



## Australian Heritage Database

# Places for Decision

Class: Indigenous

## Identification

<b>List:</b>	<b>National Heritage List</b>
<b>Name of Place:</b>	Mount William Stone Hatchet Quarry
<b>Other Names:</b>	
<b>Place ID:</b>	105936
<b>File No:</b>	2/06/078/0002
<b>Nomination Date:</b>	30/01/2007
<b>Principal Group:</b>	Aboriginal Quarries

## Status

<b>Legal Status:</b>	30/01/2007 - Nominated place
<b>Admin Status:</b>	20/02/2007 - Included in FPAL - under assessment by AHC

## Assessment

<b>Recommendation:</b>	
<b>Assessor's Comments:</b>	
<b>Other Assessments:</b>	:

## Location

<b>Nearest Town:</b>	Lancefield
<b>Distance from town (km):</b>	9
<b>Direction from town:</b>	NE
<b>Area (ha):</b>	15
<b>Address:</b>	Powells Trk, Lancefield, VIC, 3435
<b>LGA:</b>	Macedon Ranges Shire VIC Mitchell Shire VIC

### Location/Boundaries:

About 18ha, 9km north east of Lancefield, off Powells Track, being an area enclosed by a line joining the following MGA points consecutively: 305577E 5879227N, 305630E 5879507N, 305909E 5879457N, 305886E 5879154N, 305748E 5879071N, 305661E 5879087N, 305623E 5879055N, 305567E 5878927N, 305637E 5878910N, 305632E 5878885N, 305541E 5878868N, 305476E 5878889N, 305456E 5878890N, 305377E 5878896N, 305355E 5878958N, 305394E 5879066N, 305444E 5879147N, 305568E 5879230N, then directly to the commencement point.

### Assessor's Summary of Significance:

**Draft Values:**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Values</b>	<b>Rating</b>
A Events, Processes	<p>During the late Holocene, as woodlands expanded, ground-edged stone hatchets became an essential part of the Aboriginal toolkit in eastern Australia. They were an important all-purpose tool as well as being an item of prestige. Material for these tools was obtained from specific quarries. The Mount William stone hatchet quarry was an important source of stone hatchet heads which were traded over a wide area of south-east Australia. The quarry area has evidence for both surface and underground mining, with 268 pits and shafts, some several metres deep, where sub-surface stone was quarried (McBryde &amp; Watchman, 1976:169). There are 34 discrete production areas providing evidence for the shaping of stone into hatchet head blanks. Some of these areas contain mounds of manufacturing debris up to 20 metres in diameter. At Mount William, the number, size and depth of the quarry pits; the number and size of flaking floors and associated debris; and the distance over which hatchet heads were traded is outstanding for showing the social and technological response by Aboriginal people to the expansion of eastern Australian woodlands in the late the Holocene.</p> <p>The Mount William hatchet quarry was well-known to Europeans when Blandowski (1855) visited the place during the mid-1800s. By the early 1900s people from all walks of life were visiting Mount William to see the remains of the intensive Aboriginal quarrying and extensive flaking floors. The place's importance and the need for protection attracted the interest of a number of well respected Victorians who sought Mount William's protection from 1910 to 1923. While the place was not formally protected until 1976, the early public interest and recognition that the place showed that the Aboriginal history of Australia extended back well before the arrival of Europeans is exceptional in the course of Australia's cultural history.</p>	AT
B Rarity	<p>Although there are no first hand descriptions of the operations of Mount William, in 1882 and 1884 William Barak, a Wurundjeri man who witnessed the final operations of the quarry, described aspects of the custodial control over this resource to the anthropologist Alfred Howitt (1904:311). Records of Aboriginal custodial control of stone resources are uncommon in Australia, and the information on Aboriginal custodial control at Mt William is one of two examples in Australia (McBryde, 2000:248; Jones &amp; White, 1988:54-55). The detailed ethnographic records of custodial control of the valuable stone resource at Mount William quarry by an individual, Billi-billeri of the Wurundjeri, demonstrate a rare occurrence that makes this place of outstanding significance</p>	AT

in Australia's cultural history.

