do a little bit of consulting in the mining industry now but not very much.

30 I, I forgot to mention this earlier, but I'm also the owner of the Mount Broke Wines cellar door and restaurant and vineyard. But the point I wanted to make here is that Broke has a link to Ravensworth through the Old North Road. It has a link to the Bowman property. The Bowmans would have used the North Road and travelled through there to, to go to Sydney. I knew Doug McDonald, who owned the Edderton property, which is just to the north-east of Jerrys Plains. He said, you know, he was born in the very early 1900s, he said his birth was registered at Wollombi because that was still the legal centre for these, for the people that or the families that had come from, or the settlers that had come into this part of the region, that his father's birth was registered at Wollombi, and as a result his was.

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You can see the mining area that goes there. It's dramatically changed things. Broke's on the edge of the mining district and it's got its own, its own scene, it's got its own culture and, and mining doesn't, doesn't dominate what happens in Broke.

10 If we go to the next slide, Ravensworth House. The circle there shows where the house is currently located, and, and I've seen the recommendation from the Department of Planning that says keep the house up and move it locally and keep it on the same Ravensworth Farm, but as you can see, this is surrounded 360 degrees by mining activity. There is, there's also underground activity there. I used to work at the Liddell underground mine, which is, you can see Liddell on the, to the left-hand side of the image. And I just look at it and think if you look at the expenditure involved in relocating the homestead and moving it just up the road, to leave it isolated amongst this mining activity, what does that really gain? What is the community and economic benefit of doing that? And how, and I think that needs to be considered when you look at something very, very clever could be done with this property, with this building.

20 If I go to the next slide, it shows a plan drawn in 1859 after the village of Broke was drawn up, after it was designed. The actual, where it says, "Reserved for recreation and access to water," the green area there was originally put on a plan for the rest of the village earlier on, in somewhere around the 1830s, in the 1830s, but the village itself was not designed and put on a plan till 1859. Two key points are the reserve for recreation and access to water is where the proposed site of the Broke Village Square is in the red, the red oval, and directly across the road, directly across Wollembi Street, the road from Broke to Singleton now, is a, a vacant lot there on the, on the plan, which is reserved for public buildings.

30 Now, in the 1970s, that reserve for public buildings was sold off to private interests. I remember being at school and the teacher says, "Come outside and have a look because there's a bulldozer arrived and it's going to knock down all the trees on the reserve." And, and that reserve is now housing. So Broke lost its town centre, and the potential to deliver the town centre was lost at that time. I strongly believe the Broke Village Square proposal brings back an opportunity to restore the heart of the village.

40 The next slide shows the red-and-blue ovals again. You can see that what was the reserve for public buildings is now houses. This is a Google Earth image from 2022. And you can see the, the red circle for the proposed site of the Broke Village Square, next to the Wollembi Brook. Immediately across Milbrodale Road, is a skate park and a children's playground. There are some historic old churches along the, along Wollembi Street. There's an historic school, there's an historic gaol. There's a, there's a lot of history in the village. But the village does lack that heart, those things

that are sort of, they're in different places, and you can see when you look at the original plan that there was a plan to have a heart, a centre in this town. And the location that's proposed on the corner of Milbrodale Road, it, it exposes the site to traffic, it's central to, central to everything else that's in the village and it provides fantastic access into the Wollombi Brook. Having lived in Broke all my life, when I was, when I was a kid at Broke Primary School, there were about 10 houses in that village. From my perspective, this proposal, if it goes ahead, would totally change the village in terms of giving it that place where people come together on a regular daily basis because it becomes the town centre.

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The next slide, the next slide, I've just, this is a Google Earth, a Google Earth image from 2002. And the reason I've used this is because it shows the old Broke bridge, the old low level crossing that was built in the 1960s and since removed and it also shows the Wollombi Brook when it's not full of vegetation. But it's a, it's a beautiful white, sandy stream. Just downstream from the, from the bridge is an old weir that was built in the 1920s. It disappeared into the sand after the flood of 1949 and floods in the '50s, and as the brook slowly sort of regenerated and narrowed itself up and got deeper, the weir's, the, the, the causeway has been, it's come back up out of the sand and it's created a, a weir.

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So in the '70s and the '80s, people came here to go camping, to go and use the, the Wollombi Brook, to go swimming, to, to use the beautiful, the beautiful features of the sandy beaches and so on that were there. And I strongly believe that if the, if the Broke Village Square is constructed here and effort is put to clean the river up, then you can have a situation where you have the Broke Village Square, the town centre leading down to the, the white beaches and, and the waterhole in the, in the Wollombi Brook, delivering what this reserve was, was designed for (not transcribable)

MS LEESON: Sorry, Phil, I interrupt you there. Adrian has a question for you.

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MR PILTON: I was just going to ask the question why (not transcribable) the village square where you've got it with the red circle instead of up on Wollombi Street, which would be closer to the town itself?

MR McNAMARA: That, that distance between the red circle and Wollombi Street is about 40 metres, so I've, I've put it there, it sets it slightly back, I think, if you look at the, if you look at the image on the front, it's actually set closer to that point.

