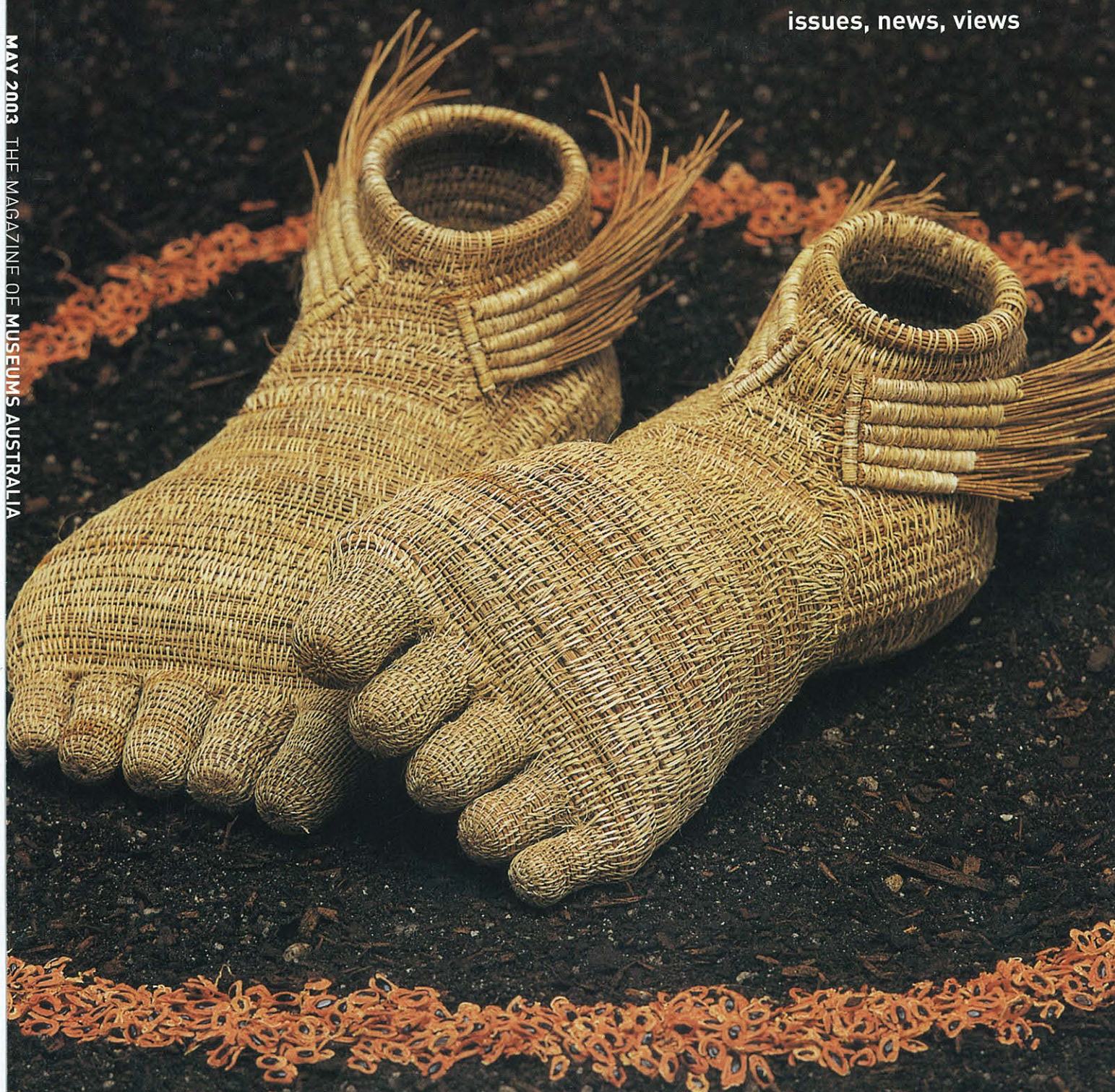


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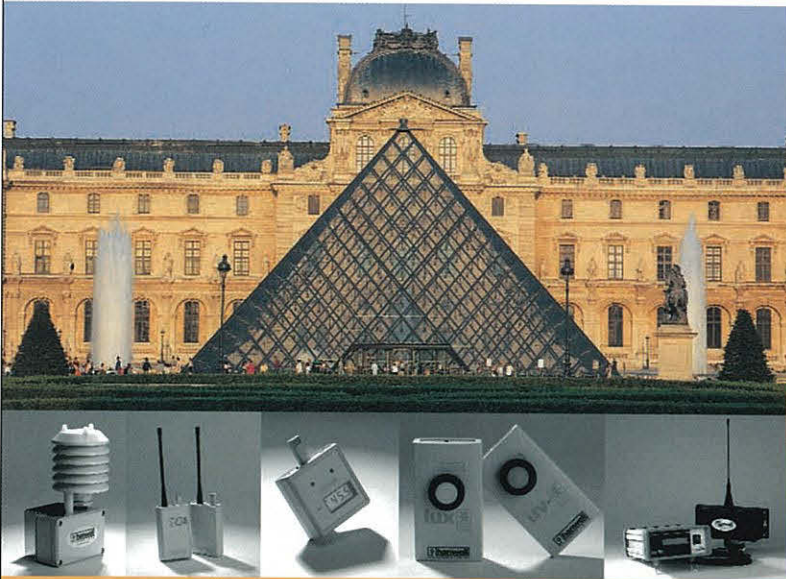
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MAY 2003 THE MAGAZINE OF MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA



Museums and
sustainability

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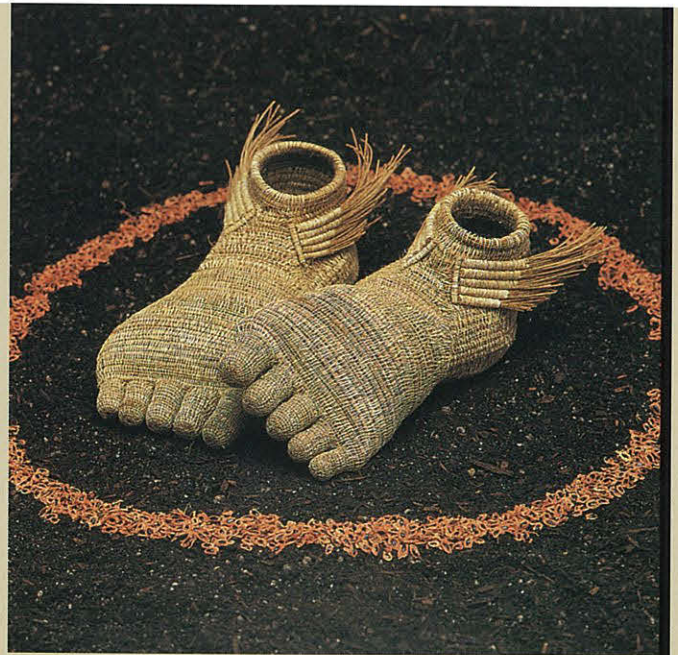
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COVER IMAGE:

Sieglinde Karl
Becoming 2001

Courtesy of Tamworth City Gallery

This work of art, a pair of flying feet inspired by Greek mythology, is woven from allocasuarina needles, New Zealand flax and acacia melanoxylon seeds. It is included in the travelling exhibition, *Material Witness*, the 15th Tamworth Fibre Textile Biennial. It has already been on display in Mornington Peninsula Gallery, and is now at QUT Gallery until 22 June. From there it travels to: Campbelltown City Gallery, 19 September to 19 October; Port Pirie Regional Gallery, 1 November to 30 November 2003; Tweed River Regional Gallery from 15 January to 14 March 2004; John Curtin Gallery, 14 April to 13 June 2004; and Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Launceston, from 17 July to 12 September 2004.



