

## **FOTC Annual Report, 14 December 2020**

### **Overall Summary of the Year.**

This year has proved to be one of the most unusual that we as part of the Australian Community have experienced. Briefly, it has meant that for most of the year we have not been able to hold regular committee meetings or to open the museum to members of the public. In terms of visitors to Armidale and the New England Region, I believe that there will be increased numbers and we will need to work out ways to advertise our museum within the building.

### **Occupation of the building.**

NECOM has been granted a lease of the eastern side of the main building on the ground floor. This lease includes the store-room G16 which Friends always assumed would be a storage room for us and the Museum of Education Trustees. Once alerted Susan Tanner, secretary of the Museum of Board Trustees wrote a letter seeking formal use of G16. I also wrote to the Education Department outlining the rooms that Friends occupy but I have received no reply concerning lease arrangements.

### **University of New England Archives and Heritage Centre:**

Adverse reports concerning the Heritage Centre and University of New England Archives have continued throughout the year. All three members of the Heritage Centre are taking redundancy and the Archivist, Bill Oates, will be leaving on 5 December 2020. Philip Ward, the third member of staff will be leaving in March 2021. I have been informed verbally that funding for the Heritage Centre and Archives will continue until March 2022.

Today the V.C. of the U.N.E. Professor Brigid Heywood, spoke on ABC Radio about the future of the Heritage Centre. At an appropriate time, Friends need to be involved in the debate about the Archives and the large College collection held there.

### **Museum of Education**

A Board of Trustees has been formed by the Department of Lands for the management of the Museum of Education established by the Armidale Teachers' College. Myself and Peter Pickett, are on that board of seven along with Bill Oates, the retired U.N.E. archivist. We received a start-up grant from Lands and more recently a \$200,000 COVID Community Development Grant. A heritage architect, Tony Deakin, has prepared an architectural heritage report on the Museum so that we can seek costings for conservation work.

Recently Alan Hardaker chair of the Board of Trustees, Wayne Hoppe and myself met with the Vice Chancellor concerning the return of the Education Museum items that are stored within the Heritage. A number of issues arose at the meeting concerning ownership of the Museum buildings and the museum items. These matters are being resolved with the NSW Government concerning the Crown Lands Act and the legal implications of a Board of Trustees.

### **The Copland Foundation:**

Bill Oates and I sent off an application to obtain an interpretation grant of \$6,532 from the Copland Foundation. The purpose of the grant is to obtain web-based hosting with associated computer hardware and equipment including a digital camera, stand and lights. It will mean that we can combine the holdings of the Museum of Education and the F.O.T.C. holdings into the one catalogue/interpretation program. We have been successful in this grant.

Graham Wilson FOTC President