

11 APRIL 2013

Open letter to the residents of Richmond and the Coal River Valley

Proposed sale of Oak Lodge by the National Trust Open weekend 11th & 12th May 11.30am-3.30pm

Dear residents,

The campaign to save Oak Lodge is well underway so we are writing to update you on the events since the 30th January public meeting and to invite you to visit Oak Lodge and show your support.

Thank you to everyone who attended the community meeting in Richmond on 30th January 2013. There was standing room only in the Richmond Hall, with many people voicing their passionate support for Oak Lodge to remain a house open to the public in keeping with Miss Muriel Horsfall's gifting of the property to the National Trust in 1998.

The Premier, Hon. Lara Giddings, Hon. David O'Byrne, the Leader of the Opposition Hon. Will Hodgman and Hon. Jacquie Petrusma attended, as did the new chairman of the National Trust, Mr. Dario Tomat. At the meeting, the Premier offered to support a state-wide campaign to raise \$1 million to ensure financial security for the National Trust and offered a \$10,000 government donation to start the campaign. Following this announcement, the National Trust wrote to the Coal River Valley Historical Society Inc. to notify us that the house would not be sold for 6 months and that if the state-wide campaign is successful, the Trust would hand Oak Lodge to the Richmond community.

The CRVHS is still waiting for an announcement about the state-wide campaign, so we have started our own campaign to secure Oak Lodge for the Richmond community.

Under the auspices of the CRVHS Inc. a sub-committee is organising fundraising and a media campaign. Volunteers for this work would be most welcome.

The CRVHS Inc. is paying the costs of all fundraising activities using existing funds raised in 2003 to prevent the National Trust from selling the house at the time. It is now proper that those funds are being used to save the property once again.

All *Save Oak Lodge* monies donated and raised are for transferring the title of Oak Lodge from National Trust (Tasmania) to a locally controlled organisation that will retain public access to Oak Lodge and maintain the property substantially in its current form.

Donations are held in a *Save Oak Lodge* bank account (Bendigo Bank BSB 633-000 Account 148147291), owned and controlled by the Coal River Valley Historical Society Inc. (CRVHSI) whose office bearers are the signatories. Any excess funds would be invested for the future maintenance of Oak Lodge.

If our campaign is not successful and Oak Lodge instead transfers to private ownership, then the *Save Oak Lodge* funds will be placed in a specially set up trust account to be used on an appropriate community-decided built-heritage project. Once the Society's documented expenses were paid and identified donors refunded, the account trustees

appointed from the Richmond community would disperse the funds to suitable built-heritage projects in the Richmond area.

Of course that's unlikely because with community support we *are* going to save Oak Lodge.

Oak Lodge is again open 7 days a week, 11.30am – 3.30pm. If you would like to become a volunteer in either the house or garden, please contact Neville (62604238) or Lois (62604153). Training will be given.

As part of Heritage Month we are hosting a free Open Weekend at Oak Lodge on Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th May 2013, 11.30am-3.30pm. Free entry to view the house, meet members of the committee and find out more about the house, the fundraising campaign and our plans for the future.

The Society is having a business plan prepared by a highly regarded consultant, Martin Farley.

Our new website www.coalriverhistory.org includes the Oak Lodge story and details of our upcoming events and how to donate.

There is also an email address: info@coalriverhistory.org and the *Save Oak Lodge* Facebook page.

The Society is very confident that Oak Lodge will be saved from sale and that the house will develop a more important role in the life of the historic town of Richmond.

Please consider what you can do to help: join the Society, follow *Save Oak Lodge* on Facebook, make a donation (BSB 633-000 Acc 148147291) or give some time to volunteer at Oak Lodge and help with campaign events.

Thank you for your support so far. With your help we can preserve this important part of the valley's history, remain true to Miss Horsfall's wishes and retain Oak Lodge for the community and our many visitors, now and for future generations.

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