



The photograph as a witness to time, people and events, has been a preferred medium for documenting and preserving our histories since its invention in 1839.

The pictorialist photographer Harold Cazneaux (1878 – 1953) was commissioned by BHP to photograph their steelwork plants throughout Australia in 1934. His photograph *Steam and Sunshining, Newcastle BHP, 1934*, blends his characteristic use of light with billowing steam incorporating a modernist sense of space, form and geometry. It remains still an iconic image of Australia's industrial past.

A generation on in 1963, another renowned photographer, David Moore (1927 – 2003) created his iconic image with *Newcastle Steelworks*, with a foreground composition of two young boys riding away from the steelworks that were atmospherically billowing smoke across the horizon, providing a human scale to the immense industrial production.

In 1999, Murray Mckean's photographs showed the site post closure in a state of ruin. Detritus from the steelworks is sprawled across the landscape in a kind of wreckage that documents the monumental scale and emotion of that time in Newcastle's history. The residual materials, and the evidence of absent workers, and workers as they clear the site, will remain tangible for many. Using the texture of the abandoned architecture of the site, Murray has preserved this period of our city's history with a series of poignant images that offer critical commentary on our collective memory twenty years on.

STEEL LIFE MURRAY MCKEAN

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24 SEPTEMBER - 19 OCTOBER 2019

**PLEASE JOIN CHANCELLOR MR PAUL JEANS FOR THE EXHIBITION LAUNCH
TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 6:30PM**

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

Broken Hill Propriety (BHP) began mining silver, lead and zinc at Broken Hill in NSW in 1885. In 1915 the company ventured into steel and commissioned a steel making works to be opened on ten hectares of land by the Hunter River at Mayfield. During its operations it was one of the largest employers in Newcastle and defined the city as an industrial centre.

By the 1990s, the steelworks, affectionately known as 'big Harry's place', was to be phased out by the end of that decade, bringing to a close the operations of Australia's oldest steel making operations that had employed over 50,000 people.

Newcastle's steelworks closed on September 30th, 1999.



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IMAGE FRONT: *Steel Life number 14* 2001
IMAGE BACK: *Steel Life number 21* 2001

silver gelatin prints shot on 6x7 mm 100 iso film using a Mamiya RB 67 camera images courtesy MURRAY MCKEAN