CONTENTS



→ NEWS AND COMMENT...INCLUDES

- 2 A small museum embraces change
- 3 From teddy bears to pioneer women's history
- 3 Ian Galloway on looting in Iraq
- 4 National Collections Advisory Forum update
- 4 Cape York Stories at Queensland Art Gallery
- 5 AICCM training summit
- 6 Exhibitions
- 8 Personal view of Newcastle's history

→ MUSEUMS AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 9 Museums and sustainability
- 10 Fauna versus flora in botanic gardens
- 12 WebWatch — Australia's virtual herbarium
- 13 Sustainability issues and Museum Victoria
- 14 Museums Australia Sustainability Guidelines

→ OTHER FEATURES

- 20 Hot topic — David Hutchison defends museum historians
- 21 Award for *James Craig*
- 22 Health and Medicine Museums
- 24 MA in action
- 26 Critiquing 'Tangled Destinies' at NMA
- 27 Reviews
- 33 Noticeboard



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ELIZABETH MASTERS

A SMALL MUSEUM EMBRACES CHANGE

ELIZABETH MASTERS DESCRIBES THE MAKEOVER BY VOLUNTEERS OF A HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S MUSEUM.

Forced to evacuate their crumbling pisé (rammed earth) museum building in mid 2001 to allow renovations, the Boorowa & District Historical Society, based in the town of Boorowa in south-western NSW, took the opportunity to revolutionise its approach to museum displays.

The Boorowa Council, which owns the museum building, had received a Centenary of Federation grant to carry out extensive renovations. The grant required the Historical Society to establish a display reflecting the local wool industry.

The museum had changed little since it was set up as a folk museum thirty years ago. With no paid staff and a miniscule budget, the society's first step towards the wool display was to form a curatorial committee of members and community representatives.

'Boorowa is noted for its production of fine wool and our members were optimistic they could mount a display in next to no time', said co-ordinator Glen Johns.

'But our first meeting showed just how much we had to learn, and the project took over our lives for the next eighteen months. We devoted the first ten months to research, consulting experts in the field, studying relevant publications and visiting other museums, far and wide.'

The next step was to prepare a display plan, with a decision to present the industry in both an historical and contemporary context. The display, in five sections, highlighted old shearing sheds and early equipment: the modern shearing shed and the current approach to wool presentation and marketing; the value of woollen clothing; wool folklore by a local bush poet and a yarn spinner; and the success of local shearer Ian Elkins, former World Shearing Champion.

'The first step to put the theory into practice was to prepare a model layout of the display,' said Glen. 'Once the building renovations were completed in October 2002 we began the physical preparation.'

Galvanised iron walls were erected and the illusion of a shearing shed interior was created with a series of window photographs shot in local sheds.

Special lighting was installed, significant display items gathered and draft interpretation notes refined and printed. Poetry was recorded, bush yarns transcribed.

'We also sat through countless hours of videotape recordings to end up with a splendid nine-minute presentation of our champion shearer in action', said Glen.

Although the budget groaned, three life-size photographs were installed as strategic backdrops.



Stencil for wool bale from 'Freshfield' property
Courtesy of Boorowa & District Historical Society

VISITORS ARE INVITED TO RECORD THEIR VISIT BY KNITTING A LINE OR TWO OF THE MUSEUM'S WOOLLEN SCARF.

By opening day, the display had all come together. Glen Johns said 'We must acknowledge the generosity of our corporate donors in providing strategic display items and the goodwill of past and present Boorowa wool growers, as well as the many, many hours given by the enthusiastic committee to ensure the deadline was met'.

Windows on Wool was officially opened by the Federal Member for Hume, Alby Schultz, on 8 February 2003. Visitors are invited to record their visit by knitting a line or two of the museum's woollen scarf.

The Society's president, Peter Mason, emphasised the fact that small museums must embrace change or be left behind: 'The era of museums stuffed with clutter has long passed. Museum professional and funding bodies have made it very clear that if we want access to expertise and funding we must mount professional exhibitions.'

The Society's members are now planning their next display, on the explorer Hamilton Hume's family, who settled in the area. An education centre is also a priority, to ensure that young and old residents are aware of their heritage and the importance of preserving it.

ELIZABETH MASTERS IS A MEMBER OF THE BOOROWA & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FROM TEDDY BEARS TO PIONEER WOMEN'S HISTORY

The photograph of 'Big Ted' from the National Museum exhibition, *Hickory Dickory Dock: the changing face of Playschool*, inspired Daena Murray of MA's Northern Territory branch to include a profile on a local teddy bear expert in the branch's February Newsletter.

Pauline Cockrill, Curator of the Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame in Alice Springs, gained an international reputation as an expert and best selling author of books about teddy bears. Working in her first job as a curator at the National



Pauline Cockrill with a 'rather nice, threadbare, pre-World War One Steiff (German) bear, photographed in London'

Courtesy of Pauline Cockrill

Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green, in London's East End (part of the Victoria & Albert Museum), she researched teddy bears to deal with the many inquiries from people who had seen valuable bears on the popular television show, *Antiques Roadshow*.

Pauline curated an exhibition on soft toys, including teddy bears, and built up the collection. She was then invited to write a book, *Teddy Bears and Soft Toys*, published in 1988, and followed this up with *The Ultimate Teddy Book* (1991). Four

other books followed, and Pauline discovered she had acquired a new title — 'the teddy bear woman'.

On a backpacking trip to Australia in 1990 Pauline decided that she should seek a different career direction. She fell in love with the Northern Territory. Once she had moved to Australia she pursued her next museum career interest, women's history in museums. She is now developing a Quilt Project at the National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame.

DR IAN GALLOWAY

LOOTING IN IRAQ — A CULTURAL TRAGEDY

In a television interview recently, Defence Chief Major General Peter Cosgrove described war as 'a series of tragedies'. Since war began in Iraq on March 20, we have witnessed a series of human tragedies live on television, in one of the most reported conflicts in history.