### **Historic Themes:**

### **Nominator's Summary of Significance:**

#### **Description:**

The Mount William stone hatchet quarry is located near the town of Lancefield in central Victoria, approximately 60 kilometres north-west of Melbourne. The quarry is sited at the northern end of the Mount William Range on a ridgeline that extends to the northeast of Mount William itself (Coutts & Miller, 1977:1; Goodison, 1996:1). The place straddles a narrow ridgeline plateau (at an altitude of 550–620 metres above sea level) that drops off steeply to the west to a major gully. Outcrops of greenstone (diabase), some of which are several metres high, stretch for a kilometre along this slope. The slopes to the north and east of Mount William are more gently rounded.

The boundary encompasses an area of approximately 18 hectares; the boundary between the Macedon Ranges Shire and the Mitchell Shire divides the area approximately in half. The southern part is about ten hectares; eight hectares is owned by the ILC and is surrounded by a 2.4 metre high fence; the remaining two hectares are two small portions on private land. The northern part of the place is on private land and about seven hectares and is unfenced.

The vegetation in the quarry area has been subjected to a long history of disturbances including clearance for grazing. Originally the area was probably covered by dry sclerophyll forest. Areas of open manna gum woodland (*Eucalyptus viminalis*), open mixed species woodland (*Eucalyptus dives*, *Eucalyptus goniacalyx* and *Eucalyptus melliodora*) and kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*) grassland occur on the ridgeline plateau (Goodison 1996: 38-42).

There are two hundred and sixty eight circular hollows, the remains of mining pits, eighteen of which had shafts several metres deep where the greenstone was quarried from the bedrock; the other two hundred and fifty are shallow mining pits, several metres in diameter and over a metre deep (McBryde, 1984b:273-274). Many of the mining pits have associated areas (flaking floors) where stone was shaped by flaking to create rough hatchet head blanks. In some instances, these flaking floors have a rock outcrop in the centre which was used as an anvil to shape the quarried rock (McBryde, 1976:168). A total of thirty four flaking floors occur downslope from the mining pits.

On the western slopes of the ridge, shattered rocks and debris surround the large, exposed boulders, indicating that they were worked at the base. The accumulated waste from this activity extends fifty metres down-slope; McBryde (1984b:273) reported fifty such areas. Flaking floors represented as circular mounds of worked stone, some twenty metres in diameter, and sometimes a metre high, are found close to, and downslope from the quarried boulders (McBryde & Watchman, 1976:168;). Most of the flaking floors in this area have a rock outcrop in the centre that was used as an anvil.

On the northern and eastern side of the ridge, the rocky outcrop is less exposed. A number of circular hollows grouped in clusters of up to twenty indicate subsurface quarrying of greenstone. Many of these mining pits are several metres in diameter and over a metre deep (McBryde, 1984b:273). Debris from this quarrying is found downslope from the hollows (McBryde & Watchman, 1976:169).

None of the hatchet heads found at Mount William have been ground and polished into finished hatchet heads (Coutts & Miller, 1977). The nearest axe grinding grooves are found approximately 29 kilometres away at Mount Macedon. An analysis of stone fragments at this site showed they were diabase, the same stone that occurs at Mount William (West, 1972:198-200).

In 1854 when Mount William was first described by Blandowski, the overall extent of quarrying activity extended for more than forty hectares (Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999:99). The evidence of quarrying activities at Mount William in 1993 extended to an area of approximately twenty eight hectares (McBryde, *et. al.*, 1993). Much of what was originally described by Blandowski is today now covered by soil and vegetation (Mulvaney and Kamminga, 1999:99; Paton, 2005:283).