MR EWEN: Yeah, that's just a very diagrammatic drawing.

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MR McNAMARA: That's just, I've just, I've just used that for sort of guidance on people's eye because I wasn't sure whether I'd be – but, but, yeah, being a local, having, knowing the river, being there, if you set it back from the, from the road and the noise and take advantage of the natural beauty that exists there, I feel that's, that's a very, very good spot. The skate park, the skate park is straight across the road from it.

PROF. BARLOW: Paul? Snow Barlow here.

10 MR McNAMARA: Yeah.

PROF. BARLOW: What do you mean by cleaning up the river, Wollombi Brook? What's wrong with it at present?

MR McNAMARA: Well, if you look at the two images, the one that's taken in 2022, the Wollombi Brook's become congested. It, the Wollombi Brook was really badly eroded in 1949. It was totally cleaned out. My dad described it as it used to be a narrow little brook with a beautiful stream in the middle, and June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1949, he woke up in the morning and it was gone, every tree was gone and they could see, they could see across the valley to the rope flying, the flying fox rope flapping on top of the water. The whole thing turned into an eroded sandy bed and it's slowly, slowly, slowly recovered and, and revegetated. However, the vegetation in places has become so congested that the stream's becoming dirty, to some extent, and you, and, and you can't see that white sandy beach that exists. And the shot of 2002 just shows what it's like when it's less congested.

So when I say "cleaning it up", I mean, I mean, manually, you know, groups of people in a sort of, you know, Landcare, voluntary sort of nature, getting in the middle of the stream there and cleaning it up, clean up the, the grass, the rubbish, the, the, the shrubs, the scrub that sits in the middle of the brook and allowing it to flow, you know, across clean sand through that area. It's quite feasible. There are sections of the brook that are still, you know, don't, aren't, aren't congested like that but - - -

MS LEESON: Phil, sorry to interrupt. I think we've got a pretty clear picture of your view and the issues pertaining to Wollombi but can I just, and I think we understand the passion and the vision of moving the homestead to Broke. We have before us, I suppose, well, we do have two options before us. One is to relocate the homestead on the Ravensworth area. The other is to bring it in to town, into Broke. And we understand your reasoning for that and we understand the benefits of that. And, on the other hand, we've been presented with some benefits associated with leaving Ravensworth and also the pros, the cons of that, as well. When you mentioned earlier,

and what I'm interested in is you talked about Ravensworth and people would have gotten to Ravensworth using the North Road. That's clearly one sense of historic connection to the property. Are there other connections between Broke and Ravensworth Homestead? And I don't mean just in a physical road sense but either in a usage sense or any other heritage connections between the two sites, because it is presented to us that Broke is quite some distance from the homestead site where it is at the moment.

10 MR McNAMARA: That's why I wanted to introduce that sort of link of the North Road. My, my dad was the, my dad was the Shire President of Patrick Plains Shire and then the Mayor of Singleton. So he combined, you know, he was the shire president and then mayor for a period of approximately 25 years. And I remember being, it must have been about 1975, he took me to meet Campbell, to, well, simply because he needed to look after me for the day, I ended up in the car with him and I went to Ravensworth Homestead with, with my dad to meet Campbell Marshall, who was the outgoing shire president.

20 And I remember sitting in the, in the house as a kid, and Campbell Marshall was a World War One veteran, so he had some guns and a, you know, Lee-Enfield 303 and, and some, some artillery shells and stuff in his house which was sort of, like, a little bit fascinating for a kid. But I've got to say that in the rest of, for the rest of my life, I've heard nothing about Ravensworth House in terms of it adding any particular, you know, historic value or, to the population in the Hunter Valley in, in the Singleton area. I mean, it's occasionally made some noise, but once it moved from privately owned to mining-held, its, its value's dissipated. Is there, is there a link? Do people in Broke have a relationship with Ravensworth? Well, they did when I was young but Ravensworth disappeared. It's no longer a village. There was a school there. It was a little town. I mean, I, I knew kids from Ravensworth when I went to high school because that was there but Ravensworth's gone. It's, you know, it, it has been, been 30 replaced by the mining industry simply because the geology determines that that's a very, very low cost to mine.

MS LEESON: Okay.

MR McNAMARA: So - - -

MS LEESON: Thank you. I think that answers - - -

40 MR McNAMARA: Can I just ask, can I just finish the last two slides of the presentation 'cause the - - -

MS LEESON: Please. We are mindful of time but, yes.

MR McNAMARA: So am I. This, on this slide here, I've turned on the locations in the Broke Fordwich Private Irrigation District outlets. I'm a director. I've been on the board for, I've been on the board for 20 years. I'm a director. I'm the, I'm the Operations Manager. I run the, the Private Irrigation District. This thing's unique apart from there is another one at Pokolbin. There are more than 200 outlets here and every one of those pointers is an outlet in the system. We supply water to more than 200 people. It's, it's totally drought-proofed this area. And it, it allows people and  
10 houses and properties that were on land that was previously on dry land, no access to water, no access to the river or anything, it allows them to have a permanent water supply. It, it creates homes with gardens, agriculture, vineyards, great places for tourism and accommodation. It really underpins the whole area because it drought-proofs it.