Just as an end to the conflict appeared in sight, a cultural tragedy has occurred. The looting of the National Archaeological Museum of Baghdad and the Mosul Museum and the stripping of the University Library in Mosul, represent an international disaster. Before the war began,

officials in the United States of America and the United Kingdom were warned of what could occur and were encouraged to put strategies in place to prevent damage to cultural sites and collections.

The Coalition forces, though faced with many conflicting priorities, have failed to meet their international responsibilities. The International Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, adopted in 1954 as part of the Hague Convention, undertakes to '...prohibit, prevent and if necessary put a stop to any form of theft,

pillage or misappropriation of, and any acts of vandalism directed against cultural property'. It appears that while US Marines were rapidly deployed to protect hospitals and other key facilities in East Baghdad, no such protection was afforded to the National Museum in West Baghdad.

Though neither the USA nor UK are signatories to the Convention, both have publicly stated that it is their policy to comply with its principles.

A shared knowledge and appreciation of cultural heritage can play an important role in rebuilding war-torn societies. Cultural heritage is a common

foundation on which this rebuilding can take place. It is therefore imperative that every effort is made to reclaim any stolen objects and prevent further looting.

Though we are far from the field of conflict, as members of the international museum community, it is important that we raise our voices to condemn these outrageous acts.

DR IAN GALLOWAY
PRESIDENT
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL
COMMITTEE OF ICOM

NATIONAL COLLECTIONS ADVISORY FORUM

UPDATE

The National Collections Advisory Forum has been asked to develop a strategic vision for the future of the collections sector, and since its establishment in August 2002 the Forum has been consulting widely with key organisations in the galleries, libraries, archives and museums sectors on relevant issues.

In the November 2002 issue of *Museum National*, Forum Chair, Professor Margaret Seares, reported that Forum Members had agreed to conduct consultations on establishing the priority order for the eight key needs identified by Deakin University in the Key Needs Study.

Consultations

Forum consultations were undertaken over a three-month period in late 2002. These consultations revealed that documentation, conservation and interpretation were consistently rated among the top four sectoral needs. Issues such as the need for support to maintain regional institutions were also prominent, as was the role larger institutions might take in providing outreach services and support for professional development in small collections. Professional development was raised as a high priority by many parts of the sector.

National Industry Body

There was consensus across all four domains (galleries, libraries, archives and museums) that the establishment of a national industry body is an important step in the development of a

THE FORUM WILL REPORT TO THE CULTURAL MINISTERS' COUNCIL ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY BY AUGUST 2003.

sustainable sector. There was support for the idea that a national industry body should not become solely focussed on the delivery of ongoing programs of support, but that the structure needed to be flexible enough to allow the body's leadership role to develop over time.

The Forum has now commissioned Sagacity Consulting to undertake the feasibility study and as part of the process they will facilitate two Forum convened industry meetings and seek input through a dedicated internet facility. The Forum will report to the Cultural Ministers' Council on the outcomes of the study by August 2003.

Key Needs Study

Following on from the consultations the Forum has been considering a range of strategic responses to the key needs. These include the development of a significance training program for volunteers, research on community value and the development of national collections management standards, and an enhanced model of regional outreach and program delivery. Finally, the Forum agreed to commence development on a National Collections Strategy to provide a vision for the sector over the next three to five years, and to provide an operational context for the national industry body if it eventuates.

CAPE YORK STORIES COME TO THE QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY

The Queensland Art Gallery will soon be hosting a significant new exhibition of more than 200 Indigenous historical and contemporary works of art and their associated stories. *Story Place: Indigenous Art of Cape York and the Rainforest* will be the result of a partnership between the Queensland Government, Queensland Art Gallery, Comalco and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC).

The exhibition will include historical material sourced from a number of museum collections, including those of the Australian Museum, the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and the National Gallery of Australia. It will also feature a selection of shields, sculptures, law poles, paintings, works on paper and fibre works, highlighting and celebrating the links between ceremony, dance and culture and Indigenous visual art.

Five Indigenous arts trainees were appointed in February 2003 to assist with the exhibition's research, development and implementation. Queensland Art Gallery Director Doug Hall called the traineeships 'a significant professional development opportunity' that would 'provide invaluable support in realising the exhibition. The appointment of these trainees is a milestone in the development of the exhibition which has stimulated art making and contact among artists within the communities.'

Sponsor Comalco has assisted with acquisition of artworks from widely scattered communities, from Tully to the tip of Cape York.

FIVE INDIGENOUS ARTS TRAINEES WERE APPOINTED IN FEBRUARY 2003 TO ASSIST WITH THE EXHIBITION'S RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION. QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY DIRECTOR DOUG HALL CALLED THE TRAINEESHIPS 'A SIGNIFICANT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY' THAT WOULD 'PROVIDE INVALUABLE SUPPORT IN REALISING THE EXHIBITION.'

AICCM TRAINING SUMMIT

The Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials (AICCM) held a 'Training Summit' on 9–10 March at the National Museum, Canberra. Its aim was to review the future of conservator education following the University of Canberra's decision in September 2002 to close its courses in the Conservation of Cultural Materials and Cultural Heritage Management.

Participants reviewed the findings of a National Training Audit, noting key issues such as the specialist v. generalist debate, the need for para-professionals and technicians as well as graduate conservators, and the critical importance of internships in training. Emeritus Prof. Colin Pearson surveyed these and

further issues for the future. He observed that conservation requires such a variety of skills from trade qualifications to MBAs that basic conservation courses cannot hope to provide them all, and that conservators must expect to seek further qualifications after their initial training. He reviewed changes in the broad heritage industry and queried how education programs should respond, for instance, to the growth of private conservation firms; the demand for conservators to work on exhibition-associated projects rather than single treatments; and the trend towards conservators being more and more central to whole-collection management.

There followed presentations by three universities offering

conservation programs. The University of Western Sydney and the University of NSW presented a joint program drawing on the former's existing Centre for Conservation Training and the latter's academic strengths in materials science and art education. This was evidently so recent a decision that the PowerPoint presentation featured only the UNSW logo, and when pressed for detail, its sponsors could say only that the program was in development. However, it was launched as an eighteen-month Masters, to be taught by sessional industry specialists and with web-based teaching of theory components. The University of Melbourne confirmed that it will commence a two-year Masters program in 2004, based in its

Ian Potter Conservation Centre, which already offers short courses.

AICCM resolved at the end of the Summit to wait to see further developments from the universities, and to produce number of issues papers on conservation training. Meanwhile, the University of Canberra announced on 8 April that it would re-establish its undergraduate specialist degree in Cultural Heritage Studies in 2004, though without the Conservation of Cultural Materials stream, leaving Cultural Heritage Management the only major. This move guarantees the future of the UC postgraduate programs in Cultural Heritage Management.

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The Department offers a wide range of learning opportunities to meet the requirements of individuals at all levels of their museum careers. Programmes are delivered both by distance learning (part-time) and through face-to-face, campus-based courses (full-time) enabling students to select a mode of learning to suit their needs and circumstances.