#### **Analysis:**

Mount William is both an excavated hardstone quarry and a hatchet manufacturing site (Hiscock & Mitchell, 1993). Ground-edged stone hatchets were important tools throughout much of eastern Australia, including the north-eastern regions of Queensland, and the analysis focuses on quarries from these regions for which there is comparable data.

Mount William lies within one of six Cambrian greenstone belts in Victoria and is one of at least ten stone hatchet quarries within the area. The other quarries are: Mount Camel, Howqua River, Cosgrove, Jallukar, Berrambol and Baronga on the Hopkins River; and Ceres and Dog Rocks near Geelong (McBryde & Watchman, 1976:166). Limited data are available for these quarries so they have not been included in the comparative analysis.

Only a few stone hatchet quarries in Australia have been documented in any detail. Two of these are: the quarry at Moore Creek, north of Tamworth, New South Wales; and Lake Moondarra near Mount Isa in central-west Queensland. Lake Moondarra is a series of twenty six, small, mainly surficial quarries, spread over an area of 2.4 km<sup>2</sup>. All of these quarries were important sources of material for ground-edged stone hatchets in Australia.

The Aboriginal custodial arrangements of Mount William were documented in some detail by Howitt in the late 1800s. In comparison, little is known about the traditional ownership arrangements of either Moore Creek or Lake Moondarra. The other stone quarry with detailed accounts of custodianship is Ngilipitji in East Arnhem Land. It was quarried for quartzite material to make spear heads and knives. Donald Thomson visited Ngilipitji in 1937 and recorded details of quarry ownership and access rights to the place. According to Tibbett (2005:44-45) Ngilipitji had similar conditions of access to Mt William.

**CRITERION (a)** *the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history*

### **Stone Hatchets and Aboriginal Quarrying**

During the late Holocene, as woodlands expanded over much of Eastern Australia, Aboriginal people in these areas adopted and relied on ground-edged stone hatchets as a general purpose tool used for a variety of tasks: to cut open the limbs of trees to get possums from hollows; to split open trunks to get honey or grubs or the eggs of insects; to cut off sheets of bark for huts or canoe; to cut down trees; to shape wood into shields or clubs or spears; and, to butcher larger animals. The importance of this tool to Aboriginal people in eastern Australia is reflected by the fact there was at least one stone axe in every camp, in every hunting or fighting party, and in every group travelling through the bush (Brough Smyth 1876: 379; Sharp 1952: 18). The importance of ground edged stone hatchets was not confined to the utilitarian; they were also valued trade items that extended the range of social relationships well beyond the local group. Ethnographic records indicate that such exchanges were usually embedded in the regional network of prestige, marriage and other ceremonial activity (Brough Smyth 1876: 359; Sharp 1952: 18).

While ground-edge stone hatchets can be produced from a range of raw materials including river cobbles, the best raw materials occur in relatively few places and the material suitable for ground-edged hatchets was extracted from specific quarry locations selected for the suitability of the material for its use for cutting, scraping, pounding and chopping (Mulvaney & Kamminga, 1999:213). A number of quarries used to obtain material for ground stone hatchet head production are known. These include Moore Creek in northern New South Wales, Lake Moondarra in Queensland, and Mount Camel in Victoria. There are, however, only a few quarries that were intensively worked and the stone hatchet heads from these quarries were traded over long distances. The ground stone hatchet heads and the quarries from which they were obtained are the product of social and technological adaptations by Aboriginal people in response to the expansion of woodlands during the late Holocene.

Mount William is one of the largest and most intensively worked quarries used to produce ground stone hatchet heads. In 1855 when Mount William was first described by Blandowski, the overall extent of quarrying activity extended for more than 40 hectares (Mulvaney & Kamminga, 1999:99). The evidence of quarrying activities at Mount William currently extends to an area of at least 28 hectares as much of the area originally described by Blandowski is now covered by soil and vegetation (Mulvaney and Kamminga, 1999:99). While the twenty six Lake Moondarra quarries when combined exceed Mount William in overall area, they do not demonstrate the same intensity of quarrying and flaking.

