



## Lilydale & District Historical Society Inc.

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### Plan Cave Hill submission

*(Prepared by Sue Thompson and John Brown)*

The Lilydale & District Historical Society welcomes the opportunity Sibelco has given all the community to contribute their vision for the future development of the Cave Hill Quarry site.

We recognize there are others with more expertise in the various development themes so we will restrict ourselves to giving our vision for the enhancement and interpretation of the heritage of the site.

Recognition of the heritage of the site – its first people, geology, buildings, vistas, employees and the Mitchell family -is paramount but cannot be isolated from the history of Lilydale. David Mitchell's links with the area goes back to May 13, 1862 he had purchased Briarty's Station at Steele's Flat (near Healesville) at auction. This was the start of his life-long agricultural link with and love of the Yarra Valley.

We believe the first step should be for a detailed inventory to be carried out on the site which should include photographic and written documentation of the site as it is today and include: the aboriginal cultural significance of the site; the built environments; landscape vistas, the Olinda Creek diversion, the tramway, railway line/siding, water race, the quarry pit itself plus industrial heritage.

The inventory will help develop a program for restoration, conservation and rehabilitation of all of the above elements.

Any interpretation should be based around David Mitchell's own work ethics, his embracing of new technology demonstrated repeatedly at Cave Hill and his Richmond works; his support for his workers and the wider community. He was a creative but practical stonemason whose work was reflected in his many building projects.

The society does not endorse the concept of turning old buildings into a museum just to make use of that building.

We believe the Cave Hill buildings and their use should be sustainable and aim to be revenue neutral. With this in mind and based on the David Mitchell concept outlined above, we propose the following:

1. That the Cheese factory become the site and town's interpretation centre which could be sustainable and self supporting. The interpretation centre should highlight:
  - a. the history of the town;
  - b. stories about the workers and work practices;
  - c. David Mitchell's role;
  - d. the Cave Hill development;
  - e. Cave Hill farm development and operations;
  - f. David Mitchells' contracting history and
  - g. Melba's involvement as a beneficiary of Cave Hill.
2. To achieve 1. The society believes research should be commissioned on the history of Cave Hill to produce a publication(s), e-book, multi-media presentation and website of the history of the site. This could be generate income and be distributed to the schools for incorporation into their curriculum. The society is particularly keen to interview former and current employees to talk about their working lives which would become part of the

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## 2 - Plan Cave Hill Submission

story at the interpretation centre. This could lead to the compilation of the first comprehensive study of workers in Lilydale.

3. David Mitchell was a stone mason so we propose the establishment of sculpture studios within the existing buildings (for example the barn) for artists to work and exhibit. Their work could be incorporated in the interpretative signage within the site. Cave Hill could become the town's creative arts hub which could link in with other venues such as the Yering Station Sculpture Show and Tarrawarra Gallery.
4. Artists' studios could also be established as Cave Hill has been featured in the works of many famous artists including Sir Arthur Streeton and Fred Williams.
5. An annual event such as a Cave Hill picnic (held every year for workers and the townspeople in the past) linked in with, for example, Heritage Week
6. An annual art exhibition could be developed to promote Cave Hill and Lilydale's rich arts heritage.
7. The society hasn't formed an opinion as to the management structures for the heritage interpretation centre, studios and other fixed assets, but would hope that the management would draw on our knowledge, resources, skills and expertise which we consider is substantial.

In conclusion we consider our heritage proposals:

- a. Will celebrate our history;
- b. Will foster a creative arts centre/hub;
- c. will connect people with Cave Hill and Lilydale past and present and into the future;
- d. will enrich community life at Cave Hill and Lilydale through an understanding of the past;
- e. will enhance sustainable communities by utilising the existing built heritage;
- f. Will document the site's rehabilitation and so continue the story of Cave Hill.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. J. ...', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

July 13, 2013