

# HAPPY 100th BIRTHDAY VALERIE LHUEDE

We are pleased to send our congratulations to our mentor, friend and benefactor Valerie Anne Lheude, AM, BArch (Restorer) on her amazing 100<sup>th</sup> birthday! One significant event in her eventful life has been her preservation of the old silver town of Yerranderie which she purchased from her father Aubin Rene Lheudé. He had formed the Tonalli Mining Company in 1946 to inject activity into the mines after the earlier strikes and closures but was deterred when the proposal to build Warragamba Dam was ratified.

In our extensive archives at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre we hold a letter in which Val explains her reasons for purchasing Yerranderie and the surrounding mines.

*“ I bought the Company which owned Yerranderie, a former silver mining town. It was derelict, deserted, and a true ghost town. No one had been there for 10 years. Was I mad to do so? Having travelled the world, I considered Yerranderie ranked with the most scenic and legendary spots in other countries-and it was close to Sydney’s burgeoning metropolis. “*



Val explains in the document how she gradually restored the derelict buildings – the Post Office, Tailor’s Shop, Mrs Barnes’s Boarding House, Slippery Norris’s Cottage, the old shops and a miner’s cottage for the caretaker. She also constructed a small air strip to enable her to fly in to the town from her home in Mosman because the road in from Oakdale was submerged by Lake Burragorang for the Warragamba Dam. The alternative route via Oberon took 5 hours. Her dedication to this project is widely recognised and the significance of Yerranderie historically and environmental-

ly continues in the work of the National Parks and Wildlife Association who now manage the village. The Wollondilly Heritage Centre and Museum holds many items from the collection which ex residents donated to Val. Some of the stories of Yerranderie are told in the Museum in objects and storyboards and the archives hold documents and photos and her book ‘Yerranderie is my Dreaming’.

Congratulations, Happy Birthday Val!