At Mount William, McBryde recorded two hundred and sixty eight circular mining pits. Eighteen of these pits have shafts several metres deep where the greenstone was cut out from the bedrock (McBryde, 1984b:273-274). The other two hundred and fifty pits, though shallower, are several metres in diameter and over a metre deep. Only two of the twenty six Lake Moondarra quarries have pits as most of the quarries are surficial. The largest number of pits at a single quarry at Lake Moondarra is thirty five, considerably fewer pits than at the Mount William quarry. The pits are also

much smaller at Lake Moondarra with an estimated average depth of less than one metre (Tibbett, 2005:101). Hiscock described one mining pit being about 8 to 10 metres across and less than one metre deep (Hiscock, 2005:288). The depth, size and number of mining pits at Mount William shows a greater intensity of subsurface quarrying compared with Lake Moondarra.

There are thirty four flaking floors at Mount William; some located at the mining pits and others located down hill away from the main mining pits. Many have a slab of rock outcropping in the centre that was used as an anvil to shape the mined rock. Some of these floors have associated mounds, up to 20 metres in diameter, of accumulated debris from the shaping of stone into crude hatchet heads. The location of the flaking floors away from the main mining pits demonstrates a spatial separation of the different stages of hatchet head production (McBryde, 1984b:273). While a similar separation of quarrying and shaping areas occurs at Lake Moondarra, there are only six flaking floors at this site (Tibbett, 2005:72). The greater number of flaking floors and the associated massive mounds of debris at Mount William demonstrate a larger scale and greater intensity of hatchet head production than that at Lake Moondarra.

McBryde's archaeological research on the distribution of Mount William hatchets shows that the Aboriginal exchange networks for Mount William stone hatchets extended several hundred kilometres (McBryde, 1978:355). Her analysis of the distribution of these items provide evidence that some stone hatchets were exchanged from secondary centres and demonstrated that the distribution of Mount William stone hatchets reflected social and political relations.

The Mount William stone hatchet quarry is exceptional in the course or pattern of Australia's cultural history because the number, size and depth of the quarry pits; the number of flaking floors, the size of debris associated with the manufacture of the hatchet heads and the distance over which hatchet heads were traded is outstanding, showing the social and technological response by Aboriginal people to the expansion of eastern Australian woodlands in the late Holocene.

### **Early recognition of importance of an Aboriginal place**

It is clear from Blandowski's (1855) comment about Mount William being "the celebrated spot which supplies natives with stone" that the place was well-known to Europeans during the mid-1800s as was its importance as a site that supplied a rare and restricted stone resource to Aboriginal people across a large area.

By the early 1900s the recognition of Mount William's importance in showing Aboriginal people occupied the land well before the arrival of Europeans saw the quarry become a frequently visited place by people from all walks of life; scientists, students and those with a curious nature wanted to see for themselves its intensive workings and extensive flaking floors. This resulted in the removal of many artefacts from the site and the realisation that the place needed protecting for future generations.

The place's importance and need for protection attracted the interest of a number of well respected Victorians who sought Mount William's protection. The first attempt was in 1910 by Baldwin Spencer, the then director of the Museum of Victoria. He

established a committee in association with the Historical Society of Victoria to purchase a portion of the area as a reserve. However the landowners did not want to sell (Mulvaney and Calaby, 1985: 260-261; Goodison, 1996:22). Then in 1917 in a representation to the Victorian Parliament, the member for Dalhousie, Mr A.F. Cameron stated that Mount William was "the greatest historic landmark of Australia" and should be protected (*Victorian Parliamentary Debates: Legislative Assembly* Vol. 147: 1917; Paton, 2005:278). Between 1917 and 1921 Cameron attempted to have Mount William protected through a government appropriation to purchase the land (*Victorian Parliamentary Debates: Legislative Assembly vol 151 1918*; Paton, 2005:278). In 1918 he reported that "a gentleman in Melbourne [offered] 300 pounds towards the purchase of that land as a reserve. He wished it to be handed over to the State or to some organisation" (Paton, 2005:279); however this did not proceed. In 1921 Cameron requested in Parliament that this matter to "be gone on with", but no further action was taken by the Parliament regarding Mount William after Cameron's death in 1923 (Paton 2005: 279).

