

The Stroud-Gloucester Valley

A HERITAGE LANDSCAPE UNDER THREAT



Sir Arthur Streeton, *The Gloucester Buckets*, 1894

**THE STROUD-GLOUCESTER VALLEY:
A HERITAGE LANDSCAPE UNDER THREAT**

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The Vale of Gloucester

The scenery drew comment on its sighting by Robert Dawson in exploration of November 1826. Dawson's description of the setting for the town of Gloucester is still recognisable today.

It was with some impatience that I approached the high and rocky peaks which were elevated above the forest, like monuments in the wilderness, and which formed so remarkable a picture in this part of the colony. ... The country as we advanced became gradually more even and fertile, till at length we became upon a beautiful and rich flat of considerable extent...

Gloucester Shire Council recognised the valley's significance in the commemorative publication *The Vale of Gloucester*, 1953. The Vale of Gloucester was among the first cultural landscapes to be formally identified in Australia when it was listed by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) in 1975 and nominated for entry on the Register of the National Estate in 1976.

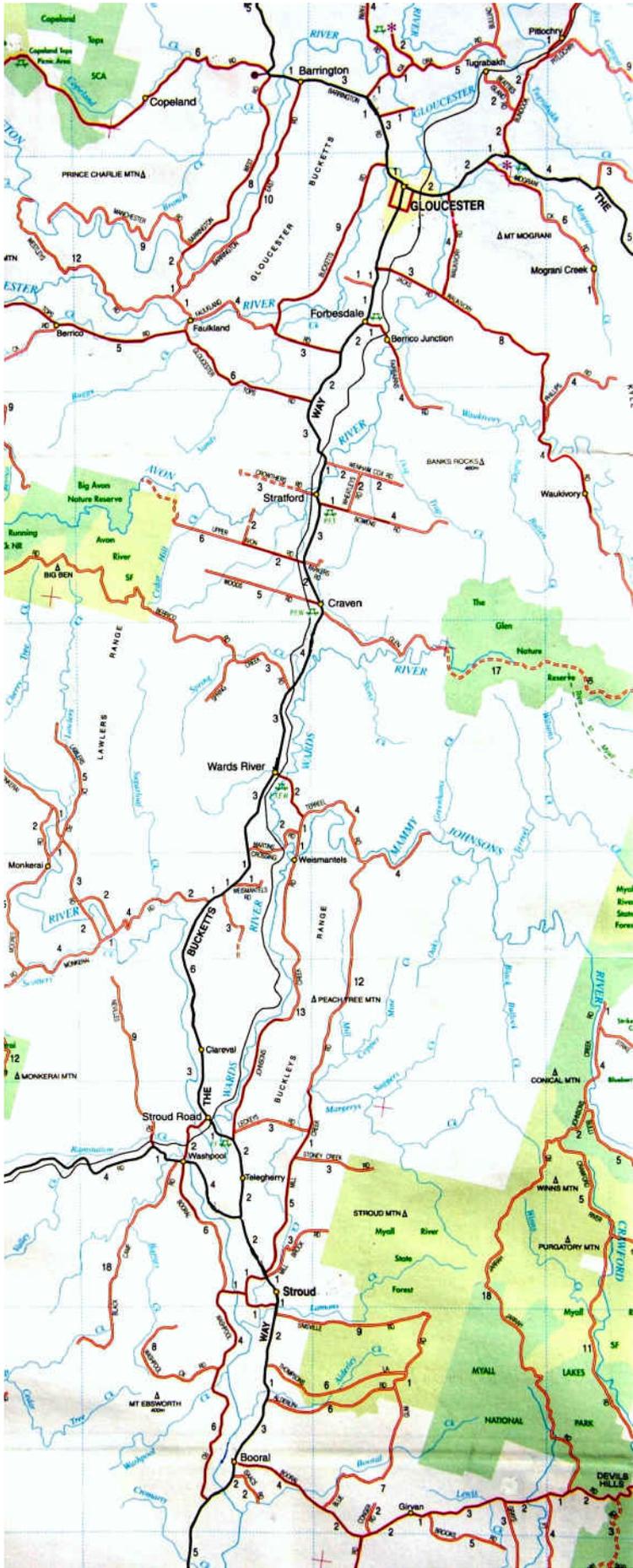
The following documents provide an overview of the Valley's heritage assessments to date.

- the Gloucester Shire Council's commemorative publication *The Vale of Gloucester*, Eve Keane, Gloucester Shire Council, 1953;
 - the National Trust of Australia (NSW) listing 1975;
 - the nomination to the Register of the National Estate 1976;
 - the National Trust of Australia (NSW) revised listing 1981;
 - provision of the Environment Protection (Scenic) Zone in the Gloucester LEP 2000, revised 2010;
 - the National Trust of Australia revised listing 2009;
 - nomination to the National Heritage List 2010, 2012;
 - Publication of *The Stroud-Gloucester Valley: A Heritage Landscape Under Threat*, BGSP Alliance Inc., 2009; revised 2015, 2016.
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Above. Stroud, 1852, water colour by Conrad Martens, (1801-1878). The painting depicts St Johns Church, *Quambi House* and the first rectory, later destroyed by fire. Martens was born in London in 1801 and was trained in landscape painting by Copley Fielding. He joined the *Beagle* at Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1832 as artist for scientific survey team that included Charles Darwin. He arrived in Sydney in 1835 where he worked as a teacher and artist, and established a reputation for his panoramic views of the harbour and foreshores. He travelled extensively through New South Wales during the late 1840s and 1850s and visited Stroud in 1852. His work is highly regarded both for its artistic merit and its historical value.

Cover. The Gloucester Buckets, 1894, by Sir Arthur Streeton (1867-1943). Streeton was born at Dundee, Victoria in 1867. He learned sketching and water-colour painting as a child and was apprenticed as a lithographer in 1886. In late 1886 he met Tom Roberts who invited him to join Roberts and a group of painters that also included Frederic McCubbin and Louis Abrahams. Streeton worked in Victoria until 1890 when he moved to Sydney. From 1891 he travelled through much of New South Wales striving to capture the character of the Australian landscape as he saw it. This early period, to about 1896, is considered by many to have produced his finest landscapes. Streeton left for England shortly after and won recognition in Britain, France and the United States. He established a reputation as a war artist during World War I.



The Stroud – Gloucester Valley

Scale 0 10km

Extracted from the map, NRMA, Lower and Mid North Coast, undated, purchased March 2009

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THE STROUD-GLOUCESTER VALLEY: A HERITAGE LANDSCAPE UNDER THREAT

SECTION 1 BACKGROUND TO THE ASSESSMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

This assessment considers the Stroud-Gloucester Valley as a cultural heritage landscape of state significance. In so doing it also concludes that the Valley in its entirety, or at least for substantial parts of it, is of national significance. It is clear in view of proposed gas and coal mining that a full heritage-scenic assessment is required if the valley's important place in Australia's history and its very special environmental qualities are to be preserved. This document provides a basis for such an assessment - it is not intended to be complete, rather it seeks to show how little has been done and how much is now needed. The assessment depends principally on the valley's special geological qualities and scenic qualities, its occupation by the Australian Agricultural Company and before them by the Worimi and Biripi peoples.

The Australian Agricultural Company was formed in London in April 1824 and incorporated in June of that year under an Imperial Act of the British Parliament. The Company received a conditional grant of one million acres between Port Stephens and the Manning River and, at least initially, a guaranteed convict labour force. Settlement of its Port Stephens Estate commenced in 1826 with view to establishing a fine-wool industry and to cultivate a range of agricultural crops. The company prospered but the Port Stephens Estate proved unsuitable for sheep grazing and the sheep were moved to the Peel River Estate in 1856. The Company eventually ended its occupation of the Stroud-Gloucester Valley in 1902.

The Australian Agricultural Company's occupation of the Stroud-Gloucester Valley left a legacy of early colonial buildings and a grazing landscape created by the Company's venture. These features, coupled with the valley's distinctive geological features and impressive scenery, led to it being classified by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) in 1976 as a Landscape Conservation Area for historic and scenic reasons. It was one of the first landscapes so identified in New South Wales. The listing for 'Vale of Gloucester' was revised and extended in area in 1981 but otherwise has not been reassessed since that time. Changes have occurred after the Company's exit and new development took place, but along lines that were consistent with the valley's rural character.

That has changed. The proposed large-scale coal mining and methane gas mining have brought to the valley a level of development pressure that could never have been envisaged. The valley's scenic and heritage qualities as a total 'place' are not being recognised; scenic-heritage assessments seek only individual 'items' and contend that there is no adverse impact created by the development because there is no historic building or other 'item' in the direct path of the development.

2. THE CULTURAL HERITAGE LANDSCAPE

The term 'cultural heritage landscape' denotes that the landscape's essential character is that of a cultural landscape rather than a natural landscape. The term does not

preclude a landscape from also having natural significance and acknowledges that natural significance may contribute to the landscape's cultural significance.

A cultural heritage landscape should be considered as an integral, whole landscape; it should not be viewed only as a number of items or areas within the larger landscape. Development that takes place in any part of the landscape ultimately impacts on the whole of the landscape from a scenic and heritage consideration. Without a 'whole of landscape' approach, the component vistas, buildings and historical sites that make up the whole, even if they are protected individually, will become detached items in a disjointed landscape. The significance of the landscape will therefore be lost.

Cultural landscapes are not restricted to those traditional sites where a property, precinct or village are the places more usually identified. Many larger examples have been identified, both in Australia and throughout the world. For example, the World Heritage Orkhon Valley Cultural Landscape in Mongolia totals 121,967 hectares, the Agave Landscape and Ancient Industrial facilities in Mexico total 34,658 hectares and the Pyrenees – Mount-Perdu geological and pastoral landscape totals 30,639 hectares. In Australia, the World Heritage Willandra Lakes Region, which is of both cultural and natural significance, exceeds 240,000 hectares.

