



MEDIA RELEASE

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Interpretive works on Blundells Cottage to provide insight into the past

TODAY, the National Capital Authority (NCA) announced that landscaping and conservation works had commenced at the historic Canberra attraction, Blundells Cottage (the Cottage). The works commenced at the lakeside Cottage in early May 2018, and it has remained closed during this time.

The project includes enhancements to the Cottage's landscape setting and will incorporate new interpretive elements to help better reference its agricultural heritage.

NCA Chief Executive, Ms Sally Barnes, stated that the latest program of works on the site of the 1860's worker's dwelling would provide visitors with a richer appreciation of the tenants' lives. Extensive restoration works to the main cottage building were undertaken in 2017.

"As one of Canberra's heritage treasures, works on the Cottage will help showcase land use in the area, especially relevant to its early history. These new works will interpret past activities, including re-establishing a vegetable patch to reflect Alice Oldfield's kitchen garden as well as creating an interpretive walk following the original fence line," said Ms Barnes.

"We will remain respectful of the Cottage's past by incorporating traditional materials for the landscaping using local timber, gravel and stone. These material will be used to create a stone retaining wall with custom handcrafted timber seating on the Cottage's forecourt as well as a mobility friendly viewing platform," said Ms Barnes.

Conservation works have also begun on the two-room slab building adjacent to Cottage. Works to be undertake include removing and restoring the building's walls, replacing decayed footings and bases, installing a new retaining wall using original stones, recrafting the windows and doors and patching the internal lime crust flooring.

"As an agency, we place great emphasis on respecting the heritage significance of assets on the National Capital Estate. We've ensured we remain true to the Cottage's past by engaging craftsmen to conserve the outbuilding using traditional bush skills, now only practiced by a handful of people in Australia. This level of care will ensure that this heritage site will be conserved to be appreciated by generations to come."

"Once reopened, the slab shed and restored landscape will provide an historic insight into the lives of the many families who lived in the Cottage from 1859 to the 1960s. The slab building will be used to tell the story of the Blundell family, marking the first time that every era of Cottage occupation will be represented in the overall display," said Ms Barnes.

Blundells Cottage is expected to reopen in August 2018. For further details, visit www.nca.gov.au