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- are underpinned by the department's leading edge research and the work of RCMG (Research Centre for Museums and Galleries)
- reflect the department's commitment to student-centred learning and to meeting the needs of students from diverse backgrounds
- maintain an international perspective and reflect the department's collaborative approach to working within the sector

The Department has been awarded the highest possible score (24/24) for the quality of its teaching and student support by The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and was graded 5 in the most recent Research Assessment Exercise.



University of
Leicester



EXHIBITIONS

Last days for the Archibald, Wynne, Sulman, and inaugural Citigroup Private Bank photo prize exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, which closes on 25 May.

Winners were: Geoffrey Dyer, whose portrait of Tasmanian author Richard Flanagan won the Archibald Prize; Tim Kyle, whose massive *Seated Figure* won the Wynne Prize; Judy Cassab, who was awarded the Trustees Watercolour Prize for *Nocturne, Rainbow Valley*; Eric Smith, who won the Sulman Prize for *Reflection*; and Greg Weight, who was the first photographer to win the Citigroup Private Bank Australian Photographic Portrait Prize for his work, *Railroad blues Jim Conway 2003*.

A photograph that was not placed, but will interest members of the museum community, is Australian Museum photographer Stuart Humphreys' study, *Professor Michael Archer with Thylacine*. The exhibition contains a number of other works of interest, including Nicholas Harding's portrait of the redoubtable Margaret Whitlam.

Nicholas Harding
Margaret Whitlam AO

Reproduced by permission of the Art Gallery of New South Wales



SATISFACTION AT HAZELHURST REGIONAL GALLERY AND ARTS CENTRE

This exhibition, on tour from Lake Macquarie Regional Gallery, combines photography, ceramics and food preparation, as seen in this image produced by Mark Capon, with food by Robert Molines, and

photographed by Izabela Pluta. The exhibition, at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre, Gymea, NSW, from 24 May to 20 July, will be sure to stimulate the appetite.

Mark Capon
Teeming series: large pierced platter 2002
Image courtesy of Lake Macquarie Regional Gallery, supplied by Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre



TRAVELLERS' ART AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

From 12 June to 21 September visitors to the National Library of Australia can see two hundred early travel images, drawn exclusively from the Library's collections by curator Tim Fisher, in a new exhibition, *Travellers' Art*.

Augustus Earle (1793–1838)
A Bullock Hackery or Cow Coach of India 1829
 watercolour on paper
 National Library of Australia

UNDER THE COVERS AT THE JEWISH MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA

Under the Covers: Love Sex & Intimacy in Jewish Life is a fascinating exhibition on display at the Jewish Museum of Australia in St Kilda, Victoria, until 18 June.

Introducing the exhibition, curator Sidra Kranz Moshinsky writes 'That which is most holy in Judaism is most covered ... *Under the Covers* seeks to explore the world of Jewish love, sex and intimacy by lifting some covers, while being respectful of traditions of boundaries, modesty and holiness. This exhibition examines how ancient concepts are adopted and adapted in the patchwork of relationships that colour Australian Jewish life.'

She cites the *chuppah* under which a traditional Jewish wedding takes place as one example of a cover with rich symbolic meaning. The exhibition contains examples of a *chuppah*, wedding clothes,

certificates, and artworks by Helene Aylon, Ben Elisha, Heather Ellyard, Gayle Factor, Dena Lester, Bill Meyer, Joan Roth, and Jenni Worth that explore ritual and communal practices associated with marriage and intimacy, and the nature of Jewish sexuality. The final section, 'Soul Mates', is a photographic essay of Jewish couples by Julia Topliss.

Jewish Museum of Australia Director, Dr Helen Light, said that the exhibition 'represents the approach of the Jewish Museum of Australia — full of information, but not judgmental. We are not a religious but a cultural institution. We therefore reflect on a community as it is, not as Jewish law dictates it should be — although we explore that too, and respect its parameters in the presentation of the exhibition.'



Courtesy of Newcastle Regional Museum

AN AUTHOR'S PERSONAL VIEW OF A CITY'S HISTORY

Newcastle

too close to Sydney for Sydney's comfort ...

a nursery of workers for big industries
use them, discard them

safely Labor for a Labor government
irretrievably Labor for a Liberal government
neither needs to take notice

nobody cares about the people of Newcastle
except the people themselves

they help themselves
they teach themselves
they reward themselves

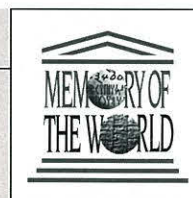
brave
battling

how shall we live?

These words were written by Australian author Marion Halligan to accompany a new permanent exhibition she has curated at Newcastle Regional Museum, *How shall we live?*

Born in Newcastle, which she has used as the location for one of her most powerful novels, *Lovers' Knots*, Marion Halligan now lives in Canberra. For this project she visited the museum and selected a wide range of objects, then wrote narratives that develop a personal view of the city's history.

UNESCO'S MEMORY OF THE WORLD AUSTRALIAN REGISTER



Three new collections have been inscribed on the Memory of the World Australian register of documentary heritage — the Walter and Marion Griffin designs for Canberra (National Archives of Australia), the Australian Agricultural Company collection (Noel Butlin Archives Centre, ANU), and the Cinesound Movietone newsreel collection (ScreenSound Australia: the National Film and Sound Archive).

Launched in May 2002 by the Director-General of UNESCO, the register lists documentary heritage of national influence, identified annually by the Australian Memory of the World Committee as meeting the same criteria, adapted to the Australian setting, as international register entries. Australian documents listed on the international or regional registers are normally also included on the national register. Collections already on the register are the *Endeavour* Journal of Captain James Cook and the case papers of

Edward Koiki Mabo (National Library of Australia), which are on the international Memory of the World register. The Australian constitutional documents are held by a number of institutions — the National Library of Australia, National Archives of Australia, ScreenSound Australia: National Screen and Sound Archive, Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, and the High Court of Australia.

Any institution, organisation or individual can nominate documentary heritage for inclusion in the register. The nomination and assessment process is set out on the website, www.amw.org.au

Custodians of heritage inscribed on the register are publicly presented with a commemorative certificate and have certain rights to use of the UNESCO Memory of the World logo.

As it grows, the register will list the key documents that have recorded and shaped Australia — our national memory.

What's your favourite 'horror story' in museum practice? Think of museum stores where the clutter defies analysis; large windows that transfer heat and thus create huge demand for airconditioning; trustees who construct a new building but can't afford to pay staff; volunteer-run museums that fail to attract a younger generation of supporters; great exhibitions for which no promotion has been organised. Behind poor management may be a lack of commitment to sustainability — for museums, their personnel, and the wider community.

'Museums and Sustainability: Guidelines for Policy and Practice in Museums and Galleries', is launched in this *Museum National*. It presents 'best practice' ideas for sustainability in museum

operations and with collections. It also advocates museum involvement in community education and decision-making about sustainable economic, environmental, social and cultural goals.