In natural heritage terms, the World Heritage Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves in New South Wales and Southern Queensland total 366,507 hectares, with the nearby Barrington Tops National Park component of that being slightly more than 74,000 hectares and with a further 8,500 hectares in the Barrington Tops State Conservation Area. The total area of the Stroud-Gloucester Valley is considerably less than these examples. Restricting the boundaries to the valley floor and the immediate bordering ranges gives an area of approximately 25,000 hectares although extending the boundaries further into the lateral ranges and the adjoining Gloucester River and Waukivory valleys will increase this figure.

3. DEFINING THE STROUD-GLOUCESTER VALLEY

Defining that area referred to variously as the *Vale of Gloucester*, the *Gloucester Valley*, the *Stroud-Gloucester Valley* and the *Stroud-Gloucester Syncline* requires a detailed consideration of the natural, historical and social factors that have moulded the physical and cultural landscape into its present form. This will entail an understanding of the geological formation of the valley, its climate, its occupation by Aboriginal people and then the layers of European settlement that have arrived following its occupation by the Australian Agricultural Company in the late 1820s.

Three broad definitions of the Stroud-Gloucester Valley have been in use to date. The first includes only the immediate surrounds of Gloucester at the northern end of the valley, the second covers the area from Stroud Road to around Barrington and the third, which is the preferred definition for this assessment, extends from Booral in the south to around Barrington.

Definition 1

The first and most restricted of the areas refers to the immediate surroundings of the Gloucester township. This area is too restricted to assess the historical, geological, and scenic significance of the Gloucester Valley as a multifaceted natural-cultural

heritage landscape but it is relevant because it corresponds to the Scenic protection zone 7(d) on the Gloucester Local Environmental Plan 2000. It is therefore of critical importance when assessing the potential scenic-heritage impact of major development in the proximity of Gloucester township.

This area is up to twelve kilometres from east to west at its widest point and ten kilometres from south to north. It includes the Mograni Range on the eastern side, and extends beyond the Bucketts on the western side. It commences in the vicinity of the Faulklands Road-Bucketts Way intersection in the south and extends to the vicinity of Barrington in the north.

Definition 2

The second area was defined by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) as extending from around Stroud Road in the south to around Barrington – Tugrahakh in the north, and was referred by them as the *Vale of Gloucester*. The National Trust listing, to be considered later in this assessment, provides a powerful and highly authoritative statement about the Gloucester Valley's heritage significance. The selection of Stroud Road as the southern boundary is unexplained given the exclusion of the highly significant Stroud township area to the south but possibly was made on perceptions of the valley's scenic qualities starting at that point. This definition also has geological basis; it is referred to geologically as the Stroud-Gloucester syncline, the southern 'closure' of which is noted as being in the Stroud Road area.¹

Definition 3 – the preferred definition

The third area, extending from Booral in the south to around Barrington-Tugrahakh in the north best defines the Gloucester Valley. This definition provides consistency between the three principal identifying factors; geological formation, historical settlement by the Australian Agricultural Company and scenic qualities. Geologically, this definition has merit despite its area extending beyond the southern extremity of the Stroud-Gloucester syncline.

Definition 3 - geological reasons

Geologically, the boundaries of the Gloucester Valley can be defined by the Alum Mountain Volcanics. The formation, which is named after the Alum Mountain near Bulahdelah in the Myall syncline to the east, consists mainly of Permian basalt flows with rhyolite and interbedded pebble conglomerates and coal seams at the base.² In the Gloucester Valley it is typified by the Gloucester Bucketts, the formation's most conspicuous feature. The formation commences in a north-south alignment near Booral, diverges into two north-south aligned arms a little north of Stroud Road and then rejoins immediately north of Gloucester, thus forming the two sides of the Valley over the greater part of its length. The north-south alignment of the valley ends abruptly in a complicated series of faults about three kilometres north of Gloucester and is replaced by an area of less clearly defined ridges and valleys before joining the

1 John Roberts, Brian Engel & John Chapman (Ed), *Geology of the Camberwell, Dungog and Bulahdelah 1:100 000 sheets*, 1991, Geological Survey of New South Wales, NSW Department of Minerals and Energy, p.3.

2 See map Dungog Geological Series Sheet 9233 (Edition 1) 1991, Geological Survey of NSW; Department of Mineral Resources for a more technical description.

eastward flowing Manning River. Between these lateral volcanic formations lie the Permian coalfields of the Derwang to Avon coal measures.³

The Craven watershed divides this northern section of the valley into the southward flowing Karuah, Wards and Mammy Johnsons Rivers and the northward flowing Avon and Gloucester Rivers but the division is barely discernable, so that the impression of a single valley prevails. This divide today marks the boundary between Gloucester Shire Council and the Great Lakes Council. Overall, the Valley extends about 55 kilometres in length from Booral to the Bowman River. It is of varying width, being narrowest in the section between Stroud Road and Weismantels and broadest between Craven and Gloucester, where it is up to ten kilometres wide.

Definition 3 - historical reasons

(Readers are referred to Section 5 *A background history*, which follows this assessment.)

The historical importance of Booral in defining the southern extremity of the Gloucester Valley is threefold. First, Booral marks the head of navigation on the Karuah River. The Booral wharf was the point of arrival of all goods and supplies to be brought into the area or taken from the area. The wharf was constructed about 1834 as a large stone and timber structure measuring, about 10 x 20 metres in size and was equipped with cranes and stores to handle incoming supplies and the wool and agricultural produce that were expected from the new settlement.⁴

The second reason relates to the generally poor quality soils of the Port Stephens Estate. Attempts were made to farm the areas near the settlement at Carrington, Port Stephens, but with little success and suitable land was sought further north in the Stroud-Gloucester Valley. The alluvial floodplain of the Karuah River at Booral, although small in area, provided such land and became a valuable food source for the troubled fledging settlement in much the same manner as the more extensive Hawkesbury River floodplain supplied the fledgling Port Jackson settlement. Booral thus marked the beginnings of agricultural settlement in the valley.

The third reason arises naturally from the first two reasons. Booral marks the beginning of the remaining physical evidence as it is seen today – buildings of varying function and type, archaeological sites and the landscape itself extend northward from Booral to north of Gloucester. Booral contains eight buildings remaining from the Australian Agricultural Company era while Stroud, which became the Company's headquarters because of its suitable agricultural and pastoral location, is approximately eight kilometres to the north.⁵

Definition 3 - scenic reasons

Booral marks the beginning of the Stroud-Gloucester Valley from a scenic consideration. However, the traveller does not enter the valley at a clearly defined entrance point, travel through a continuing similar landscape and then exit the valley.

3 Above note 2; also map Newcastle, New South Wales, 1:25000 Geological Series, Sheet S1 56-2.

4 The wharf was listed in the *Heritage Register, Report and Thematic Study, Hunter Region Environmental Plan Heritage Study*, 1988, (Suters, Busted, Corner, Clode Pty Ltd.) as an item of regional significance. The wharf has not been inspected in the last 10 years due to difficulty of access and requires an updated inspection and assessment for State heritage significance.

5 Stroud became the headquarters during the early 1830s and remained so until 1856 when the headquarters were moved to Sydney.

The valley is rather a varying landscape of related features and scenes. The alluvial floor of the Karuah River marks the entrance and, although intensive agriculture is not undertaken on it today, its suitability to its past agricultural function is still apparent. The valley floor varies from flat to undulating, the valley itself varies in width and vegetation varies from almost totally cleared of natural forest to open wooded areas to forested hills, while the bordering ranges that form the lateral boundaries vary from rounded hills to starkly rugged volcanic outcrops. It is this varying but interrelated scenery that creates the valley's visual appeal and unites it into the one, coherent landscape.

4. EXISTING RECOGNITION OF THE STROUD-GLOUCESTER VALLEY AS A CULTURAL HERITAGE LANDSCAPE

The first requirement is to assess all existing recognition of the Stroud-Gloucester Valley as a scenic-historic landscape. This will include the Gloucester Shire and Great Lakes Local Environmental Plans but it should be noted that both of these are currently being reviewed.

Scenic qualities identified in the local Environmental plans

The Gloucester Local Environmental Plan states as an object for its 1(a) rural zone 'to maintain the scenic amenity and landscape quality of the area' and 'to encourage other forms of development, including tourism, that are compatible with agricultural activities and do not create undesirable environmental and cultural impacts'. The objectives for Zone 1 (c) Small Rural Holdings and Zone 1 (f) Forestry also include provisions to maintain the character, amenity and landscape qualities of the areas.

The Gloucester Local Environmental Plan specifically addresses natural and scenic conservation by way of providing Environmental Protection Scenic, Scientific and Wildlife Habitat Zones.⁶ Most important among these for this assessment is the Zone 7(d) scenic protection zone that surrounds the Gloucester township and corresponds to the first definition for the Gloucester Valley described above in 2 DEFINING THE STROUD-GLOUCESTER VALLEY.

The Great Lakes Local Environmental Plan has no such provisions at present but acknowledges the scenic significance for Stroud's scenic setting by way of the *Stroud Heritage Development Control Plan 2000*. This document provides for the Stroud Heritage Conservation Area to protect the more historic parts of the town and the Stroud Visual Catchment Area and the Stroud Cultural Landscape Area to protect the integrity of the setting.

Heritage items currently identified in the Local Environmental Plans

The recognition of the Stroud-Gloucester Valley as a cultural heritage landscape is not dependent on the identification of individual items within the landscape; the landscape can be recognised for its qualities alone. However, the identification of individual items, structures and sites within the cultural landscape bring greater context to it; they assist in the interpretation of the landscape and understanding the reasons for its form and character. They record the layers of development that have taken place and

⁶ Gloucester Local Environmental Plan cls 7(d), 7(j), 7(l).

provide insight into the purposes, hopes and aspirations that led to that development and the successes and failures that were forthcoming from it.

The Gloucester Shire Council Local Environmental Plan 2000 lists 64 items of which 47 are within the defined Gloucester Valley and 13 of the remaining 17 are in close proximity and could be considered within the Stroud-Gloucester Valley depending on the chosen boundaries. Four of these items are of State heritage significance. One heritage conservation area is identified, the Gloucester Main Street precinct, which covers the commercial area. Several items should be reassessed for state significance, particularly the former Gloucester Station residence because of its links with the Australian Agricultural Company and the area's first settlement. Four potential archaeological sites are listed in Schedule 5 of the Local Environmental Plan, three of which are located in the Gloucester Valley.