The Parachilna ochre mine in South Australia is comparable to Mount William as a place where Indigenous interests were recognised at an early date. In the case of Parachilna, in 1905 the South Australian government protected the ochre mine from the operation of the *Mining Act 1893* (SA) (Meyers et. al. 1997). In this instance, the protection of Parachilna was a result of Aboriginal protest to non-Indigenous interference of the ochre mines. The early attempts to protect Mount William however were undertaken by non-Indigenous people and were motivated by an understanding of the place's importance as part of the Aboriginal history of Australia.

Mount William is of outstanding importance in the course of Australia's cultural history as a place recognised by the public at an exceptionally early date as providing evidence that the country was inhabited by Aboriginal people well before the arrival of Europeans.

**CRITERION (b)** *the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's cultural history.*

Although there are no first hand descriptions of the operations of the Mount William quarry, in 1882 and 1884 William Barak, a Wurundjeri man who witnessed its final operations, described aspects of the custodial control over this resource to the anthropologist Alfred Howitt. Barak explained to Howitt that among the Woiworong "The right to hunt and procure food in any particular tract of country belonged to the group of people born there, and could not be infringed by others without permission. But there were places which such a group of people claimed for some special reason and in which the whole tribe had a special interest. Such a place was the 'stone quarry' at Mount William" (Howitt, 1904:311). Barak also explained the network of leading men who jointly had custodial rights in the quarry (Howitt, 1904:311).

Records of Aboriginal custodial control of stone resources are uncommon in Australia (McBryde, 2000:248). The only other stone resource with detailed records of Aboriginal custodial arrangements is Ngilipitji in east Arnhem Land (Jones & White, 1988:54-55).

The detailed ethnographic records of custodial control of the valuable stone resource at Mount William quarry by an individual, Billi-billeri of the Wurundjeri, demonstrate a rare occurrence that makes this place of outstanding significance in Australia's cultural history.

**CRITERION (c)** *the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's cultural history.*

Previous research undertaken by McBryde and her co-workers at Mount William (McBryde, 1984a; 1984b; McBryde & Harrison, 1981; McBryde & Watchman, 1976) has made a major contribution to Australian and international archaeology. It is unlikely, however, that the place has the potential to yield further information that will make an outstanding contribution to an understanding of Australia's cultural history.

### **History:**

#### **Early historic accounts of Aboriginal custodianship of Mt William and the associated exchange networks for stone hatchets**

The Wurundjeri, a sub-group of the Woiworong, quarried greenstone at Mount William to make hatchet blanks. Although we do not know exactly when this started, it must have been sometime in the last 1,500 years, the period during which Aboriginal people in south-east Australia used greenstone hatchets (McBryde, 2006, pers. comm. 1 Nov, File 2006/09587). During this period Aboriginal people in eastern Australia relied on ground-edged stone hatchets as a general purpose tool used in a variety of ways: to cut open the limbs of trees to get possums from hollows; to split open trunks to get honey or grubs or the eggs of insects; to cut off sheets of bark for huts or canoe; to cut down trees; to shape wood into shields or clubs or spears; and, to butcher larger animals. Unlike many other utilitarian Aboriginal stone tools ground-edged stone hatchets, especially those from important quarry sites, were traded over long distances. They were treated as valued items, with prestige attaching to their owners. The trade in stone hatchet heads therefore created social links and obligations between Aboriginal groups.

