

This submission is generally supportive of the Stratford Renewable Hub project. However, I am concerned about the future of the Craven Village, including the Union Church, Craven Schoolmasters residence, The Glen – Craven Logging Railway and general lack of conservation of these items and heritage interpretation of the local history, both European and indigenous activities within the area.

While the Glen – Craven Logging Railway has local heritage significance and is listed in the Gloucester LEP and draft Mid-Coast LEP on lots 284, 311 to 314 (DP979573) adjoining The Glen Road and Nature Reserve the REH application pays no attention to conservation of the Glen-Craven railway alignment, except to say “site would be avoided”. The lack of building maintenance by a landholder is neglect and does not equal conservation of heritage items.

The Secretary’s Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARS) clearly specifies “assess the impact to historic heritage having regard to the *NSW Heritage Manual*”. In our opinion the EIS and supporting documents, including the heritage assessment prepared by Niche, do not adequately address the social impact the REH will have on the Craven Village which is largely owned by the proponent and some dwellings are in a state of disrepair. The lack of building maintenance by a landholder is neglect and does not equal conservation of heritage items.

With respect to the Craven Village the Niche heritage assessment rightly details European history from the 1820’s and throughout the 20th century up to early 2000’s articulating the timber history and associated buildings and railway line into the Glen Nature Reserve. While the Niche assessment contains some errors and omissions regarding the timber mill operation and ownership, including the NSW Government it does correctly nominate the Craven Village to be of “local heritage significance”. An earlier assessment conducted by Michael Pearson arrived at similar conclusions to the Niche study.

The study *Craven a History* prepared by Gerald McCalden provides a more comprehensive historical account of matters, which is available at the link below.

https://www.gloucestermuseum.com.au/uploads/1/2/6/1/126115770/craven_a_history_april20_1.pdf

The Niche assessment, in conjunction with other studies by Gerald McCalden, McNeil, G. Smith and most recently by Eric Martin and Associates (as attached) support an application for formal listing in the draft Mid-Coast LEP.

Unlike other heritage listings in the Mid-Coast Council area the Craven Village is unique in that the village was built to support the timber mill which enjoyed direct access to railway services on the east coast of Australia.

LEP listing should be accompanied by Conservation Management Plan of Craven Village and interpretive heritage display insitu of the Craven Mill, railway line integration with the main northern railway and other mill work accommodation since demolished and former school buildings including the most recent building relocated to Stratford.

The social, cultural and scientific significant elements with the Craven Village and Glen-Craven Logging Railway are readily identifiable by various historical studies and existing structures and in the opinion of various experts does justify a heritage listing in the MCC LEP.

While indigenous artefacts maybe impossible to locate the co-existence and social integration of indigenous and European settlers should be studied and recorded.

A conservation management plan should identify maintenance requirements, adaptive reuses of buildings and places which could include the history of mining, forestry, affordable housing and tourism opportunities in conjunction with local historical societies in Gloucester and Stroud and respective tourism information centres.

For example, the union church could be adapted to be a mining and forestry museum.

In conclusion, it is my view that even though the Craven Village is outside the area of disturbance for the project any approval of the Stratford REH should be accompanied by conditions of consent regarding heritage recognition and active conservation management plan of the Craven Village and the Glen – Craven Logging Railway.