



**A J MACLEOD PROPERTY PTY LTD**



**“Lifestyle, Recreation, Farming, Investment & Residential Pursuits”**

***“The greatest risk in the world is to take no risk at all”***

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**The Highland Clearances**

I have recently returned from another overseas adventure this time to the middle east and northern Europe, hence why my monthly newsletters are now only every quarter. The main aim was to discover the truth behind a story that has been handed down through generations of my family. My name Alistair JOHN MacLeod, the middle name after my great great great Grandfather John MacLeod, a highlander from the Isle of Skye Scotland. The Mac is Gaelic meaning SON OF, the LEOD is Norse from the Viking era where they settled/invaded the inner and outer Hebrides, off far western Scotland in 1200 AD. I was told by my father we had been dispossessed from our lands and forced to migrate to Australia in 1882. I spent three months researching the story and my family blood line, meeting with family members in Scotland, and verifying the blood line, and verification in the archives section in a small town, Portree on the Isle of Skye, and proving beyond doubt the connection and the story. I was under the belief it was a migration, but now believe it might be better referred to as asylum seeking. After the battle of Culloden 1746 the Highlanders were banned from speaking their native language Gaelic, banned from wearing their tartans, and banned from playing their bag pipes. For the next 140 years these people with their own customs and culture were persecuted. They were considered savages by the Crown, and in most cases pushed off their lands that they had occupied for hundreds of years, and replaced by sheep, as the new title owners of the land, could obtain an income from wool and meat. This period in history is referred to as THE HIGHLAND CLEARANCES. The highland Clan system was one of subsistence living, where by land would be used by a family to live off, and if the Chieftain called the Clan to battle, the user of the land, known as the crofter would be loyal to the chieftain. The Clan system is honored more than personal possessions or ones own self interest. Who you are Mac, Son Of is of the most up most importance in the Clan system.



A Black house Humble beginnings



MacLeod Clan burial grounds Isle of Skye

My family was no exception, of where John MacLeod had a small 2 acre crofting plot, they lived in a stone hut with thatched roof known as a Black house. For warmth they burnt peat on the ground inside the hut, with the thick smoke filtering through the thatched roof, as there was no wood to use for fire in this barren wind swept region. I stood on a hill near Dunvegan castle that is the burial ground of the MacLeod Clan, in the walls of the roofless church and the grounds are the monuments to some of the MacLeod Chief tens, although my blood line is not Chieftain, my blood line is buried here, but no tombstone marks the burial place, but my people are here, for many generations over hundreds of years. And within view of this burial site, is the 2 acre crofting plot of which my people lived a subsistence living for hundreds of years. This moment was the most emotional and humbling experience I have ever had. They were dispossessed from their land, no different as to the likes of the Australian Aboriginal or the American Indian. It was hard to fathom their existence on 2 acres that they never had title to, and the hardships and hunger they experienced. And here I was, an Australian who travels the world, once penniless that then acquired with in a short period of 4 years, several properties and 1,000 acres of land with several hundred head of cattle, able to accomplish this by a rising economic market. The comparison was sobering to say the least, and this is who I am, SON Of these once proud and strong people. When the crofter plot was lost, John's son Donald moved to the local town and worked as a Blacksmith. But the Clearance of the original inhabitants by the Aristocrats reduced the population from 24,000 to 6,000 forcing Donald and family to move to Australia. In some circumstances the sailing ships were not fit for cargo, and the aristocrats would not transport their goods, but they would load up these ships with desperate people from the highlands of Scotland. Locals of the town people of Portree showed me the site of the blacksmith shop and gates Donald made as a Blacksmith. I spent the night in the home of which Donald lived before coming to Australia. I was interviewed for the local radio station, as the new owner of the former home of Donald new the History of the Blacksmith. Donald died a pauper in Australia after trying to find gold on the diggings, a broken man hospitalized then placed on Stradbroke island to die. Again with no land to call his own. Most people have a similar story of their family origin, of sacrifice and hardship. It is no greater history than ones own history. It is up to all of us that are privileged to be living in this era and great country, to take advantage of an opportunity to own a piece of land you can call your own. As most of our ancestors did not.



Portree Isle of Skye



Gates built by my great great

## **2 Years interest free deal**

I am offering two years interest free period for the last of the Snowy Mountains properties, long terms available over several years. Six of the Eight properties were sold Stage one of the subdivision. The Old Homestead of 147 acres was the last property to be placed on the market. If interested reply requesting an information memorandum. The second property available, also now offering a 2 years interest free period.

## **Residential on Maribynong river/Valley**

I have for sale a residential at East Keilor in Melbourne, this is the home I live in but have decided to move on, hopefully to a rural property. It has potential for subdivision, is not listed on my web site as yet, but details are at this link as follows: I am not offering long terms with this property 90 day settlement. Details at <http://www.realestate.com.au/property-house-vic-keilor+east-115378879>

*“The distance between your dreams and reality is called action”*

## **Never Die Wondering**



**Kind regards**

**Alistair MacLeod**

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INTEREST FREE PERIOD & LONG TERMS AVAILABLE

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A J MACLEOD PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT has for sale properties in both N.S.W. and Victoria, large or small acreage, lifestyle, recreation, residential, Investment or farming pursuits. The properties range from open forest type country to farming properties, known as the jewel of the Snowy Mountains with the areas high rain fall, and permanent mountain stream. Spectacular views towards the high country - A natural paradise. In Nth Geelong Victoria, available now is a commercial site & business opportunity.