#### **The Mount William Quarry**

William Buckley, an escaped convict living in the bush from 1803 to 1833 provides the earliest European reference to the Mount William quarry, describing a hard, black stone from a place called *Kar-keen* which was shaped into stone heads (Brough-Smyth, 1876:360).

Historical accounts indicate that greenstone from Mount William was still being quarried and traded in the 1830s when Melbourne first became a colonial settlement (William Bradley [1838] as cited in McBryde, 1984a:142) but it seems to have ended by the time William von Blandowski, the first zoologist at the Melbourne Museum, visited Mount William in 1854 (Blandowski, 1855:56). It is clear from his record that Mount William was well-known to Europeans during the mid-1800s as was its importance as a site that supplied a rare and restricted stone resource to Aboriginal



people across a large area:

"The celebrated spot which supplies the natives with stone (phonolite) for their tomohawks, and of which I had been informed by the tribes 400 miles distant□Having observed on the tops of these hills a multitude of fragments of stones which appeared to have been broken artificially□Here I unexpectedly found the deserted quarries (kinohahm) of the aboriginals □The quarries □. extend over an area of upwards of 100 acres □.. They are situated midway between the territories of two friendly tribes, - the Mount Macedon and Goulburn, - who are too weak to resist the invasion of the more powerful tribes; many of whom, I was informed, travel hither several hundred of miles in quest of this invaluable rock. The hostile intruders, however, acknowledge and respect the rights of the owners, and always meet them in peace" (Blandowski, 1855:56-57).

Blandowski also provided the first known written description of the environment and commented on the quarries:

"the quarries which extend over an area of upwards of one hundred acres, present an appearance somewhat similar to that of a deserted goldfield, and convey a faithful idea of the great determination displayed by the aboriginals" (Blandowski, 1855, in McBryde & Watchman, 1976:169).

Another early visitor, Taylor noted that, "from the amount of broken stone covering a large area this quarry must have been in use for a very lengthened period" (Taylor, 1875, in Goodison, 1996:19).

Although there are no first hand descriptions of the operations of the quarry, in 1882 and 1884 William Barak, a prominent Wurundjeri man, described aspects of the custodial control over this resource to the anthropologist Alfred Howitt. Barak witnessed the final operations of the quarry, and was himself part of the Mount William network.

"When Barak was interviewed by Howitt he was the sole surviving traditionally designated Wurundjeri leader among the Woiwurrung. The remaining Woiwurrung had long been dispossessed of their lands and relocated to government-controlled settlements at Acheron and the Mohican station, then from 1863 at Coranderrk." (McBryde, 2000: 248)

Barak described to Howitt places that "a group of people claimed for some special reason, and in which the whole tribe had an interest"; such a place was Mount William which had a network of leading men who jointly had custodial rights in the quarry (Howitt, 1904:311). The leading men were of two intermarrying clans: the Kurnung-willam clan and the Kurnaje-berreing clan which were two of three clans that made up the Wurundjeri (Howitt, 1904:72). There were four men who acquired the responsibility of ownership and control of the quarry: Ningu-labul and Nurrum-nurrum-bin of the Kurnung-willam clan and Billi-billeri and Bebejan of Kurnaje-berreing clan. Despite the network of interests, Howitt (1904:311-313) makes it clear that Billi-billeri was the headman in occupation of the site and that he was the principal defender of the stone hatchet material. Howitt's records were astounding for their time and according to McBryde (2000:249), "brought the quarry to the attention

of an international anthropological audience".

### **The Trade in Hatchet Heads from Mount William**

There are a number of early descriptions of the trade in greenstone hatchets from Mount William. One of the earliest was written by William Bradley on 12 November 1838. He recorded the exchange of Mount William material in the following way:

"Today two groups of blacks met at the encampment by the deep hole in the creek □ The stranger groups as I will call them had travelled from the south and they had carried with them a number [of] □ stone hatchets □ Some of these hatchets were polished while others were still quite rough and I imagine still require further work. The group of blacks who are camped on the creek were eager to obtain these hatchets and in return for one polished axe they gave two of their opossum skin covers. For a hatchet still in a roughened state they gave in return a number of their light bamboo spears. This bartering as I shall call it went on for some time, but only amongst the menfolk" (Bradley, 1838, in McBryde, 1984a:142).

