

# MINISTERIAL BRIEFING

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**The Hon. Nicole Manison MLA**

**Minister for Tourism**

**Friday 11 November 2022**

Foundation Mates: Ted Egan AO, Krafty (Wayne Kraft AM), the Late Karen Schneider, Frank & Lorraine Dalton, Jimmy Dalton, Pat Carmody & Sally Martin

Founded in November 2020

Web Address: [www.matesofthemurrumbidgee.com.au](http://www.matesofthemurrumbidgee.com.au)

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Membership: Currently 363 'Mates'

## **Background:**

The 'Mates of the Murrumbidgee' are a non-incorporated group of Australians who are most concerned with the continued deterioration of the Heritage-Listed 'Newcastle Waters Township'.

Please note also, that the 'Mates' are NOT SEEKING any direct Northern Territory Government financial assistance.

The Heritage-Listed Township is situated 3km west of the Stuart Highway and 25km north of the (WW11 established) Elliott Township.

The histories of the first Australians, the explorers, the development and completion of the Overland Telegraph Line and the establishment of Australia's cattle industry all intersect at Newcastle Waters.

Indeed, in 1926, the Commonwealth of Australia gazetted the *Northern Australia Act* and that Newcastle Waters would become 'The seat of Government of North Australia'!!! (an abbreviated copy is attached).

Beyond a decaying 'streetscape', the Township is devoid of informative and appropriate 'Interpretative Signage'.

The 'Drovers' Park' (established in 1988 to coincide with the 'Droving Australia' Bicentennial Event) is situated at the entrance to the Newcastle Waters (Pastoral) Station, the Heritage-Listed Township and the Marlinja Aboriginal Community.



The 'Drovers' Park' is the perfect landmark to commence an expanded (and staged) restorative effort inclusive of adequate visitor shade structures and interpretative signage.

**Current Status:**

The Newcastle Waters Township was formally Heritage-Listed in 1993.

Thanks to the great efforts of volunteers, the National Trust owned 'Jones Store' is the only structure that has benefited from any restorative works.



In August 2017, as the (then) Chairperson of the Heritage Council of the Northern Territory, Krafty initiated a formalised process to 'elevate' the derelict Township to the attention of the Heritage Council, TourismNT and HospitalityNT.

In April & May 2018, the engagement processes commenced with appropriate Stakeholders.

This included a 'site-inspection' at Newcastle Waters with representatives from TourismNT, the Heritage Branch, the National Trust and the Southern Region NT Government Director.

It is of note that Newcastle Waters now features in the 'Barkly Region Destination Plan'.

In late October 2018, TourismNT appointed consultancy firm TRC to complete a 'Newcastle Waters Township Concept Plan'.

Most recently (September 2022), the TourismNT- funded 'Newcastle Waters Historic Township Master Plan' was completed.

This document is currently not available for 'public consumption'.

The aforementioned plans involved TourismNT - appointed 'Project Control Groups'.

We, the 'Mates of the Murrniji', were invited to participate and were represented by Krafty as part of this engagement process.

### **Immediate Future**

The 'Mates of the Murrniji' Group are fearful that the Project may now lose momentum.

Minister, we are most grateful for the efforts of TourismNT.

The 'foundation' planning documents are now complete.

The vexed question of the establishment of an appropriate corporate structure to 'move the project forward' seems to be the first important priority.

Consultancy firm TRC have proposed a 'Precinct Management Model' which could be used as a 'template' for such a corporate structure.

We consider TourismNT - representing the interests of the Northern Territory Government - could/should become the 'Lead Manager/Facilitator' of the newly established corporate entity.

The 'National Trust of the Northern Territory' (owners of Jones Store) could provide the 'Corporate Finance' platform/structure to facilitate incoming and outgoing funds within strict 'Due Diligence' guidelines.

The National Trust should receive a nominal, but appropriate, 'Management Fee' for their 'Funds Management' responsibilities.

The 'Newcastle Waters Township Master Plan' defines the broader fiscal requirements for a staged-funding strategy.

Under an appropriate (tax-effective) corporate platform, funding sources could include the following:

- (1) Federal/NT Government funding through ongoing 'Grants Application' opportunities.
- (2) Philanthropic donations.
- (3) Corporate joint venture opportunities.

### **Centenary Celebrations / Project Completion**

Minister, our next 'Mates of the Murrnaji' Muster is proposed for Monday 05 June 2023 at Newcastle Waters.

The day prior (04 June) represents the 97<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the assent of the *Northern Australia Act 1926*.

We propose that a 'Centenary Celebration' be scheduled for 04 June 2026 to highlight (and celebrate) the completion of the implementation of the 'Newcastle Waters Historic Township' Master Plan.

Just over a 3.5 year timeframe from our meeting today!!!



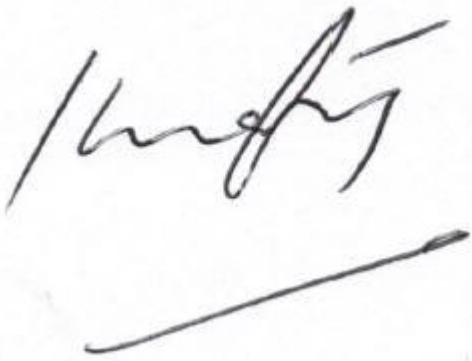
## Summary

Minister, on behalf of the 'Mates of the Murrnaji', I thank you for the opportunity to meet with you today.

We welcome your interest in the future of the historic (and heritage-listed) Newcastle Waters Township.

Most importantly, we seek your valued support, and that of your Ministerial colleagues, to build upon and progress the foundations outlined in the 'Newcastle Waters Historic Township' Masterplan.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wayne Kraft', is written over a light blue horizontal line. The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Krafty

(Wayne Kraft AM)

for and in behalf of the 'Mates of the Murrnaji' Project

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