The *Great Lakes Heritage Study* 2007 study identified 56 items of cultural significance in that part of the Gloucester Valley within the Great Lakes Council area.⁷ Important among these is the Stroud Heritage Conservation Area, which includes the original commercial, civic and residential areas relating the Australian Agricultural Company's establishment and occupancy of the town.⁸ Two groups of items, the Gundayne Group at Booral and the St Johns Group at Stroud, are of State significance but a number of other buildings should be similarly assessed. In addition to these items, another twenty items within the Stroud Heritage Conservation Area were considered to be of local significance but have not been fully assessed at this time. A further 22 items were assessed as having a lesser level of heritage significance. Although the Great Lakes items were concentrated in Booral and Stroud, a number extend to its northern boundary with Gloucester Shire Council. All except 'Mammy' Johnson's Grave at Stroud Road represent European cultural heritage.

The National Trust listing for the *Vale of Gloucester*.

The National Trust of Australia (NSW) has identified 85 conservation landscapes in New South Wales, including the Vale of Gloucester.⁹ The original proposal was drawn up in 1975 and indicates the early recognition of the Gloucester Valley as a cultural heritage landscape of great significance – the *Vale of Gloucester* sits in the Register among other highly significant conservation areas such as the Kosciusko Alpine Areas, Lord Howe Island, Parramatta Park and the Cumberland Plain Remnant Communities. The National Trust listing does not have statutory force but is a highly persuasive assessment of the Valley's significance. The National Trust identified the Vale of Gloucester as extending from Stroud Road in the south to the junction of the Bowman and Gloucester Rivers in the north and westward into the Gloucester River valley to beyond Berrico.

The Trust's assessment is based upon the Valley's historical significance, its association with the Australian Agricultural Company and its special scenic qualities;

7 Garry Smith, *Great Lakes Heritage Study* 2007, Part 5, Items of Heritage Significance.

8 W. Ranald Boydell for Great Lakes Council, *Stroud Heritage Development Control Plan*, 2000, figure 1, rear page.

9 National Trust of Australia (NSW) Conservation Landscape Data Base.

This area...is an historical landscape, important to the development of Australian agriculture and complementary to the township of Stroud in evaluating the activities of the Australian Agricultural Company.

and in relation to Gloucester township;

The town of Gloucester is surrounded by a series of low hill ranges which dominate the valley floor and provided a spectacular landscape to the agricultural activity that takes place in the valley.¹⁰

The Trust's assessment proposed that;

[T]he Vale of Gloucester be the subject of a detailed Rural Lands Environmental study, with a view to protection under a Regional or Local Environmental Plan. Any future proposals, especially those affecting the expansion of existing settlements and industrialisation should be adequately investigated to ensure that such development will not detract from the essentially rural nature of the area and is harmoniously sited in respect to the more outstanding features of the landscape.

The National Estate Database

A second listing exists for the *Vale of Gloucester* on the National Estate Database. In considering the National Estate Database it should be noted that the Heritage Commission, the controlling body, was abolished on 1 January 2004 and that additions or changes have not been allowed after that date.¹¹ Important among the Database listings at the time the Heritage Commission was abolished was an indicative listing for the Vale of Gloucester, made for landscape and cultural significance.

The Register of the National Estate identified places that have aesthetic, historic, scientific or social significance for the present community and for future generations. Items were not necessarily of national significance and many were also listed on the relevant national, state or local registers or inventories. The National Estate Register does not therefore have legal force but it is highly persuasive in that the Heritage Commission considered the place worthy of entry on the National Estate Register. The boundaries of the *Vale of Gloucester* were not explicitly identified but appear to be consistent with the National Trust listing.

.....

10 National Trust of Australia (NSW), *Vale of Gloucester*, Listing proposal NTN.o6 page 1 and Appendix A.

11 *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* 1999 (Cth) and the *Australian Heritage Council Act* 2003 (Cth).

SECTION 2 ASSESSING SIGNIFICANCE AT THE LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL LEVELS

5. ASSESSMENT BY THE NSW HERITAGE MANUAL.

The *NSW Heritage Manual* does not specifically address landscape assessment but relies on the general assessment criteria and evaluation guidelines provided in Appendices A and B. The assessment criteria specified are historical significance, aesthetic significance, technical/research significance and social significance. These are consistent with the Australian Council of National Trusts criteria, which provide for assessment under historic value, social value, aesthetic value and scientific value¹² and are also consistent with the criteria and guidelines published by Heritage Victoria.¹³

Two further criteria, those of rarity and representativeness are used to assess the degree of significance under the four criteria but these assessments have not been developed in this document because of the need, in many instances, for further comparative assessment.

The criteria used are those recommended for entry onto both the State Heritage Register, for items with state significance, and the State Heritage Inventory, for items with local heritage significance. This assessment considers that the Stroud-Gloucester Valley has state level significance. The issue of whether the Stroud-Gloucester Valley has national level heritage significance is worthy of full assessment and is addressed after this assessment.

Historical significance

Significant because of the importance of an association with, or a position in the evolving pattern of our cultural history – with phases, activities or people.

Three areas of significance are defined, to have heritage significance a place needs to meet at least one of the areas but may meet more than one. They are;

- shows evidence of significant human occupation or activity;
- is associated with a significant activity, event, historical phase or person;
- maintains or shows the continuity of a historical process or activity.

The Stroud-Gloucester Valley shows evidence of the Australian Agricultural Company's settlement by way of its extensive vistas over the cleared grazing lands to the bordering ranges. This is reinforced by the surviving buildings and sites that are spread through the valley from Booral in the south to near Gloucester. These views, buildings and sites can still be readily recognised by the observer and by comparison with important historical accounts such as J.D. Lang's account of c.1850.¹⁴

12 Australian Council of National Trusts *National Policy for the Conservation of Cultural Landscapes*, March 1999, page 4.

13 Heritage Victoria, *Landscape Assessment Guidelines for Cultural Heritage Significance*, last update June 2002, page 7.

14 John Dunmore Lang, *An Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales: including A Visit to the Gold Regions, and a Description of the Mines*; Third edition, 1852, Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, London, p.208.

The Stroud-Gloucester Valley is significant historically because of its association with the formative years of the wool industry. The nineteenth century was a period of rapid expansion of the British woollen mills and wool, both in British industrial terms and in Australian colonial terms, was the source of fortunes. It was for Australian agriculture a period of experimentation, new settlement and 'robust' land acquisition – it was the age of the squatters. The Australian Agricultural Company's venture in the Port Stephens Estate did not succeed but it determined for all time that the humid coastal areas are unsuited to wool production. The failed venture led to improvements in stockbreeding and animal husbandry practices generally. The Company was highly successful in its venture on the Goonoo Goonoo and Warrah Estates near Tamworth and became a major influence on the development of the New South Wales wool industry.

The Australian Agricultural Company was the first large agricultural company formed on the Australian mainland and was formed a few months ahead of the Van Dieman's Land Company in Tasmania, making it the first such company formed in Australia.¹⁵ Companies of this scale became a feature of Australia's rural development and the Australian Agricultural Company continues to be a major influence today.

The buildings and sites that remain both from the Company's time and from later periods of development are important visual elements in the landscape and important historical records of those periods of development. Some of these buildings and sites also have aesthetic and technical/research significance but, for convenience, are addressed only in this section. The early Australian Agricultural Company buildings in Booral and Stroud are the most salient examples - these vividly record both the application of architectural styles and techniques to the pioneer settlement and the adaptation of local materials to meet those requirements. The State Heritage Register listing for St Johns Church notes that;

The Church is a finely crafted example and subdued example of early architecture that predates the influence of ecclesiology. Incredibly, few changes have been made to the building, and it remains to this day essentially as it was designed and constructed in 1833.

Many of these buildings were constructed with the assistance of convict labour and this, along with the broader contribution of convict labour to land improvements and road construction, constitutes an important area of significance that requires major research.

Aesthetic significance

Significant for strong visual, or sensory appeal... landmark qualities.

Five areas of significance are defined, the third and fourth are relevant;

- shows or is associated with creative or technical innovation or achievement;
- is the inspiration for a creative or technical innovation or achievement;
- is aesthetically distinctive;
- has landmark qualities;
- exemplifies a particular taste, style or technology.

15 The dates given under the listing for Edward Curr, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol 1 Melbourne University Press, 1966, pp. 269-272 indicate almost simultaneous formation with the A. A. Co. being first by three months.

The Stroud- Gloucester Valley is acknowledged for its visual qualities, these qualities underpin both the valley's tourism qualities and its new-settlement appeal and, from that, its economic base. As noted previously, the valley's scenic qualities form a major basis for the National Trust's identification of the *Vale of Gloucester* as a Landscape Conservation Area approved for entry onto the national Trust register on 31 May 1976, making one of the first such areas identified in New South Wales. The Trust's entry notes that:

The town of Gloucester is surrounded by a series of low hill ranges which dominate the valley floor and provide a spectacular landscape to the agricultural activity that takes place in the valley.

A large number of views throughout the Stroud-Gloucester Valley have landmark significance and some of these are illustrated by way of example. This quality, widespread as it is throughout the valley, is nowhere better exemplified than by the Gloucester Bucketts and it is doubtful if any town in Australia has a more dramatic backdrop. That landmark view, however, is not just of the Bucketts themselves - it includes the Mograni Range on the eastern side of Gloucester, the valley between, the views from both the Bucketts and the Mograni range and the panoramic views provided by the Mograni Lookout on the Bucketts Way.

That scenery drew comment on its first sighting by Robert Dawson in his exploration of November 1826. Dawson's description of the setting for the town of Gloucester is still recognisable today.