The importance of the Mount William quarry and the hatchets produced there was recognised by other European settlers. Robert Brough-Smyth (1876: 181 & 359) described the importance of Mount William as a source of hatchet blanks which were traded over wide areas, and noted that Aboriginal people often travelled long distances to obtain the preferred stone. He also described certain customs associated with visits to the quarry, and stated that the "interchange of weapons and implements □ in early times was quite an important business between natives of the south and those of the north, and that Aboriginal groups that did not engage were held in lower regard than those who did" (Brough-Smyth, 1876:359).

Isaac Batey, a Victorian pioneer, described an Aboriginal drover from the Lachlan saying that "stone tomahawks were obtained □ from a hill down in the Melbourne country" (Batey, 1862, in McBryde & Harrison, 1981:183). Other accounts describe the types of items traded for stone hatchets. These included reeds from the Murray and Goulburn Rivers groups to make spears (Guthridge 1907:5; Brough-Smyth 1876:181) as well as rugs, weapons, ornaments, belts, necklaces. In some cases, people gave presents in advance to get stones (Howitt, n.d., cited in McBryde, 1984b:272).

Frederick McCarthy's later research on trade routes throughout Australia uses these early historic accounts of the Mount William stone hatchet exchange network. For instance one of the seven trunk-trade routes identified by McCarthy is the south-east Australia route which connects with the trade from Mount William.

"(the south-east Australia route) extends from south and central Queensland down the Paroo and Warrego River to the Darling, which it follows to the Murray River and links up with the barter along this river; it then passes down the Lower Murray where it connects with a route from central Victoria (Mount William), and at Lake Alexandrina joins the Glenelg River-Coorong-Port Augusta-Lake Eyre route" (McCarthy, 1940:100).

McBryde's subsequent archaeological research on the distribution of Mount William hatchets shows that the Aboriginal exchange networks for Mount William stone

hatchets extended several hundred kilometres (McBryde, 1978:355). She also showed that the distribution of Mount William stone hatchets was determined by the social and political relations between the Kulin and neighbouring groups and the social and political relations between the neighbouring groups. For example, Mount William hatchet heads are sparsely distributed or absent in south-eastern Victoria and have a wider distribution in Western Victoria (McBryde, 1984b:269, 279).

### **Public recognition and transferral of custodianship**

It has been estimated that by the late 1800s, thousands of members of the general public had visited Mount William. Organised excursions to the place were still popular in the early 1900s, and when the District Teachers Association organised an excursion in 1906 the day was "proclaimed a public holiday in the Shire of Lancefield, so that an opportunity will be afforded to all to be present" (Lancefield Mercury, 1906, in Goodison, 1996:21).

It was a popular place for field trips by schools, public enthusiasts and scientists, and this popularity as an educational resource resulted in many articles being written about the quarry (Paton, 2005:275-277). Many visitors to Mount William at this time commented on the impressive expanse of material still evident of Aboriginal quarrying. One visitor found it "hard to realise, from the appearance of the heaps, that more than fifty years had elapsed since the last axes had been shaped there" (Hall, 1908, in Goodison, 1996:22).

Acknowledgement of the place's importance resulted in a number of well respected Victorians seeking to protect Mount William. The first attempt was in 1910 by Baldwin Spencer, the then director of the Museum of Victoria. A committee was established in association with the Historical Society of Victoria to purchase a portion of the area to form a reserve. The landowner however declined to sell their land (Mulvaney and Calaby, 1985: 260-261; Goodison, 1996:22). Then in 1917, the member for Dalhousie, Mr A.F. Cameron, made the following representation in the Victorian Legislative Assembly on behalf of members of the Historical Society, field naturalists and men who take an interest in that sort of thing:

"Something like twenty-five acres of land could be procured at a reasonable price, and fenced in, to be held for all time as the great historic landmark of Australia, furnishing the only indication or proof that we have that this country was inhabited for hundreds of years before the white man came here" (*Victorian Parliamentary Debates: Legislative Assembly* Vol. 147: 1917; Paton, 2005:278).

