

11 March 2009

## NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR HISTORIC HOMESTEAD THAT INSPIRED TOM ROBERTS PAINTINGS

A property that inspired some of Australia's most famous paintings has been saved thanks to the work of the Historic Houses Trust and Inverell Shire Council.

Newstead in Inverell in northern New South Wales was visited regularly in the late 1800s by artist Tom Roberts and the shearing shed and surrounding landscape were the inspiration for three of his iconic paintings *Bailed Up* (1895), *In a Corner on the Macintyre* (1895) and *The Golden Fleece* (1894).

Newstead homestead dates back to 1841 and over the past four years, the Historic Houses Trust in conjunction with Inverell Shire Council and a range of local stakeholders, have conserved the property and developed a management plan for its future use.

The work was made possible by a special grant of \$180,000 from the NSW Government and the completion of the first stage of this regional partnership will be celebrated with an opening on Sunday 15 March with special guest Premier Nathan Rees.

Newstead is one of the oldest surviving homesteads and gardens in the Inverell Shire and was settled by Dr Colin Anderson and his wife Mary Sinclair who arrived in Australia from Scotland in 1839. Their son Duncan Anderson was a close friend of Tom Roberts and they shared an interest in politics, music, literature, theatre and gardening. Their after dinner conversations on Australian folklore accompanied by a glass of rum inspired some of Roberts' most iconic works.

Newstead was one of several rural properties in the area photographed in 1995 by the Historic Houses Trust for an exhibition on the future of western New South Wales' pastoral heritage. At that time Newstead was in decline as a result of property amalgamations and its future was uncertain.

Kate Clark, Historic Houses Trust Director said Newstead is significant as it represents the growth of the early colony and an important period in Australian pastoral history.

"The farm buildings at Newstead are a very special part of our rural heritage that tell a whole range of different stories about who we are and have been — from the traditional owners of the land, to the small village of white settlers, aboriginal people, ex-convicts, Scots, Germans and Chinese settlers who helped to sustain the property

"Australia's rural heritage is very vulnerable – but it is a precious part of who we are, and projects like this are a great way of buying time and finding a new future for special places.

"This project only happened because a passionate local group brought together a range of different groups who, with the generous support of the NSW State government, has made it happen. And we are really delighted to play a part in conserving the property for future generations," said Kate Clark.

The complex history of Newstead which tells the story of the families who owned the property for more than 150 years has been pieced together in the 'Family Ties' project – a collaboration between the Inverell & District Family History group and Inverell Cultural & Arts Council with support from the Historic Houses Trust and the University of New England. Much of the research has been focussed on the collection of historic photographs, documents and objects that relate to Newstead which survive in private collections.

A Newstead Advisory Committee consisting of the current owners, representatives from Inverell Shire Council, the local community and the Heritage Futures Research Centre at the University of New England will guide the future management of this significant property.

**Newstead is part of a privately owned property & guided tours are available through Inverell Visitors Centre on 02 6728 8161. MEDIA INQUIRIES: Ruth Williams 02 8239 2326 or 0409 741 974**