It was with some impatience that I approached the high and rocky peaks which were elevated above the forest, like monuments in the wilderness, and which formed so remarkable a picture in this part of the colony. ... The country as we advanced became gradually more even and fertile, till at length we became upon a beautiful and rich flat of considerable extent...From this level the ground rose abruptly to an almost naked range of sandstone mountains... Several peaks towered above the range, like the turrets of a fortified place and on their tops grew a few stunted evergreens, giving the whole the appearance of ivy-clad ruins...I perceived that it was washed by a steam of no ordinary size... The loud murmuring of a rapid and refreshing steam in such a climate ... seemed for the moment, in the midst of such romantic scenery, like a species of enchantment.¹⁶

The scenic significance was especially noted in the special commemorative publication, *The Vale of Gloucester*, 1952:

The newcomer to Gloucester is repaid copiously for his interest. Scenically the country is magnificent. Soft blue ranges and near purple peaks on all sides break the lines of the rolling hills and spurs where grassy slopes, green in spring, deepening in colour under the warm summer days until they glow with the rich colouring and bloom of a blood red plum. ... High up on the sources of the Manning, the Bowman and the Barrington Rivers, morning mists hang mauve among the grey-green foliage and sombre rocks; whilst out on Mograni spur nature spreads out the whole riches of a full palette. This is painters' country...¹⁷

16 Robert Dawson, *The Present State of Australia*, 1831, cited in Eve Keane, *The Vale of Gloucester*, 1952, Gloucester Shire Council.

17 Eve Keane, *Vale of Gloucester*, Gloucester Shire Council-Oswald Ziegler Publications, 1952, 'A

The valley's scenic qualities provide its greatest tourism asset, drawing large numbers of visitors at all times of the year. Observation of people stopping at the Mograni Lookout leads to the conclusion that this view must be among the most photographed views in New South Wales.

Stroud and Booral at the southern end of the valley have also been noted for their historical and scenic setting. The document *Stroud Heritage: Heritage Significance*, which accompanies the *Stroud Heritage Development Control Plan*, noted in 2000 that:

Unspoiled by development and sheltered by the surrounding mountains, Stroud is a reminder of the influence of the AA Company in the nineteenth century and its role in the country's rural development. While the town's progress has been hampered by its isolation, that isolation has protected the natural beauty of the area and an impressive built environment which dates from the earliest days of settlement.¹⁸

Social significance

Significant through association with a contemporary community for social, spiritual or other reasons.

Two areas of significance area defined.

- is important for its association with an identifiable group;
- is crucial to a community's sense of place.

The *NSW Heritage Manual* advises that a place should be excluded from the above considerations if it 'is only important to the community for amenity reasons'. This assessment considers that the second area of significance is relevant and, that while amenity forms a part of the community's appreciation of the valley's scenic and historic qualities, the appreciation goes far beyond mere enjoyment of the amenity.

An assessment of the social significance of the valley's historical and scenic qualities does more than acknowledge that those qualities exist to the impartial observer. It considers the degree to which they shape the values and attitudes of the community and, from that, contribute to the community's identity and sense of place. The Gloucester Valley's scenic and historical qualities, and the community association with them, can be seen to meet this criterion. This is especially illustrated by Gloucester's special association with the Bucketts and the adjacent valleys of the Avon and Gloucester Rivers, and by the Stroud community's special association with Stroud's history, its early colonial beginnings and its scenic setting near the southern end of the valley.

The Vale of Gloucester, as described by Eve Keane, is indeed 'painters country'.

Technical/research significance

Significance because of its contribution or potential contribution to an understanding of our cultural history or environment.

Three areas of significance are defined.

welcome for those passing by', np, conclusion to the text.

18 W. Ranald Boydell, *Stroud Heritage: Heritage Significance*, 2000, Great Lakes Council, p.7.

- is yielding, or has the potential to yield new and further substantial scientific, historical, cultural, technical and/or archaeological information;
- is an important benchmark or reference site of its type;
- provides evidence of past technologies or cultures of human behaviour patterns that is unavailable elsewhere.

This is the last criterion to be considered relevant to the Stroud-Gloucester Valley. It is the most difficult of the four areas to quantify but significance exists in all three areas, particularly in regard to Aboriginal occupation and their relationship with the Australian Agricultural Company. Historical evidence shows that the Stroud-Gloucester Valley was a rich food source and that it supported a considerable Aboriginal population. Aboriginal land management created the open, grassy apple woodlands that Robert Dawson enthused about and were a major reason behind the Australian Agricultural Company's decision to retain the western half of the Port Stephens Estate (the Stroud-Gloucester Valley) but to exchange the eastern half for land on the New England Plains.

Unfortunately there has not been a continued Aboriginal presence in the valley and thus no continuing oral tradition. Knowledge of sacred sites, areas of spiritual importance, areas of material or 'commercial' significance and sites of conflict with the Australian Agricultural Company has been lost. A few localised archaeological assessments have been undertaken to justify one particular development or another but there has been no comprehensive archaeological/historical assessment of the valley. There is recent interest in the preservation of the grave of an Aboriginal woman known as Mammy Johnson and in the significance of the broader area around Mammy Johnsons River. The grave, which is at Stroud Road in the Great Lakes Council area, was included in the Great Lakes Heritage Study 2008 but the surrounding area was not assessed.

There is a pressing need to undertake a full assessment of Aboriginal occupation of the valley. This should first assess surviving oral tradition and historical knowledge and should, on the basis of what is learned from that assessment, lead to an investigative archaeological survey rather than the limited site specific, pro-development surveys that have been undertaken to date.

The Stroud-Gloucester Valley is also geologically significant because of its complex geological formation involving early sedimentary formations with subsequent east-west compressional stresses, volcanic action and complex erosion processes. The Loughnan report notes;¹⁹

Perhaps no other area within the State presents such a unique opportunity for studying the rapid succession of differing tectonic environmental as the Stroud-Gloucester Trough... Undoubtedly the most remarkable feature of the area is that due to a late E.W. compressional stress of some magnitude which superimposed new structures on pre-existing ones causing the development of tear fractures and the displacement of whole blocks of country.

and

19 F. C. Loughnan, *The Permian Coal Measures of the Stroud-Gloucester Trough*, School of Mining Engineering and Applied Geology, NSW University of Technology, Read 1 December 1954.

The ubiquity of river gravels at every possible level of the present topography is indicative of the numerous cycles of erosion to which this area has been subjected, and as shown above, the valley has embarked upon a further cycle of base levelling, undoubtedly brought about by a tributary of the Karuah extending its headward reaches to capture the ancestors of the Ward's River-Johnson's Creek system, which prior to this capture, flowed northward.

6. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

(This statement draws on and summarises the areas of significance addressed above.)

The Stroud-Gloucester Valley has outstanding historical significance because of its association with the Australian Agricultural Company and from that with the convict era and with the development of the Australian wool industry. The Port Stephens Estate, including the Stroud-Gloucester Valley, is historically significant at a state and regional level because it marks the beginnings of free settlement on the New South Wales north coast.

The Stroud-Gloucester Valley is historically and architecturally significant because of the early and mid-nineteenth century buildings that remain from the Australian Agricultural Company's occupation of the area. Stroud and Booral, at the southern end of the valley, contain excellent examples of early Australian architecture that record the use of architectural styles, techniques and materials in a pioneer Australian rural settlement. These vary from simple brick cottages to the more substantial *Stroud House*, and the architecturally distinctive *St Johns Church*. They are supported by a range of later nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings of historical and aesthetic significance.

The Stroud-Gloucester Valley is aesthetically significant because of the fine rural scenery that characterises the valley and underpins its economic base of agriculture, tourism and lifestyle settlement. These scenes vary from pleasing rural vistas to dramatic views, both of the boundary ranges and from vantage points on the ranges. This quality is typical along the entire length of the valley.

The Gloucester Bucketts are of outstanding scenic significance, both as a backdrop to Gloucester and as a vantage point to view the valley. Their scenic qualities and their changing mood and colour according to weather and season are admired by the visitor and deeply appreciated by the community. It is doubtful if any town in Australia has a stronger association with its natural setting than Gloucester has with the Bucketts Ranges and the adjacent valley. This association goes beyond a mere appreciation of the valley's amenity - it forms an important element in the community's identity and sense of place.

The Stroud-Gloucester Valley is important for its association with the Worimi and the Biripi people. The valley was a rich source of food and supported a high population but their land management techniques created the open grassy woodland that the Australian Agricultural Company found so much to their liking and they were quickly displaced from their ancestral lands.

The Stroud-Gloucester Valley is geologically significant because of its complex formation by early sedimentary deposition, intense lateral pressures, volcanic action and complex erosion processes. This geological history has resulted in visually and geologically distinctive features such as the Buckley Range, the Mograni Range and the Gloucester Bucketts, and in complex erosion processes that indicate examples of river capture and changed drainage patterns.

7. ASSESSING NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Stroud-Gloucester Valley should be considered for National heritage significance, either in its entirety as a cultural heritage landscape or in regard to parts of it or places within it. That process will require extensive comparative assessments with other places acknowledged as having National heritage significance but assessments to date indicate levels of significance that are at the National level.

The definition of a ‘place’ in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) is broad and includes a location, area or region or a number of areas or regions.²⁰ The *Act* provides that the regulations must prescribe criteria to assess the significance of places under three headings; the natural heritage significance values of places; the indigenous heritage values of places; and the historic heritage values of places. The *Act* requires that a place must have significance under one or more criteria if it is to be considered to have national heritage significance.²¹

The *Regulations* prescribe nine assessment criteria, three of which are relevant to the Stroud-Gloucester Valley.²² These are;

the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia’s natural or cultural history;

the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of Australia’s natural or cultural environments;

the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group.

The Stroud-Gloucester Valley landscape in its entirety should be assessed under the three criteria with views across the valley, geological formations, historical sites and places being assessed. The contribution of convict labour should be assessed for all parts of the Valley although it is acknowledged that the more tangible evidence of this area of significance will be in the Booral-Stroud area. The convict contribution to the development of the Australian Agricultural Company’s venture is very relevant because of the Australian government’s nomination of 11 convict sites for addition to the World Heritage List. The World Heritage Centre has advised that the nomination

20 *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) s 528.

21 *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) s 324D.