In 1918 Mr Cameron asked for an appropriation to purchase the land on which the quarry is located (*Victorian Parliamentary Debates: Legislative Assembly vol 151 1918*; Paton, 2005:278) and in 1919 he suggested that the place be purchased so that Aboriginal people could be returned to the area (*Victorian Parliamentary Debates: Legislative Assembly 1919*; Paton, 2005:278). Then in 1921 Mr Cameron reported to Parliament that "a gentleman in Melbourne [offered] 300 pounds towards the purchase of that land as a reserve. He wished it to be handed over to the State or to some organisation" (Paton, 2005:279). Mr Cameron requested of the Parliament that this matter "be gone on with". Mr Cameron fell seriously ill shortly after this, and died in December 1923. After his death, no further action was taken by the

Parliament regarding Mount William (Paton, 2005: 279).

### **Archaeological research at Mount William**

Mount William became a focus for archaeological research in the 1960s and 1970s (Paton, 2005:280). The anthropologist, Donald Thomson visited Mt William in 1969 noting that the place held significance beyond its economic importance and great research potential (McBryde, 2000:250). In the 1970s Isobel McBryde undertook a major study into trade systems and production for trade, investigating the Mount William quarries and the distribution of ground-edged stone hatchets from this and other quarries in Victoria and New South Wales (McBryde, 1984a; 1984b; McBryde & Watchman, 1976; McBryde & Harrison, 1981). McBryde's research drew upon ethno-historical sources, including linguistic evidence, together with archaeological evidence and petrological studies to explore the workings of Mount William, and the distribution trends and social value of its material (Paton, 2005:281-282). This cross-disciplinary approach to the study of Mount William influenced a change in approach to understanding stone quarries and stone tool technology (McBryde & Paton, n.d.:3). Previously understood from a purely utilitarian perspective, McBryde's studies uncovered the social dimension of exchange within Aboriginal society and the value of stone tools. McBryde's work was also influential overseas, particularly in Britain, Europe and North America (Paton, 2005:4).

### **Eventual protection of the place**

In 1969 Mr Powell, the then landowner of Crown Allotment (CA) 24 (the land on which the southern portion of the archaeological area lies), concerned about the damage to the place, offered to sell a portion of CA 24 to the then Shire of Romsey. In 1971, the Shire was successful in receiving financial support from the Victorian government to purchase the land, and in 1972 the title of an eight hectare portion of CA 24 was transferred to the Shire.

In 1976, under the *Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972* an archaeological area was declared over a seven hectare portion of Crown Allotment 16A (north of CA 24) and the Shire's land (Goodison, 1996:24 □ 27). The area is protected under the Victorian *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

In 1997 the Shire of Romsey (now the Macedon Ranges Shire Council) gifted their land to the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC). By gifting the land to the ILC, the Shire has set in place the eventual return of the quarry to Wurundjeri who have a strong and continuing attachment to the quarry as part of their heritage.

### **Condition:**

There are a number of exposed generally flat areas containing rock rubble, at least part of which appears to be debris from stone flaking. Soil and grass overlies some areas of rock rubble. Reportedly, a substantial quantity of stone material (not hatchet heads) has been removed from the site as a result of souveniring, but it is not possible to establish the extent to which the site has been degraded by such activity. The entire fenced portion is overgrown with high grass, but is easily accessible by foot. Surficial damage to some flaking floors and mining pits has occurred as a result of the activities of rabbits, wombats and feral pigs.

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