Please enjoy the thoughtful evidence included here from museums, botanic gardens and herbaria. Urge your museum's governing body to adopt the Museums Australia guidelines into their policy framework. Then share your own museum's story of sustainability with others — through discussion at SIG, Branch and Chapter meetings, and through the pages of *Museum National* and other publications.

MARGARET BIRTLEY
CHAIR, EDITORIAL STANDING
COMMITTEE, MUSEUMS
AUSTRALIA

SWITCHED ON AT THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

The South Australian Museum has switched on its own solar system, creating a new 'North Terrace Power Station'. Premier Mike Rann and Museum Director Tim Flannery officially 'switched on' the solar panels on the Museum's roof on 27 November 2002. The South Australian Government contributed \$200,000 toward the installation of the solar panels as part of its energy efficiency action plan, in partnership with Origin Energy.

A readout screen in the Museum foyer shows the energy output per hour (the amount of power saved) since the solar panels were installed.

Staff volunteers have become 'Energy Sleuths', seeking out energy-saving techniques in the Museum's

Main Building, Armoury and Science Centre. The sleuths have discovered ways to make savings by placing 'turn off' stickers on light switches and appliances, and encouraging staff to turn off lights, radios, computers, airconditioners and photocopiers when leaving the office for meetings or lunch. Lights in the main Museum building are turned off at closing times, with only the necessary lights kept on.

Tim Flannery oversees their work with advice from David Ellery of Origin Energy. A monthly and quarterly set of reports will review progress. The South Australian Museum reports, 'We have already received a bill and noticed savings!'

SUSAN MARSDEN IS A
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MUSEUM NATIONAL INVESTIGATES A SUSTAINABILITY ISSUE IN THE SYDNEY AND MELBOURNE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS.

Two of Australia's capital city botanic gardens are wrestling with a dilemma: what to do about the thousands of Grey-headed Flying-foxes (*Pteropus poliocephalus*), a species endangered in Australia, that roost in large numbers in particular areas of the Gardens, causing ongoing damage to tree specimens, some of which are of significant historical value. In addition to reducing their impact on living collections, managing the bats is an important part of the Gardens' amenity, and their reputation as clean, non-smelly environments.

Several factors operate against botanic gardens' management of what is familiarly known as the 'bat' problem. A commitment to biodiversity has replaced the historic emphasis on plants only in botanic gardens. Nowadays fauna as well as flora in botanic gardens is considered a significant part of their environment. Long gone are the days when botanic gardens directors issued staff with rifles to eradicate problem fauna. The endangered species status of the Flying-foxes gives added force to the biodiversity policy. Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney Environmental Coordinator, Patrick Houlcroft, has said that, despite the management dilemma posed by their presence, he feels 'privileged to support a population whose numbers are dropping on Australia's eastern seaboard'.

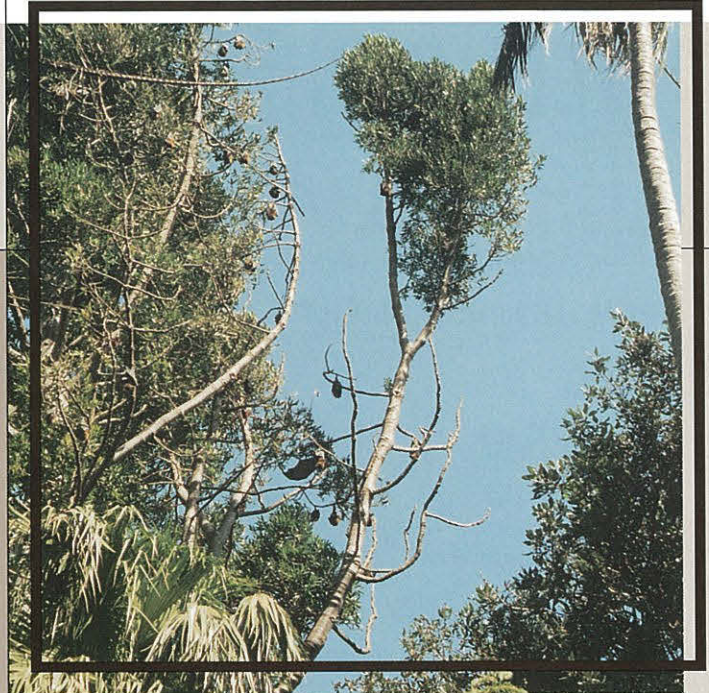
The contribution of Flying-foxes to the environment is integral to the ecosystem of south-eastern Australia. These nectar and fruit-eating animals play a vital role in pollinating eucalyptus forests and woodlands. They also disperse the seeds of rainforest plants, allowing them to germinate some distance from parent plants.

A volunteer guide at Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney said that tourists are recommended to go to Woolloomooloo at dusk to see the Flying-foxes stream out of the garden, heading for their feeding grounds. These feeding grounds may be in the vicinity of the Royal Botanic Gardens, but can be up to twenty-five



Left: Grey-headed Flying-foxes roosting in the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney
 Photograph by Jaime Plaza courtesy of Royal Sydney Botanic Gardens

Right: The historic Fern Gully at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne,
 showing the damage caused by roosting Flying-foxes



THOUSANDS OF THESE ANIMALS HANG LIKE RIPE FRUIT FROM TREES WHOSE BRANCHES ARE BEING REDUCED TO SKELETONS BY BATS ROOSTING THERE.

kilometres away. Also the Flying-foxes can occasionally leave the Palm Grove *en masse* when there is a mass flowering out of Sydney. Visitors from Europe in particular, where bats are commonly the size of mice, are, according to Patrick Houlcroft, 'gobsmacked' to see these much larger animals, each weighing about a kilogram, and clearly visible to visitors. Local residents are no less fascinated by them. A website, *Sydneybats*, supported by the Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society (<http://www.sydneybats.org.au>), gives information and advice on their conservation.

On recent visits to both Gardens, *Museum National* was able to observe the Flying-foxes in the full vigour of their mating season. Thousands of these animals hang like ripe fruit from trees whose branches are being reduced to skeletons by bats roosting there. The constant friction on the branches means that the trees — some of them over 100 years old — have no capacity to reshoot. The bats emit high-pitched chattering, fly in and out of the trees in broad daylight, and fan themselves with their leathery wings in the early autumn heat. Their droppings can foul plants and pathways, and create algal blooms in water features because of the excess load of nutrient.

Sydney's problem began in 1989, when a population of Grey-headed Flying-foxes two hundred strong began to camp in the Gardens. By 1992 this original population had grown to around 3200. Significant damage to heritage trees was observed, and the Gardens began to take steps to deter the animals from roosting there.

