

## 2. CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT EVIDENCE

### 2.1 Introduction KELLS HUT CONSERVATION STUDY - HISTORICAL EXTRACT

In developing a statement of the sites cultural significance a historical assessment of the site was compiled incorporating analysis of available documentary and physical evidence. In accordance with the Burra Charter, the cultural significance statement was developed without reference to management issues or implications, which are examined later in Conservation Policy proposals (Section 4.0).

Acknowledgment is given to the valuable research of David Hewitt.

### 2.2 Analysis of Documentary Evidence

#### 2.2.1 Early Use Of The Site

Extract from N.P.W.S. Hut Record, G.Gregors (1982):

The Emu Flat area was probably settled in the late 1860's - gold miners moving to the region from the declining Kiandra diggings. Bill Stokes is believed to have built his house on the west bank of the Goobarragandra River at some time during the 1860's, and soon after this an alluvial miner called Billy McLaren built a hut on the east bank. From the hut Cecil Piper used to visit the miner and his nephew Peter McLaren. The 300 or 400 acres that the McLarens held were later acquired by Jack Elliot, who also held a 13,000 acre lease between Emu Creek and the Broken Cart stock route. Later, George Harris from Argalong acquired the combined freehold land. It was then sold to Wal Kell (who had married George's sister Mary) ....

On the north-western bank of Emu Creek, opposite the shingle roofed McLaren's Hut ruin, was a slab hut with a bark roof belonging to another miner who is believed to have died there and been buried nearby (this hut was still standing into the 1930s, Wal Kell). Like McLaren, most of the men who worked in the area worked sluice boxes - the race lines still traverse the local topography. A more elaborate mine was found near Stoke's Hut, 2 kilometres south-west of Kell's Hut.

Extracts from an interview with Wal Kell conducted by David Hewitt (Nov 1989):

In 1942, Wal Kell purchased 40 acres of freehold land and 320 acres of leasehold in the area of Emu Creek. Wal was born at "Lacmalac", east of Tumut. His first job was at "Brungle" in 1929 and he later spent four years working on the "Gooandra" run, prior to acquiring the land on the Goobarragandra River.

There was no vehicle access to the property in 1942, only a track suitable for a pack horse. Wal used a small 'jinker' pulled by one horse to transport materials and equipment to the property. The freehold land had been extensively ringbarked and then "let go", leaving no suitable timber for building with only wattle and black sallie remaining.

#### 2.2.2 Kell's Hut

The hut was built in 1943 by Wal and another man, possibly Jack Venables, who assisted for one day each week. Wal and Mary built the chimney in a day using a mud mortar and stone from the McLaren's hut chimney, all that remained when the hut burned down sometime prior to 1920. Timber for the slabs and structure was brought from the leasehold land which still contained a large

number of older trees. 'Messmate' was used as there was "no mountain ash for miles". Flooring of stringy-bark and the corrugated iron for the roofing was transported by truck from Tumut to the roadhead, 4 miles (6.5 km) downstream on the Goobarragandra. From there, the little 'jinker' was used in relays to bring the materials upstream to a point near Stoke's House, where the materials were taken across the river on a "slide".

The walls were lined internally with hessian sacks. Wal furnished the hut with a variety of pieces, most of which he fabricated himself from packing crates and split timbers.

Later, a road to take a horse and sulky was built to provide access to Stoke's House, and this was eventually incorporated in a fire trail constructed by Arthur Cotterill for the Hume-Snowy Bushfire Council.

A Permissive Occupancy lease allowed Wal Kell to graze cattle on the property all year round, in contrast to the six month summer leases on the high plains. He cleared the land of all rabbits, grazed cattle there and used the hut as shelter until 1974 when the N.P.W.S. resumed the land for inclusion in the Kosciusko National Park, taking possession in 1975.

### 2.2.3 NPWS Management From 1975

A 1978 N.P.W.S. Inspection Report described the hut as being in sound condition and containing several items of furniture and assorted relics left over from its use as a stockman's hut (refer 2.5.3, Internal Furnishings). At the time the hut was being used primarily by fishermen.

Photographs taken in 1978 show the bottom half of the chimney clad with a flattened 44-gallon drum across the back and horizontal corrugated iron at the sides. Additional sheets of