

# **Parks and Playgrounds Movement Inc.**

**Saturday, 6 March 2004**

The Editor  
Newcastle Herald  
Bolton Street  
NEWCASTLE

Dear Sir,

## **The Founding of Newcastle and Coal River Heritage Park**

**Congratulations must go to Castle Hill for achieving a \$3 million dollar Heritage Park on the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vinegar Hill Rebellion. (*Convict rebellion portrayed for anniversary* Mike Scanlon *the herald* 6/3/04 pg.16 )**

**However the sequel of the rebellion was the exile of 34 of the rebels to Coal River under Lieutenant Charles Menzies to be reluctant participants in the founding of Newcastle the second city of NSW, 30<sup>th</sup> March 1804.**

**The “drifts” into the long lost coal mines that those Irish exiles worked at Signal Hill beneath the present day Fort Scratchley have only recently been plotted on the site by a Newcastle City Council surveyor.**

It is an understatement to say that the Parks and Playgrounds Movement is more than disappointed with the way in the way Newcastle has been treated on its 200 anniversary.

Neither the Premier of this state the Honourable Bob Carr or his Minister for the Hunter the Hon Michael Costa have been prepared to even acknowledge the founding or answer correspondence on the matter. The Newcastle Council wasted the tiny \$40,000 obtained in 1999 for the Coal River Historic Site from the Prime Minister.

The Movement proposed in our prospectus prepared for the Lord Mayor in Oct 1999 that a Heritage Master Plan be developed. This was so that there could be firm base for day-to-day operations and for future capital funding. We still don't have the basic Coal River Heritage Plan.

The Movement has expended so much effort over the past thirty-five years through the Council and community groups at Newcastle East and on the foreshore and Fort Scratchley and here on the eve of Newcastle's 200<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day we are still

trying to have acknowledgement of the importance and funding of the Coal River Heritage Park.

The coal mining settlement at Coal River was a significant turning point in the history of Australia. However we have a hole in our history at that stage, which must be researched, authenticated and located on the ground.

The tangible focus for the expression of the convict record is through the Coal River Historic Site - Nobbys, Macquarie Pier, Fort Scratchley, the Convict Coal Mines and the Convict Stockade Lumber Yard.

This historic area must be officially recognised in City Hall and at Canberra and Sydney as the focus of the founding of Newcastle and the beginning of the coal mining industry that has brought great wealth to NSW and Australia.

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<http://www.geocities.com/ParksandPlaygrounds/>