22 *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) s 324D(3);
Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2000 (Cth) cl 10.01A
subregulation (2) (a), (d)(ii), (e).

will be forwarded to International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) for evaluation this year.

Assessment should not be confined to European cultural heritage. As noted earlier, the Stroud-Gloucester Valley was occupied by the Worimi and Biripi people and population numbers were high because of the abundant food sources. Significant sites are considered to include ceremonial grounds, regularly used campsites, scarred trees and at least one massacre ground. Aboriginal heritage warrants a full and exhaustive study in its own right.

More localised areas and places within the valley should be considered in support of its overall significance. Two areas stand; the Booral-Stroud area at the southern end of the valley and the Gloucester Bucketts-Avon-Gloucester River valleys at the northern end of the valley.

The Australian Agricultural Company's buildings and structures at Booral and Stroud should be assessed in relation to their function and association with the Australian Agricultural Company and its role in the development of the Australian wool industry. The St Johns Group of buildings, particularly St John's Church itself should be assessed for historical and architectural significance at the national level. These buildings are acknowledged as having State significance and present a strong argument for national significance. *Stroud House* should be assessed because of its early construction date, its association with the Australian Agricultural Company and its association with Philip Gidley King, grandson of Governor Philip Gidley King.²³

The geological significance of the Alum Mountain Volcanics and the Gloucester Bucketts require expert geological assessment. A preliminary assessment can be drawn from a comparison with Bulahdelah Mountain in the Myall Syncline to the east. The Alum Mountain Volcanics take their name from Alum Mountain, the former local name for the Bulahdelah Mountain and the geodetic point at its northern end. This has been attributed with national significance because of its geological formation and its former alum mine.²⁴ The Gloucester Bucketts are similarly considered to be of national significance but a complete geological assessment is yet to be made.

As noted, the significance of the Gloucester Bucketts extends beyond the geological significance of the range and includes the scenic significance of the Bucketts, the adjoining valleys of the Gloucester and Avon Rivers and the Mograni Range on the eastern side. The assessment should include the social significance of Gloucester's association with the Bucketts – there would be few places in Australia that enjoy a more associative natural–scenic setting. Eve Keane's words that this is "painters' country" ring true; the Gloucester Bucketts have been portrayed on canvas by Sir Arthur Streeton, one of Australia's greatest landscape painters.

23 *Stroud House* was for a period the residence of Captain Phillip Parker King, son of Governor Phillip Gidley King.

24 Navin Officer Heritage Consultants, The Bulahdelah (Alum Mountain) Alunite Mine Site-Complex Report: A Cultural Heritage assessment with Reference to the Proposed Bulahdelah Pacific Highway Upgrade Route Option E, 2001, p. 18.

8. THE STROUD-GLOUCESTER VALLEY'S PROXIMITY TO THE WORLD HERITAGE BARRINGTON TOPS NATIONAL PARK

The Stroud-Gloucester Valley provides a very rare feature in heritage conservation terms – its proximity to the World Heritage Barrington Tops Conservation Area.

A comparative assessment at state, national and world heritage level is necessary to more fully define the rarity and significance of this combination but initial assessment shows this to be a rare feature.

The physical relationship between the two areas is particularly significant. The Stroud-Gloucester Valley is linked to the Barrington Tops Conservation Area by a continuing cultural landscape that progressively gives way to increasingly forested and rugged country until the World Heritage plateau itself is reached. The Stroud-Gloucester Valley is environmentally and geographically linked to the plateau – there is no natural feature or man made development to separate them. The major rivers that flow through the valley, the Karuah, Gloucester and the Barrington, all have their headwaters in the World Heritage Area.

Issues that arise from this include the impact of inappropriate development in the Stroud-Gloucester Valley on the World Heritage area and the potential of the two areas, or in reality the one larger area, to function as an enlarged heritage conservation area of outstanding cultural and natural significance. This potential offers great benefits to the area and the broader region in terms of tourism development and the region's image. It will be a travesty if this unique combination is spoilt by intrusive development.

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SECTION 3 A BACKGROUND HISTORY OF THE STROUD-GLOUCESTER VALLEY

9. THE AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURAL COMPANY

The first requirement in undertaking a heritage assessment is to understand the historical significance of the subject area. This overview history was gathered from a number of well-researched histories that have obviated the normal requirement of undertaking primary research. Those histories are referred to in the footnotes and in the bibliography that follows.

The Australian Agricultural Company was incorporated by a Charter and an Imperial Act passed in June 1824 following which a grant of 1,000,000 acres of Crown Land was approved for the Company's purposes of breeding livestock, establishing a fine wool industry and cultivating crops in the colony of New South Wales. The Colonial Advisory Committee (the Court of Directors was in London) rejected the initial recommendation by Surveyor John Oxley that half the land be selected in the Liverpool Plains for the grazing of sheep and half in the Hastings Valley for the cultivation of tropical crops. The Committee acted instead on Oxley's second recommendation that the grant be obtained in the vicinity of Port Stephens where the availability of a deepwater port addressed the Directors' concerns regarding transport.²⁵

Robert Dawson, the first manager of the Company's estates, arrived at Port Stephens in January 1826. The area north to the Manning River was surveyed with the assistance of surveyors Dangar and Armstrong and the land stretching from Port Stephens to the Manning River in the north and from the coast westward to include the Karuah River and Gloucester River valleys was selected.

The first settlement at Carrington on the northern shore of Port Stephens was established in late 1826 and as such marks the beginning of free settlement on the New South Wales north coast.²⁶ Convict labour constructed huts, a lumberyard, mill, slaughterhouse, storehouse, dairy, temporary church and a military guardhouse. *Tahlee House* was built as the superintendent's residence in late 1826. By October that year the company had purchased 1,000 head of cattle and 2,000 head of sheep in addition to the stock they had brought out with them. Extensive land clearing was under way by early 1827.²⁷

Despite the vigour and accomplishment of the establishment years, the Port Stephens soils were of poor quality and the venture was not successful. As a result, agricultural efforts were moved north to the Booral and Stroud areas in the Karuah River valley, the horses to *Alderly* and the Avon Valley and the cattle to Gloucester. By 1834, 530 acres were under cultivation in the Karuah Valley, including 278 acres of wheat.²⁸

25 W.K. Birrell, *The Manning Valley: Landscape and Settlement 1824-1900*, 1987, Jacaranda Press, Gladesville, p. 39-43. Port Stephens proved inadequate in this regard and water depth remained a serious problem throughout the Company's occupation of the site.

26 The penal settlement at Port Macquarie commenced some five years earlier in 1821 but free settlement did not commence until after 1830.

27 Brian Engel, Janis Winn & John Wark, *Tea Gardens – Hawks Nest and Northern Port Stephens*, 2000, B. Engel. New Lambton, p. 18.

28 J. Chadban, *Stroud and the A. A. Co.*, Stroud Shire Council, 1970, P.6.

Stroud was established in 1832 and became the centre of the Company's activities during the 1830s.²⁹ Attempts were initiated in 1830 to surrender the less fertile eastern section of the Port Stephens Estate in favour of the Peel River Liverpool Plains (Warrah) Estates, a move that was finally approved in 1833. The Company then held 457,920 acres in the Port Stephens Estate as well as leasing land from the Church and School Corporation on the Estate's western boundary. The Company also occupied squatting runs in the upper valleys of the Avon, Gloucester and Barrington Rivers.³⁰

Stroud became the headquarters of the Australian Agricultural Company during the 1830s and settlement had extended to the Bowman Station, about ten kilometres north of Gloucester, by that time. The Company obtained freehold title to its land grants at Port Stephens, Liverpool Plains (Warrah) and Peel River (Goonoo Goonoo) in 1847. This meant that land could be sold; the Company had already closed its Agricultural Department in 1843 and let much of the land to tenant farmers, mostly around Stroud and Booral.³¹ Stroud was noted in 1853 (but probably existing in this form much earlier) as having a courthouse, school, church, approximately nine service buildings and shops, about 25 residences and social amenities such a cricket ground.³² Gloucester Station was the main establishment at the northern end of the area and, although Gloucester was surveyed in 1855, remained as such throughout the nineteenth century.

The original intention of the Australian Agricultural Company was to produce fine wool to meet the increasing demands of Britain's woollen mills. Germany, Britain's main supplier, was scaling back wool production in favour of industrialisation and Australian wool was seen as the product that would make fortunes. However, this was not to be for the Port Stephens Estates; the humid coastal climate and inbreeding brought the industry to an end after thirty years. The Estate's number of sheep grew from 2,500 in 1826 to 124,000 in 1834. It hovered a little below those numbers until 1856 when the flocks were sold or moved to *Warrah* on the Liverpool Plains.³³ The Company was highly successful with its *Goonoo Goonoo* and *Warrah* Estates and became a major influence in the Australian wool industry but the Port Stephens estates never fully recovered from the failure of the fine wool venture and further grazing was confined to horses and cattle. The Company's headquarters were moved from Stroud to Sydney in 1856.

The Australian Agricultural Company began to sell off land in small acreages after 1860. The estates were seen as being mismanaged by the late nineteenth century and the introduction of a land tax act by the NSW government in 1895 was the death knell for the Australian Agricultural Company's occupation of the Port Stephens Estate. The Company offered the remaining estate to the NSW government in 1899 but was refused because the *Closer Settlement Act* 1901 (NSW) was under consideration at that time.³⁴ The eventual break up of the estate began in 1902 when Stroud

29 Engel, p.22.

30 Birrell, p. 54 citing Australian Agricultural Company Reports Vol 7/8/1/10 p. 499 & 515.

31 Notes, Dr P. A. Pemberton to the writer.

32 Pemberton, pp.14-15.

33 Chadban, p.17, Pemberton p.19.

34 Birrell, p231.

auctioneer, John McKenzie, formed the Gloucester Estate Syndicate, which purchased 200,000 acres of land north of Stratford at 12/6 per acre.³⁵

The break up and sale of the Port Stephens Estate introduced the Stroud-Gloucester Valley to a new period of growth. Stroud was created as a Company town and initially prospered because of that. However, it had stagnated by the 1850s and the subdivision of Company land into smallholdings stimulated growth throughout much of the valley. Gloucester was surveyed in 1855 but initial growth was slow and it remained as a quiet village of about 75 people until the end of the century.³⁶ Following the exit of the Australian Agricultural Company and the subdivision of the Gloucester Estate, which began in 1903, Gloucester expanded into a thriving rural town.