Deterrence methods included attaching plastic bags to tree branches, playing taped distress calls, making loud noises, and using strobe lights and odours. Noise worked best: after almost a month of noise in September 1992 the Flying-foxes flew away. They reappeared in small numbers the following year, and their population steadily increased to over 3000 in 1998. The most recent estimate of their numbers (in March 2003) is around 7000.

Noise is still the most effective way of encouraging them to leave: the street-sweeper that makes its daily rounds at Sydney Gardens is particularly annoying to them. Visitors to the Melbourne Gardens hear regular noises, as staff attempt to induce the much larger population there — around 28,000 in the autumn — to leave the Gardens and establish a new colony at an attractive site at Horseshoe Bend on the Yarra River. The site has been prepared in collaboration with the Victorian Department of Sustainability and the Environment, Parks Victoria, Zoos Victoria and the City of Banyule. A website, www.nre.vic.gov.au, tracks the progress of the Melbourne Grey-headed Flying-fox relocation program.

A recent report indicates that this program has the potential to succeed in the long term. The *Melbourne Age* reported on 25 March that, after a ten-day trial of 'bat-disturbance measures' utilising mobile units called 'sound buggies' that emit sounds to unsettle the bats, several thousand of them have left the Gardens.

But they haven't gone far. The Flying-foxes have moved into areas surrounding the adjacent Shrine of Remembrance, and into the Domain. Nevertheless, as a Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne spokesperson said, at least this 'shows that they can be moved from their roosts'.

Both Gardens are up against a creature that, according to Patrick Houlcroft, 'is very persistent, very intelligent, and can tolerate disturbance'. The sustainability and management issue created by the presence of Flying-foxes in botanic gardens will probably be around for some time. In the meantime botanic gardens are opportunistically raising public awareness of the complexity of environmental issues.

THIS ARTICLE WAS PREPARED IN CONSULTATION WITH JANELLE HATHERLY AND PATRICK HOULCROFT OF THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS SYDNEY. THE EDITOR THANKS THEM FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE.

WEBWATCH

AUSTRALIA'S VIRTUAL HERBARIUM

PROMOTES SUSTAINABILITY ACROSS THE NATION

MURRAY FAGG

In 1999 the Harden-Murrumburrah Landcare Group, in south-eastern NSW, approached the Australian National Herbarium in Canberra with a problem. They needed to know what plants once grew in their area, now almost totally given over to grazing and cropping.

By searching the herbarium database for records of collections made prior to clearing, and supplementing this with knowledge from scientists and farmers, the herbarium was able to provide the group with a list of species to help them revegetate their district.

But this only drew on the collections of one herbarium with approximately 1.4 million specimens. There are eight major herbaria in Australia, all holding a similar wealth of information on a combined total of over 6.5 million specimen labels, although much of this data was not available for searching because only about forty per cent of the specimens had been databased. Imagine the potential if this information could be made accessible to any community group or individual in Australia.

The concept of a 'virtual' herbarium was not new, but its time had come. These preserved plant specimens are held in the major Australian herbaria, providing a unique historical and scientific record

of the country's flora. In addition to a preserved fragment of the plant itself, each specimen includes a label containing information about where and when it was collected, and its correct botanical name. While this is fairly fundamental information, it has great power when organised into a database and visualised with the aid of computer technology. We have an invaluable historical record of 200 years of changes to our vegetation to help us with the task of 'making good' some of the mistakes of the past. Not only do we have the occurrence records, these are tied to scientific specimens — vouchers that can be properly identified and checked so we can authenticate the names of the species involved.

Following the success of the Harden project, and the demonstration of its effectiveness to government, the Council of Heads of Australian Herbaria, supported by Commonwealth, State and Territory environment ministers, unanimously agreed to computerise the remaining half of the collections and make the data available on the Internet.

Australia's Virtual Herbarium is a truly collaborative project, involving all the major herbaria, to make botanical information available via the Web in an integrated format so that a query will

harvest relevant information from all herbaria in a few minutes and present the result as a single seamless report. It will present information from herbarium collections, nomenclatural and taxonomic databases, State and Territory checklists, Flora information systems, image databases and archives, and other on-line sources of botanical information. The specimens themselves and their associated data remain under the custodianship of each herbarium, and the data extracted from the labels of those specimens remains in the database of each participating institution —

there is no 'grand central database'.

A minimum of \$10 million over five years is needed to create the virtual herbarium. The Commonwealth agreed to match the funds provided from the States and Territories, with an additional \$2 million to be raised from private donors. The data capture of all botanical specimens is expected to be complete by 2006.

Information about the Australia's Virtual Herbarium project can be found at www.chah.gov.au/avh/

MURRAY FAGG, AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS, CANBERRA

The screenshot displays the Australia's Virtual Herbarium (AVH) web interface. At the top, the AVH logo and the text 'Australia's Virtual Herbarium' are visible. The main content area features a map of Australia with numerous red dots representing specimen locations. Below the map, there are several interactive elements: a 'New Search' section with options for 'Query Point', 'Pan', 'Zoom In', 'Zoom Out', and 'Zoom By'; a 'FloraBase' section showing a grid of plant images; an 'Australian Plant Name Index (APNI)' section with search results; a 'Query Data' section with a map and a species list; and a 'Species' section providing detailed information for *Swainsona formosa*, including a photograph and photographer details.

SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES AND MUSEUM VICTORIA

J PATRICK GREENE

Sustainability is one of those words (like 'conservation' and 'development') that have multiple meanings in the world of museums. However, at Museum Victoria we are addressing both financial and environmental sustainability in a linked manner. The need for any organisation to be financially sustainable is self-evident, but the means of achieving it are complex. The challenge is particularly marked in the case of a museum that relies on visitor income for a substantial part of its operating costs. Museum Victoria earns about \$10 million in admission fees at the Melbourne Museum, Scienceworks and Immigration Museum each year. Any fluctuation in the number of visitors will distort that figure and if there is a drop, income will be affected, placing the entire operation at risk. Museums can determine, to a degree, the number of visitors that they attract through programming, marketing and customer care. However, there are many factors completely outside their control such as war, drought, bushfires, petrol prices and competition for people's leisure time and spending. A sustainable museum is one that can plan for such eventualities with financial reserves that are sufficient to cope with lean years and which can be replenished in better ones. Regrettably, many museums

are not in that position, and are vulnerable to even quite small variations in their attendance figures.

The real answer to this situation is to avoid it in the first place. Repeatedly, new museum projects open with hopelessly over-optimistic visitor targets. It is a situation that has been illustrated in the United Kingdom, where I worked until last August, where a range of new projects funded by the national lottery (especially the Millennium Commission) found themselves in trouble as the number of visitors failed to reach projections. The most spectacular failure was the Millennium Dome that attracted six million people. That number sounds like a great success, but not when the target was twelve million. Often, new projects are conceived, not by the museum community, but as part of economic regeneration initiatives by agencies that have no background in the field. There always seems to be a consultant's report that envisages impressive visitor numbers that will make the project financially viable. The reality is often different. The March issue of *Museums Journal* cites the example of Northern Ireland: 'The Ulster History Park in Omagh has been forced by poor visitor numbers to close over the winter and is considering relaunching itself within the

next two years as an eco-museum. The crisis results from too many museums and heritage centre chasing too few visitors.' It is a situation that will be familiar to many in Australia.

