

**Submission
No 63**

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Organisation: Bega and District Historical Machinery Club Inc.

Date received: 14 August 2016

The Bega & District Historical Machinery Club Inc. is a local club whose primary objective is the fostering of, exhibition of, development of, preservation of & restoration of historical machinery or associated undertakings. Our club is a member of the National Historical Machinery Association which provides insurance, safety guidelines & rules of operation. The Bega club, while initially founded to preserve stationary engines & related farm machinery, has now expanded to include tractors, trucks & other commercial vehicles older than 30 years. There is a general interest in the preservation of this technology as evidenced whenever the club displays & and in particular, operates the machinery at club events including local shows.

A project that the club is currently undertaking which relates directly to this submission is the preservation & restoration of a 124 hp Crossley twin cylinder engine that ran the Bermagui sawmill & previously the Junee flour mill. The engine was manufactured in the early 1920s. Once the sawmill was shut, the engine was sold but never removed from the site. The ownership of the land has changed and is now a prime development site in the town with the engine in danger of removal for scrap. Over the years, since the mill shut down the engine has been vandalized with many small parts being taken or broken. While there has been local interest in preserving the engine, its size has put individuals off doing anything to save the engine. The flywheel alone weighs 8t.

The Bega club contacted the land owner who wanted the engine preserved. The club eventually bought the engine and relocated it to a Bega workshop where restoration has begun. This is a huge undertaking for the club, but the member felt that the engine was worth saving. Engines of this size are rare, a running example is now a tourist attraction at Bourke. The club has taken on the project knowing that will be many year before the engine runs again, especially given the very limited funds available to the club. Currently the engine is being dismantled with some refurbishment of components started. The crankshaft is a present in Melbourne to be reground in a workshop specializing in ship engines, but interested in our project and willing to carryout the work as a "fill in" job.

Securing funding grants to help restore the engine reveal that funding bodies are more interested in historical buildings and structure, not preserving machinery or mechanical technology or the skills required to carry out the work.

The Bega clubs project is used to illustrate to importance of this inquiry and our submission.

This submission is to support the argument that there is a pressing need to provide some form of financial assistance to voluntary organisations willing to take on the task of preserving our technological history. The club is not expecting a handout, some sort of funding stream that can be accessed by projects on some sort of merit based assessment.criteria.