10. AFTER THE AUSTRALIAN AGRICULTURAL COMPANY

Four broad historical periods of change and growth can be identified for Gloucester following the days of the Australian Agricultural Company. The first is a period of change and perhaps a degree of turmoil as the Gloucester Estate Company began its rural subdivision sales in 1903. This period marks the beginnings of Gloucester as a functioning town, not merely a surveyed town with a bare scattering of inhabitants in and around it. New dwellings were built and new shops and banks opened, the *Advocate* newspaper commenced in 1905 and the Gloucester Shire Council was formed in 1906. The dairy industry, which had its beginnings in the Manning Valley during the 1890s, expanded with the availability of new small-acreage farming allotments.

The second period was created by the arrival of the railway in 1913 and, although stalled by the First World War, brought rapid growth to the area until the Great Depression slowed that growth in the 1930s. The railway stimulated the dairy industry by providing fast, reliable transport and servicing the new dairy cooperative factories that sprang up throughout the Manning Valley and the north coast region generally. Very importantly, it created a major expansion of the hardwood timber industry by providing reliable, economical transport away from the traditional shipping-dependent mill sites along rivers and estuaries. The railway also stimulated growth in social and business ways - the days of lengthy overland coach journeys, either to the final destination or to a shipping connection, were gone and all nature of business could be conducted swiftly and safely.

The third period covers the period of prosperity and expansion following World War II as population growth created new markets. The dairy and timber industries in particular expanded during this time. This was the final period to shape 'older' Gloucester as we now see it. The fourth period has its beginnings in the 1970s. It corresponds with periods of change within the timber and dairy industries and the beginnings of tourism and lifestyle settlement as major components of the area's social structure and economy.

35 Pemberton p.20

36 Birrell, pp.156, 214.

These later phases of change and growth have all left their imprint on the Stroud-Gloucester Valley landscape but the influence of the Australian Agriculture Company in shaping that landscape is still identifiable.

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SECTION 4 SCENIC VIEWS AND VISTAS

Section 4 contains a selection of eighteen scenic views from Booral in the south to north of Gloucester. The ten views that are within the scenic zone defined in the Gloucester Local Environmental Plan, 2000, have been extracted from the selection and are shown first. Photographs are by the author unless specified otherwise.



(From Bucketts Way, Map Gloucester 9233-1N GDA94 approx. E403300 N6458450)

Fig. 1. The Gloucester Bucketts provide a dramatic backdrop to the town of Gloucester.



(Photo by Linda Benson from the Bucketts Road, Map Gloucester 9233-1N GDA94 approx E400100 N6457450)

Fig. 2. An early morning view of the Bucketts showing its many colours.



(From the Mograni Range Gloucester 9233-1N GDA94 approx. E405000 N6457700)

Fig. 3. Gloucester's setting between the valleys of the Gloucester and Avon Rivers on the eastern side of the Bucketts seen from the Mograni Range.



Fig. 4. Gloucester and the Bucketts seen from the Mograni Lookout, Bucketts Way, approximately 4km east of Gloucester.



(From the foot of Mograni Range Gloucester 9233-1N GDA94 approx. E404200 N6457650)

Fig. 5. The Gloucester Bucketts are an ever present part of Gloucester's setting , they are vividly seen irrespective of the viewing point.



(From Bucketts Way, Gloucester 9233-1N GDA94 approx. E403000 N6458400)

Fig. 6. The Gloucester Wetlands, on the eastern side of the town. This area is fed by the Avon River.



(From Grantham Road, Forbesdale, Gloucester 9233-1N GDA94 approx. E401700 N6453000)

Figs. 7 & 8. The scenes above and below are taken from the same point in Grantham Road, Forbesdale . They illustrate the ever-present quality of Gloucester's scenic setting – no matter where the viewing point is, the scenery is impressive.



(From Grantham Road, Forbesdale, Gloucester 9233-1N GDA94 approx. E401700 N6453000)



(Photo by Linda Benson from the Lions viewing walk Map Gloucester 9233-1N GDA94 approx E399000 N6458400)

Fig. 9. A view from the Lions Scenic Walk on the Bucketts, looking south-east. The Gloucester River and farmlands are in the foreground and the southern parts of the residential area are beyond that.

The following eight photographs are of views along the Stroud-Gloucester Valley from Booral in the south to north of Gloucester but exclude those that relate to the Gloucester Scenic Zone, shown above.



Fig. 10. The Karuah River valley, looking east from the Bucketts Way, Booral, near the Karuah River bridge. This was the farming country that provided food for the fledgling A.A. Company settlement.



Fig. 11. Looking north from Silo Hill, Stroud, over the Stroud Common. The older parts of Stroud are those furthest from the viewer on the right or out of sight to the right.



(From Bucketts Way, Clareval, Map Stroud Road9233-2N GDA94 approx E398000 N6425000)

Fig. 12. View looking south along the Karuah River showing the narrower, more restricted floodplain in the southern parts (southward draining section) of the Stroud-Gloucester Valley



(From Bucketts Way, Wards River, Map Stroud Road 9233-2N GDA94 approx E398850 N6430300)

Fig. 13. View from the Bucketts Way, Wards River, near *Wards River Station*, looking east towards Mammy Johnsons River. The hilly nature of the southern half of the valley is again obvious.



(From Berrico Road, Craven, Map Craven 9233-1S | GDA94 approx E396900 N6440000)

Fig. 14. The view from Berrico Road looking north-east shows the wider, flatter valley of the northern section.)



(From Crowthers Road, Stratford, Map Gloucester 9233-1N GDA94 approx E397000 N6446500)

Fig. 15. View from Crowthers Road, Stratford, looking south-south. This again shows the wide expanse of the valley in the northern section.



(From Bucketts Way, Stratford, Map Gloucester 9233-1N approx E399850 N6448300)

Fig. 16. This view looking east from the Bucketts Way, north of Stratford, provides the classic Australian rural scene – a large, spreading ironbark, grazing stock in a sun-lit paddock and a distant range of hills.



Fig. 17. The Stroud-Gloucester Valley from the northern extremity at the Kiaora Lookout and Relay Tower, near Barrington, looking south-south-east. The eastern boundary ranges and the closure at the northern end of the valley are obvious.



(From Bundook Road, Pitlochry, Map Bundook 93345-3-S AGD1966 approx E406000 N663550)

Fig. 18. The Gloucester River winds its way into the Manning Valley. This view is from the Bundook Road between Tugrahahk Creek and the rail over pass, looking north-west. This shows the end of the valley as the north-south alignment ends abruptly in a series of faults and unaligned valleys north of Gloucester.



(Thunderbolt's Way, opposite Gloucester Shire Council Landfill Facility)

Fig. 19 and 20. This document does not provide an extensive description of the area's geology but notes its scientific significance at *Definition 3 - geological reasons*, page 3, and *Technical/research significance*, page 11. The two photographs above and below have been included to illustrate some aspects of that significance but a full and comprehensive assessment is yet to be undertaken.

Photograph 19 shows formerly waterborne rocks in a moderately elevated setting that is well above current stream level and is illustrative of the complex past erosion processes. Photograph 20 shows tilting rock strata caused by the intense latera; folding pressure. The writer has noted some examples of vertical folding and one of over folding but could not relocate them for the purposes of this assessment.



(Roadside cutting Barrington Tops Road – Copeland Road – approx. one kilometre east from Copeland village)

SECTION 5 HERITAGE ITEMS

A selection of 29 photographs show a selection of heritage buildings and sites throughout the Stroud-Gloucester Valley from Booral at the southern extremity to Gloucester near the northern end. All items are visible from or readily accessible from the Bucketts Way.

Fig. 21. *Gundayne*, Booral, c.1840. This is an important early A. A. Company building. It is part of a larger group of significant buildings including *Booral House*, the former wharf remains, St Barnabas Church and cemetery and the Booral school group.



Fig. 22. Booral Public School, established 1865. This is the oldest continuing school in the Stroud-Gloucester Valley and the Great Lakes Council area. This appears to be the original building and features six-pane windows and early splayed weatherboards.

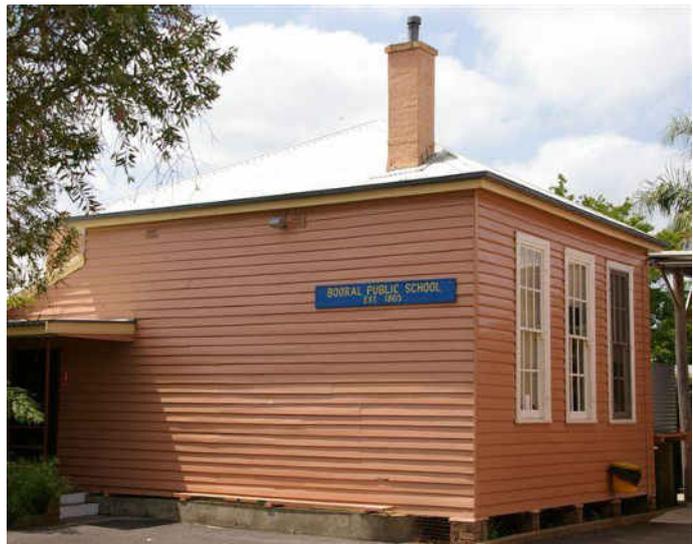


Fig. 23. *Alderly House*, Booral, built about 1934. This is believed to have been constructed as the residence for manager of the A.A. Company's horse breeding station. It is substantially original and retains much original interior detail. It is now a popular local winery.





Fig. 24. Old farmhouse, western side of the Bucketts Way, between Booral and Stroud. This is typical of old farmhouses throughout the valley.



Fig. 25. The St Johns Group, Berkeley Street, Stroud. These prominently situated and visually distinctive buildings form an important early group from the A. A. Company's original settlement. The rectory, situated to the right, is not shown.