The solution is always to insist on realistic visitor numbers. That applies to museums of any size, and not just new projects. Economic sustainability can be reinforced by an environmentally

responsible approach. By cutting waste, energy costs and water consumption a museum can act as a good citizen, and one that balances its books. That is certainly the approach that we have adopted at Museum Victoria as we address issues of sustainability, both economic and financial.

DR J PATRICK GREENE
CEO MUSEUM VICTORIA

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The Marc Newson Lockheed Lounge © is on display at the Powerhouse Museum Sydney

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Museums Australia is pleased to publish its latest policy document. The text is also available on the Museums Australia website: www.museumsaustralia.org.au/structure.htm We acknowledge the expertise of consultant author Dr Sue Graham-Taylor who worked with many interested contributors to shape the text. Thanks are also due to Suzanne Davies, Chair of the Policy Standing Committee, for her leadership of the process.

MUSEUMS AND SUSTAINABILITY

GUIDELINES FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE IN MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Sustainability means using, developing and protecting resources at a rate and in a manner that enables people to meet their current needs and also provides that future generations can meet their own needs. Sustainability requires simultaneously meeting environmental, economic and community needs.¹

1 INTRODUCTION

Museums Australia has developed this document to assist museums² of all sizes achieve appropriate best-practice in sustainability.

Museums have several clear roles in this field.

Education

One role is in community education about sustainability. Museums have an important role in civic engagement and should seek ongoing relationships with community organisations, civic groups and employers. Museums can play a key role in informing debate so communities are better placed to contribute to decisions that will shape social values and government policies. Museums can bring people together across differences and, in so doing, can help to promote individual and collective engagement with the ideas and issues of sustainability.

Operations

Museums play another role as organisations in their own right. They should adhere to sustainable practices in the way they undertake their own operations. They can serve as models of good practice in a wide range of activities including the management of their resources, decision-making and policy development.

Collections

Museums also have a role in the sustainable development and management of natural and cultural heritage collections. Australian museums, galleries and other historical collections hold an estimated 41 million objects. They are an important national asset and a legacy for future generations. However, they may become a future liability if we fail to collect, conserve and document with our long-term obligations and liabilities in mind.

These guidelines aim to give Australian museum practitioners an understanding of the ways in which they and their museums can contribute to all aspects of sustainability. Museums Australia hopes that this document will stimulate the development of sustainability

policies and practices in many Australian museums. Museums Australia encourages the governing bodies of each museum organisation to adopt the principles of sustainability into their own policy framework.

2 BACKGROUND

Governments and communities worldwide are working to integrate sustainability into decision-making at all levels.

Business and industrial organisations are seeking new approaches to development that contribute to environment and society now, without degrading them for the future. Many companies are recognising that economic goals can be complemented by environmental and social targets, and that all three areas can contribute to an organisation's own sustainability.

There is increasing recognition that cultural factors play a key role in sustainability. Quality of life is determined by many factors including health, income, level of education, cultural diversity and environmental quality. The social well-being of the human population is integral to making sustainability a reality. Sustainability and a flourishing cultural life are interdependent.³

Education for sustainability is vital and it is here that museums can play a key role. The wider issue of education for sustainability was first raised at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at the Rio Earth Summit. Chapter 36 of Agenda 21, the action plan adopted by the Conference, set out broad proposals for reorienting public education, awareness and training towards sustainable development.⁴ It looked to all countries to initiate national strategies that would increase public awareness of sustainability and promote training and capacity building to move society towards a future where the environment, society and the economy are in balance.

Since then consensus on the requirement for sustainability education has emerged from a wide range of international United Nations' conferences. Perhaps the most important document to emerge has been the 1996 Report of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, commonly known as the Delors Report.⁵ This document recognises the importance of learning to live together and to shape education systems to deal with sustainability at both local and global levels.

The community will require a greater understanding of the interdependence of the economy, environment and social and cultural issues, to be able to identify sustainable and unsustainable

MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA HOPES THAT THIS DOCUMENT WILL STIMULATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN MANY AUSTRALIAN MUSEUMS.

practices. People will be challenged to envisage a sustainable future so they will know what to aim for and be able to think through the consequences of their actions and behaviour. Museums are in a position to play a vital role in this process.

The question of sustainability, how it can be incorporated into all areas of government and society, and how progress towards sustainability can be made and measured, is the subject of ongoing debate, particularly with regard to culture.⁶

For museums sustainability principles should guide both their day-to-day operations and their role in the community. Therefore all other Museums Australia policies should be seen as components of an overarching Sustainability Policy. These policies include:

- Museums Australia: *Women's Policy: Guidelines for Museum Programs and Practice*
- Museums Australia: *Previous Possessions, New Obligations: Policies for Museums in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*
- Museums Australia: *Gay and Lesbian Policy Guidelines for Museum Programs and Practice*
- Museums Australia: *Cultural Diversity Policy*

3 DEFINITIONS

3.1 Sustainability

Definitions of sustainability are many and varied, but common to them all are the natural environment, the economy and society — generally, all three together. Most are not about maintaining life precisely as it is today. They focus on the rate of change to the natural environment and the importance of maintaining equity between generations. Many see sustainability as a continually evolving process.

The most widely used definition is that of Norwegian Prime Minister Brundtland in 1987:

sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.⁷

The concept has come to mean living on the earth's income rather than eroding its capital. It means keeping the consumption of renewable natural resources within the limits of their replenishment. A sustainable activity is one that can be carried out without damaging the long-term health and integrity of natural and cultural environments. It also means passing on to future generations an equal or preferably enhanced stock of economic, natural, social and human capital.

3.2 Environment

Environment is the surroundings in which an organisation operates, including air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans, the built environment and their interrelations.

3.3 Economy

The economy represents the exchanges and resources of a community. The two central concerns of the economy are the efficient allocation of available resources and the problem of reconciling finite resources with a virtually infinite desire for goods and services.

3.4 Society

Society is the most general term for the body of institutions and relationships within which a relatively large group of people live. It is also the most abstract term for the condition in which such institutions and relationships are formed.

3.5 Culture

Culture is the expression of a society's aesthetic, moral and spiritual values, of its understanding of the world and of life itself; culture transmits the heritage of the past and creates the heritage of the future.

4 SUSTAINABILITY AND MUSEUMS

4.1 Education and Advocacy

Social learning and behavioural change are fundamental to achieving sustainability. Museums have a role in building collaborative relationships and using education and research to raise awareness, to encourage the development of new skills and the ability to embrace and adapt to change. Museums must be aware of social issues such as equity and must work to be inclusive of all sectors of the community.