And, you know, as a result of what that, the water and the people developing their properties and so on, wine and ecotourism is flourishing in Broke. And, and what we're trying to promote here is that this, this could become a very, very dynamic, a  
20 dynamic town centre that really adds something, you know, something similar to what happened in Pokolbin back in the '70s when a few places got put together in a certain location that actually built the industry.

And my simple argument is it costs 10 to \$15 million to move it onsite and the public gets no benefit. Historically, the value's diminished if it's moved onsite. That says so in the, in the Planning Department documents. For the cost of an extra five or six or \$7 million, which Glencore are not, don't object to, they're party to it, we can move it to Broke and create something that's spectacular, something that would be of real value, ongoing, into the future, that gives Broke something significant as a, as a, as a,  
30 as a, from the mining industry that lasts and stays there.

MS LEESON: Thank you, Phil. I think you have one more slide that you want to present.

MR McNAMARA: Yeah, the last slide. I just wanted to say proponents and issues. You know, as Stewart said, Glencore have supported this very much. Stewart has been the champion of this. He's introduced the concept to Glencore. They've come along. They support it. There's been extensive public consultation in Broke by Glencore and by us. Stewart and I held a public meeting together. There's always a few people object, but the majority and the large groundswell is this would be a great  
40 thing. It, it, the site, you can see there it's on the corner in this image. The site's managed by Singleton Council. It's Crown land. It's managed by Singleton Council

and my understanding is they're about to vote on how their support for this project works. That's going to happen quite soon.

MS LEESON: We'll be speaking to Singleton Council later (not transcribable)

MR McNAMARA: Yep. Yeah, I, you know, I obviously have some links from Singleton Council and in the past and so on. The, the reserve, McNamara Park, is named after my dad because of his, his involvement in civic duty. The land, the planning and approval process, it should not be made complicated if, if the use of the public, of the land reserve is embraced, that is the Singleton Council embrace it and the locals embrace it, it should be relatively straightforward. It's Crown land so native title exists, but if it's done properly, it doesn't necessarily trigger the native title unless you vary the land title or significantly vary the land use. I've negotiated four separate native title agreements in the Northern Territory and Queensland in my, in my sort of corporate career and, you know, I do have a pretty solid understanding. There are different views, but it can be dealt with. My point is - - -

MS LEESON: Phil, Phil, we do need to, Phil, we need you to wrap up very quickly, I'm afraid. You will be more than welcome to make a public presentation at the public hearing in a couple of weeks, so I'd like - - -

MR McNAMARA: My last, my last point, Ravensworth Homestead, it can be left isolated at the mine or it can be relocated to Broke, creating a spectacular benefit for all of the community to use. And I guess I'm speaking to the, to the panel that's going to make some decisions about that, and I appeal to you to have a serious look at what we're talking about, because the community of Broke and the surrounds and the people that come there will highly appreciate it if it happens. Thanks.

MR EWEN: Chair, can I just say two or three words just to wrap up. Look, very, very quickly, going back to last year, we had a meeting with the Department of Planning and Singleton Council on site. The meeting was chaired by a Mr Matthew Sprott, S-p-r-o-t-t. He was the manager within the Department of Planning handling this project. I understand he is now on other projects. But I want to quote you him in concluding this. He, at the end of about a three or four hours of going through all the issues onsite, he made the following statement. He said that it is very clear that the heritage and social issues of - sorry, I need to just start again quickly. "The social and economic benefits of moving Ravensworth Homestead to Broke vastly outweigh any heritage or other issues relating to the current mine." Now, that, that's what really floored us when the department came out with a statement that varied from that. We think that that's, you know, my experience tells me that that's the politics of bureaucracy and the Heritage Act. Here is a really special opportunity, and we hope

that you can grasp it because these opportunities don't come up very often. And I just refer you back to the Wambo situation, we don't want another Wambo. We want to see something happen here that benefits everyone in, in a manner that is just quite amazing. So we appreciate the opportunity. We understand that you're possibly coming to Broke and have a look at the area. We hope that you do and we hope that we might just be able to meet you quickly at that time.

10 MS LEESON: We certainly do want to come to Ravensworth and to Broke to have a look. We have some logistics to work out before we can manage that. I'm going to at this point close the meeting, but thank you very much for your presentation and you've explained to us quite well, I think, the vision and opportunity you have identified for this in Broke. We obviously have to take that into account while we do our deliberations. And, and look at this, this issue, which is a bit of a thorny issue from, from many, many aspects. So that's been very fruitful and helpful for our discussions. As I said earlier, please feel free to register to present at the public meeting or the public hearing in a week or two's time, and we would also welcome any formal submission to the Commission, which I think is due by late March. So on that, if I can thank you once again, we will close the meeting. Thank you.

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**RECORDING CONCLUDED**

**[1.55pm]**