Fig. 26. *Quambi House*, St Johns group, Stroud. Claimed to have been built in 1831 or 1832 but that date relates to an earlier slab schoolhouse. The present building was recorded as being on the site in 1850 and was probably constructed during the 1840s. This is a fine early colonial building with elegant fanlights and portico to the front entrance.

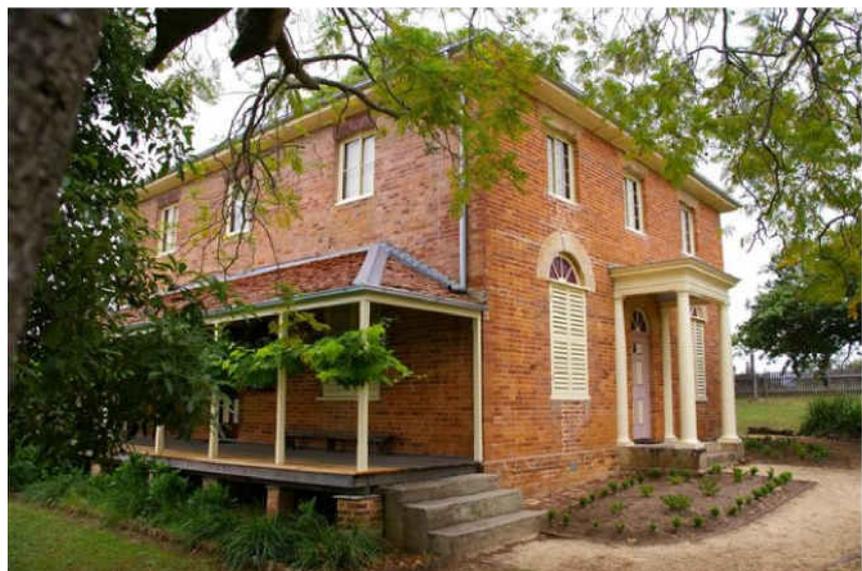


Fig. 27. St Johns Parish Hall, Stroud, built about 1855, with *Quambi House* in the background and St Johns Cemetery in the foreground.



Fig. 28. St John Church, Stroud, built about 1834. There is evidence of convict labour in its construction. The church is described in the NSW State Heritage Register as *'a finely crafted example and subdued example of early architecture that predates the influence of ecclesiology. Incredibly, few changes have been made to the building, and it remains to this day essentially as it was designed and constructed in 1833.'*

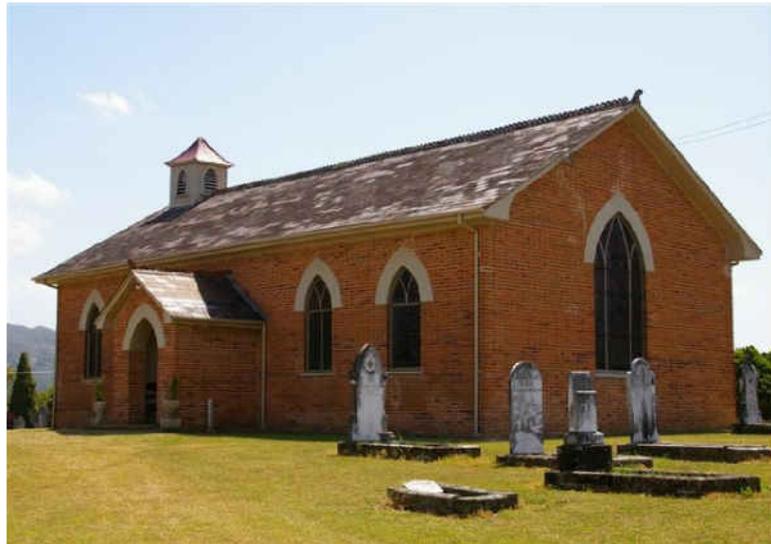


Fig. 29. Cannons, Silo Hill, Stroud. They are from the Sydney defences of about 1850 and were brought to Stroud about 1900. Silo Hill is the site of the underground grain storage silos. The hill provides views over Stroud and to the north.



Fig. 30. Central Hotel, Stroud, c.1885. This is a good example of the typical Australian country pub set in a commanding position in the vicinity of other buildings of heritage significance.



Fig. 31. Stroud Courthouse, built about 1875, now the Stroud Historical Society museum. This replaced an earlier split slab courthouse.



Fig. 32. Stroud Post Office, c.1876. A James Barnett building in a mixture of Victorian and Italianate styles of a colonial rural interpretation. This creates a fine streetscape element at the northern entry to the township.



Fig. 33. Stroud House, built about 1831 with later extensions. This was used by the A. A. Company superintendents and has a family connection through that to Governor King. It forms a prominent and key element in the Stroud Heritage Conservation Area and requires further assessment for possible national significance.



Fig. 34. The former Australian Agricultural Company woolshed at Telegherry, now identified as an archaeological site. The woolshed later accommodated the Telegherry Public School, the first government school to open the present Great Lakes Council area. The school moved to a site about 300 metres to the south about 1880 and closed in 1919 in favour of the new Stroud Road School, which was opened that year.



Fig. 35. Shop and residence, Stroud Road, Built about 1915 after the arrival of the railway. Stroud Road is the point where the northern railway enters the Great Lakes area. The village was created by the arrival of the railway.



Fig. 36. The former Weismantle's Inn, Buckets Way, south of Wards River, built in 1889. This is a good example of sawn vertical plank construction. It was built as an accommodation house and wine shop for travellers and is associated with a local gold discovery near Monkerai. It is an important roadside element in the Gloucester Valley cultural landscape, it was listed as regional significance and should now be considered for state significance.



Fig. 37. Monkerai Bridge, built 1877. This is the oldest timber truss bridge in NSW and considered of state significance. It is now closed to traffic awaiting repairs.



Fig. 38. Old sawn vertical plank farmhouse with later brick addition on left side, Tereel Road, Wards River. This was probably built in the 1860s – 1870s period and relates to the Australian Agricultural Company or to the small acreage allotments being sold by the Company after about 1860.



Fig. 39. The former residence for the Craven School, opened 1915, closed 1978. The residence was built in 1922. Craven is typical of the villages that formed along the railway line after its arrival in 1913. The railway created expansion of the dairy and the timber industries by providing fast, economic and reliable transport.



Fig. 40. The former Union Church, Craven, built in 1918 or 1919. The first wedding took place on 31 March 1920.



Fig. 41. Gloucester House, situated at the A.A. Company's former Gloucester Station, established about 1830. This building is believed to have been built around 1860 but appears earlier on form and style.



Fig. 42. Cottage, Hume Street, Gloucester. This is an excellent example of the 'Federation' style showing typical roof and verandah form and with high quality detail to windows, verandah and gable ends. This would have been built in the early years of the twentieth century as Gloucester developed into a prosperous rural town.



Fig. 43. Gloucester Memorial Park, established following the First World War. The War Memorial is adjacent. This attractive park is at the southern end of the town between Bent and Park Streets. The Buckets figure prominently in the background.



Fig. 44. Gloucester's main street. This is recognised as a heritage conservation area in the Gloucester Local Environmental Plan 2000. It contains an interesting array of buildings from about 1910 up to about the 1960s. Some changes and upgrading have occurred but the essential character remains.



Fig. 45. Gloucester School of Arts, corner Denison and Church Streets.

The foundation stone reads:

'This stone was laid by:
A. J. White Esq
Shire President
20th March 1933.
R. S. Hawdon, Architect
H. C. Jones, Builder'

The building is of an established early twentieth century style and could easily date from 15 years earlier. It serves today as a popular art gallery.



Fig. 46. Former bank of NSW, Church Street, built 1914, now professional offices. This is an interesting Federation style building showing classical influence. It is a major streetscape element because of its prominent corner siting at the business end of Church Street and records Gloucester's 'awakening' development of the early twentieth century following the exit of the A.A. Company and the arrival of the North Coast railway.



Fig. 47. National Parks and Wildlife Office, Barrington Region. An interesting building representing the main street's last phase of development in the decades after the Second World War. It is a visual reminder that the Gloucester Valley compliments the World Heritage area of the Barrington Tops. Time has not been kind to buildings of this style and era despite their modest age and many have been lost.





Fig. 48. This building now functions as the Gloucester District Historical Society museum. It was built in 1909-1910 as the new Gloucester Shire Council Chambers, in which capacity it served for approximately 50 years. It was then a private residence before being purchased by the Historical Society in 1984.



Fig. 49. The Gloucester Court house, built in 1908. The courthouse, police station, former council chambers (above) and the police residence form an important civic group at the northern end of Church Street.

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**SUMMARY OF THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF
THE
STROUD-GLOUCESTER VALLEY AND THE VALE OF GLOUCESTER**

Garry Smith, 10 September 2012, read and revised March 2013

1. SUMMARY

The valley's scenic-heritage significance is a vital component of Gloucester's social and economic development. The valley's scenic qualities were first noted by Robert Dawson during his initial exploration of 1826 and first noted in the modern sense by Gloucester Shire Council and writer Eave Keen in 1953 in the commemorative publication *The Vale of Gloucester*.

These qualities underlie its sense of place, its social structure and its traditional economic base of agriculture, tourism and life style settlement. They can, providing they are given due weight in the environmental assessment process, even be compatible with a level of gas and coal mining development. However, they cannot continue to be a major influence on the valley's character and way of life when the present uncontrolled demands posed by the coal and gas industries have taken their toll of the valley's special qualities. They will, if a proper level of environmental, social and economic assessment is not implemented, be destroyed and the valley's special qualities irretrievably lost.

2. RECOGNITION OF THE VALLEY AS A CULTURAL HERITAGE LANDSCAPE

A number of individual buildings and structures within the Stroud-Gloucester Valley have been recognised for a number of years as having heritage significance at the NSW local or State level. As a result, they have been entered onto the respective local environmental plans and onto the State Heritage Inventory or the State Heritage Register.

However, the Stroud-Gloucester Valley as a cultural heritage landscape has not been entered onto any official heritage list or register despite being recognised as a landscape of heritage significance at the local, State and National level for a large number of years. A summary of that recognition follows.

