

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Wednesday 27 May 2009

### **Closing date extended for heritage submissions for the six Ben Hall sites**

Due to the level of community interest in the serial nomination of the six Ben Hall sites to the State Heritage Register, the closing date for written submissions has been extended until **Wednesday 8 July 2009**.

The six nominated sites are Escort Rock, Cliefden, Wandii, the Bushranger Hotel, Ben Hall's Death site and Ben Hall's Grave.

Chair of the Heritage Council of NSW Mrs Gabrielle Kibble said the extension would ensure that the final report presented to the Heritage Council would contain the most up to date and comprehensive information available.

"The role of Ben Hall is significant in the development of Cabonne; Blayney; Goulburn Mulwaree; Upper Lachlan and Forbes Shires as the increased level of bushranging in the mid nineteenth century led to public calls for a greater allocation of government resources.

"Research has revealed that the advent of bushrangers like Frank Gardiner and Ben Hall changed the public perception of criminal class and their crimes. Formerly it was expected that such deeds would have been committed by convicts, not by 'men of the soil' as the bushrangers were described by the *Hawkesbury Herald* in 1906," Mrs Kibble said.

"The contribution of Aboriginal trackers to the bushranger story is also substantial and possibly represents one of the earliest examples of Aboriginal people gaining Government employment.

"The police regarded the Australian bush as a foreign and hostile environment so the Aboriginal trackers were invaluable when trying to locate escaped convicts and lost children. Billy Dargin, who played an essential role in the capture of Ben Hall, was one of the most famous Aboriginal trackers of his era.

"Other submissions have provided interesting details on the personal stories of the bushrangers such as how the friendship between Frank Gardiner and Ben Hall rose from their love for sisters Biddy and Kitty Walsh," Mrs Kibble said.

For further information on the nominated sites and how to prepare a written submission, go to [www.heritage.nsw.gov.au](http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au) and follow the links.

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