- The first recognition of the Vale's heritage significance in a modern sense was in the publication *Vale of Gloucester*, written by Eve Keane, published by Gloucester Shire Council in 1953.

- The National Trust of Australia (NSW) classified the Vale as a heritage landscape in 1975.
- The National Trust referred the nomination to the Australian Heritage Commission in 1976 but the Commission did not assess the nomination and it sat in the Register of the National Estate unassessed as an 'indicative listing' only. The RNE has now been abolished in favour of the new register, the National Heritage List.
- The National Trust revised the listing for the Vale of Gloucester in 1981.
- The Barrington-Gloucester-Stroud Preservation Alliance (the Alliance) completed a comprehensive assessment in 2009. That assessment was titled *The Stroud Gloucester Valley and the Vale of Gloucester: A heritage landscape under threat*.
- The National Trust again revised the listing in 2011, changing the listing title to the *Stroud Gloucester Valley, incorporating the Vale of Gloucester*. This assessment agrees substantially with the BGSP Alliance assessment referred to immediately above.
- The Alliance submitted a nomination to the Department of Sustainability, Water, Population, Environment and Communities in 2011 for the valley to be assessed for national heritage significance. That was to be assessed in the 2011-12 program but was put back to the 2012-13 program and omitted from that assessment program on the basis that it was not considered to be a priority assessment.
- A submission was made to the NSW Heritage Office to be assessed for entry on the NSW State Heritage Register in July 2012. Inland pastoral NSW is being considered as a relevant theme and we have submitted that it should include the Australian Agricultural Company and, from that, the Company's initial settlement in the Stroud-Gloucester Valley.
- A subsequent nomination is about to be sent to the Department of Sustainability,

Environment, Water, Population and Communities to have the Stroud-Gloucester Valley assessed in the 2013-14 assessment period.

3. THE VALLEY'S PRESENT HERITAGE STATUS AS AT SEPTEMBER 2012

The Stroud-Gloucester Valley is listed by the National Trust of Australia (NSW). This revised assessment was completed in late 2011 and defines the valley for the purpose of the listing as extending from near Booral in the south to near Barrington in the north. The other nominations made over approximately thirty-six years have not resulted in any formal statutory listing for the valley.

The position of those nominations is as follows;

- The nomination made by the National Trust of Australia (NSW) in 1976 for entry on the register of the National Estate expired approximately four years ago because full assessment was never undertaken and the Register was closed in favour of the National Heritage List.
- The nomination made in 2011 for assessment in the 2011-12 or 2012-13 assessment periods for entry on the National Heritage List has expired because the Valley was not considered to be a priority for assessment.
- The Alliance was invited to resubmit the above nomination for assessment in the 2013-14 assessment period, and this will be undertaken in the very near future.
- A nomination for entry on the NSW Heritage Register was made to the NSW Heritage Office in July 2012 and we await advice concerning that.

4. THE IMPACT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE ON THE VALLEY'S LAND USE AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

The valley's heritage significance is completely compatible with its current land uses of agriculture, horticulture, grazing, tourist development, life-style settlement and light industry. The valley's scenic-heritage qualities underpin its tourism, agriculture and life-style settlement and thus underpin its economic base and its way of life.

The heritage significance is not incompatible with mining as such, and mining has coexisted reasonably successfully to date. However, the proposed large scale development of coal and gas mining is not compatible under existing environmental assessment procedures and threatens to destroy the valley's way of life. The issue from a scenic-heritage consideration

is that these qualities should be given due weight in the environmental assessment process, not the token, cover-up processes that have marked the recent environmental assessments. These environmental assessments have been well padded with comprehensive 'expert' input but have failed to properly identify the valley's scenic-heritage qualities and attach due weight to them.

An aspect of considerable concern in regard to all areas of environmental assessment is the failure to assess cumulative impact of a proposed development when combined with existing and planned land uses. In regard to scenic-heritage impact, this manifests itself by the increasing scarring of the landscape, both in regard to localised views and the broader scenic vistas, combined with the damage to other environmental and social qualities and the visual impact of the supporting infrastructure.

5. FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT THE ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN RELATION TO HERITAGE

A major deficiency (among the many) in the present environmental legal/planning process is the failure to assess the principles of ecologically sustainable development. In that respect, two sub-principles are mentioned here: the precautionary principle and the intergenerational principle.

The precautionary principle

Assessment of the precautionary principle requires that the threat of serious or irreversible damage be identified and have corrective measures put in place before the development proceeds. However, the present legal-planning approach is to place an unreasonable level of proof on the identification and quantification of the threats and to apply attempted corrective measures when problems arise.

These two measures effectively destroy both of the essential aspects of the precautionary principle. While it is true that environmental assessments over the past decades have increased their content in regard to both the detail and the issues assessed, the current interpretation of the precautionary principle effectively emasculates it and leaves environmental assessments continuing to pre precautionary principle standards.

Principle of intergenerational equity

The principle of intergenerational equity states that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for

the benefit of future generations. This is an overarching principle and its application to the valley's coal and gas industries is obvious when issue such as water quality, air quality and social amenity are considered. This clearly can be applied to the valley's scenic-heritage qualities although such approach will at the present time receive little support in planning legal areas. However, if we acknowledge the extent of opinion that the valley has heritage significance at the local, state and commonwealth levels, the destruction of that significance would breach the principle of intergenerational equity.

6. THE TERM 'THE VALE OF GLOUCESTER', ITS USE AND MISUSE

The term the Vale of Gloucester has been used, misused, agreed upon and disputed in recent years, so that a review of its use is required.

The term was first used by Robert Dawson upon his exploration of the Gloucester Valley in 1826. It refers to its similarity to the Vale of Gloucester in Britain, not to the Gloucester township in NSW.

The terms the 'Vale of Gloucester' and the 'Stroud-Gloucester Valley' have been used synonymously in modern references. However, the latter term is now the preferred term because of attempts by mining interests and other parties to restrict the boundaries of the Vale of Gloucester in order to claim that a particular site is outside the Vale and does not require assessment for scenic-heritage impact.

The most blatant of these is a map that appeared on the Department of Planning Major Projects website bearing the logo of the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts falsely showing the Duralie mine extension to be outside the Vale. That department acknowledged in writing that it had no such map, yet eventually acknowledged that the map was sent from (but not by) that office.

The boundaries of the Vale of Gloucester

As noted above, the boundaries of the Vale have been subject to some dispute so that a brief description is in order

A review of the boundaries is as follows.

- Robert Dawson 1826. The boundaries were not indicated, the passage of his journey could indicate that his 'Vale of Gloucester' referred to much of the valley or only the more northern end of the valley.
- Eve Keane, 1953. The boundaries were not shown but the publication as a Gloucester Shire Council commemorative publication would appear to indicate the Vale was situated entirely within the shire boundaries.
- The 1975 National Trust assessment. The original boundaries are not known on current material.
- The 1981 National Trust revision shows the Vale as extending from near Stroud Road to near Barrington.
- The 2009 Alliance assessment considered three possible boundaries and determined the vicinity of Booral in the south to the vicinity of Barrington in the north as being the most sustainable boundaries on historical, natural and scenic qualities. It became clear at this point that referring to the valley as the Stroud-Gloucester Valley is the preferred option.
- The National Trust revision of 2011 agrees with the Alliance boundaries of Booral to Barrington and the preferred use of the term the Stroud-Gloucester Valley.

6. THE ALLIANCE'S 2009 ASSESSMENT; *THE STROUD-GLOUCESTER VALLEY & THE VALE OF GLOUCESTER: A HERITAGE LANDSCAPE UNDER THREAT.*

The above assessment is the most extensive assessment undertaken to date and a brief description is provided below. Later editions were titled *The Stroud-Gloucester Valley: a heritage landscape under threat*, dropping the Vale of Gloucester because of the attempts to distort the boundaries of the Vale of Gloucester.

This assessment attributes the Stroud-Gloucester Valley with a high level of heritage significance at a local level (significant to the local community), a State level (significant to NSW) and at a National level (significant to Australia).

The assessments considered three possible boundaries to define the Stroud-Gloucester Valley; first, a relatively small area at the northern end of the valley situated totally within the Gloucester Shire Council; second, the area as defined by the National Trust in 1981 as extending from near Stroud Road to near Barrington; and third, the area extending from a little south of Booral to near Barrington.

The assessment considers that the third definition, from near Booral to near Barrington is the logical and most sustainable definition when all issues are considered. Booral represents the southern entry point of the Australian Agricultural Company's Stroud-Gloucester settlement. It was the head of navigation on the Karuah River and the site of the first major area of cultivation because of the alluvial river soils. Booral marks the beginning of the volcanic formation know as the Alum Volcanics (named after the similar formation near Bulahdelah), while the area near Barrington marks the closure of the Stroud-Gloucester syncline.

Local and State significance

This document assesses the valley's heritage significance under the NSW assessment criteria and considers that the valley meets the required threshold under three criteria:

- Historical significance in relation to the development of agriculture and large agricultural companies in NSW and Australia as evidenced by the landscape throughout the valley and the buildings and improvements remaining from the AA Co's occupation.
- Aesthetic significance in regard to its outstanding scenery that has been formed by the valley's distinctive natural features and the pattern of land use throughout the valley.
- Social significance because of the especially strong association with the valley's history and scenery. That association is noted as being especially strong in regard to Gloucester's association with the Gloucester Bucketts and Stroud's association with its early colonial architecture.
- Technical/research significance in regard to its geological characteristics, its Aboriginal occupation and the suitability of Aboriginal hunting lands to AA Co grazing

purposes, and the use of local materials and resources in establishing a new settlement.

National Significance

The regulations prescribe nine assessment criteria, three of which are relevant to the Stroud Gloucester Valley. These are;

- the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history;
- the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments;
- the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group.

The Stroud-Gloucester Valley landscape is significant under the three criteria, both in its entirety and in individual places. Aboriginal occupation, convict contribution, scenic views, geological formations, historical sites and the valley's special association with these qualities create this significance.

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