A strong statement of commitment from the Chief Executive Officer and/or Board indicates to stakeholders the importance placed on sustainability. Openness, including recognition of the difficulties of achieving objectives, can be more effective than rhetorical statements.

4.2 Decision-making

Decision-making should involve the precautionary principle. The Rio Declaration defines the precautionary principle as follows:

Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation. Precautionary action requires assessment of the costs and benefits of action, and transparency in decision-making.⁸

Until new measures of 'progress' are well documented and accepted, museums should strive towards integrating economic, environmental and social factors into all decision-making. As well, museums should ensure the most efficient and effective use of human, natural and financial resources, taking full cost accounting into consideration.

4.3 Activities

Through their activities, museums have an integral role in promoting and implementing sustainability in society. Museums have a far-reaching, deeply rooted connection with their communities. Museums should showcase for staff and the public their own efforts to work towards sustainability in all aspects of their work.

Museums can build on their community links with greater vitality and engagement, becoming places where conversations take place and where change is incubated through:

- Building the public's awareness and practical knowledge of sustainability by encouraging civic discussion, research and disseminating success stories in exhibitions;
- Assisting in the education of the community for sustainability by creating an understanding of how natural, economic and social systems work and are interdependent;
- Assisting in the building of community capacity through forums, conferences and other events that provide an opportunity for public discussion on sustainability;
- Recognising the value of, and integrating where possible, traditional knowledge and intergenerational considerations.

4.4 Policies

Policies should take a long-term perspective, which considers both present and future generations through:

- Marking a transition away from unsustainable behaviours;
- Establishing clear goals and measurable indicators;
- Incorporating the concept of sustainability into missions, visions and organisational structures;
- Treating social, economic and environmental goals as interdependent.

4.5 Operations and functions

Operations should reflect principles of sustainability through:

- Pricing products and services to cover long-term social, economic and environmental costs;
- Ensuring that waste is eliminated as resources are used more efficiently and returned safely to productive use, for example through re-use and recycling;
- Ensuring that resources are protected and used efficiently.

5 GENERAL SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES FOR MUSEUMS

Some general sustainability principles that support museum practice and operations include the following:

- 5.1 Policies must take a long-term perspective, including both present and future generations.
- 5.2 Social, economic and environmental goals must be treated as interdependent.
- 5.3 The price of a product or a service must cover its long-term social, economic and environmental costs.
- 5.4 Sustainability must be incorporated into missions, visions and organisational structures.
- 5.5 Policies should mark a transition away from unsustainable behaviours.
- 5.6 Clear goals and measurable indicators are needed to guide policy.
- 5.7 Decision-making should involve the precautionary principle (see section 4.2).
- 5.8 Decision-making should involve the community and other stakeholders.
- 5.9 Opportunities for access to information, participation in decision-making and access to justice should be available to all.
- 5.10 Sustainability is a global objective. When acting locally, we should be thinking globally — environmental, social and economic problems are global in extent.
- 5.11 The concept of waste is eliminated as resources are used more efficiently and returned safely to productive use, for example through recycling.
- 5.12 Museums should build the public's awareness and practical

knowledge of sustainability by showcasing success stories in exhibitions and by coordinating broader discussion and research on sustainability.

- 5.13 Museums should assist in the education of the community for sustainability by creating an understanding of the interdependence of natural, economic and social systems.
- 5.14 Museums should assist in the building of community capacity by involving community in decision-making on research, exhibitions and other public programs.

6 PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN MUSEUMS

The following list offers sustainability guidelines for museums to consider. The list is not exhaustive.

6.1 Economic Aspects of Sustainability

Responsible financial decisions must include the long-term sustainability of the community and environment. The current reliance on economic growth statistics alone as the basic measure of prosperity and progress, implicitly devalues the importance of our natural and social capital, including natural resource wealth and environmental quality. This practice also fails to distinguish economic activities that contribute to well-being from those, like crime and pollution, that cause harm. At present there are no guidelines to assist in evaluating budgeted activities, programs and policies to ensure that they are sustainable. The need for better measures of progress is widely acknowledged and various indicators of progress are being trialled around the world.

Here are some ways in which museums can contribute to sustainability:

- Museum financial decisions should be based on careful consideration of the impact on the environment, economy, human health and community well-being;
- Museums should keep abreast of the development of indicators used to measure the social, environmental and cultural implications as well as economic costs;
- Museums should promote sustainable industries through procurement policies which support industries seeking to enhance their resource efficiency (energy, water and materials) and to reduce waste and pollution;
- Museums should aim for sustainable collecting practices in conjunction with community needs and other collecting organisations and individuals;
- Museums should work towards sustainability reporting, that is reporting not just on the economic bottom line, but also on the 'triple bottom line' — the social, environmental and economic impacts of operations.

6.2 Sustainable Collection Management

Larger, better resourced museums can play a leadership role in their communities, through offering assistance to smaller museums, community groups and organisations as well as to individual collectors, on sustainable collection management.

Museums are committed to the long-term preservation of collections and information that helps communities to understand their natural and cultural heritage.⁹ Museums are required to develop and implement policies that guide the management of, and access to, collections and information. Australian museums have a strong tradition of preserving and exhibiting tangible heritage

THESE GUIDELINES AIM TO GIVE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM PRACTITIONERS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE WAYS IN WHICH THEY AND THEIR MUSEUMS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO ALL ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY.

(moveable and fixed), and of contributing to the understanding and preservation of intangible heritage.

The following are some examples of issues to consider in sustainable collection management:

- Museums should set 'sustainability goals' for collection management and access in the context of present and potential resources. These resources might include the capacity of storage areas, the accessibility of conservation services, the environmental costs of operating storage and display environments and the ability to research and communicate the significance of items in the collection;
- Museums should review collection policies to ensure that the growth of collections and de-accessioning of items from collections is managed in the context of agreed sustainability goals;
- Museums should review exhibition and communication policies to ensure that the display and interpretation of items from the collection, and the use of information about intangible heritage, can conform with agreed sustainability goals.

6.3 Education for Sustainability

Museums have an important role in education for sustainability. They can be showcases for demonstrating what can be achieved in the workplace and can provide community education on sustainability.

Following are some ways in which museums can educate for sustainability:

- Museums build on and showcase their own progress towards sustainability;
- Through partnerships, museums showcase the progress of others;
- Museums develop partnerships with the local community in sustainability awareness projects and information sharing;
- Museums provide forums for the presentation of new knowledge and the debate of important sustainability issues such as reconciliation, poverty, population, global warming and biodiversity;
- Museums assist community groups with their work by advising and adding to their knowledge on sustainability;
- Museums present complex issues, such as global warming, in ways that are inclusive and accessible — both in publications and in displays.

6.4 New Museum Buildings

There are many challenges facing museums that seek to incorporate sustainability principles into building and construction practices. These include large and variable numbers of visitors, tightly specified temperatures and humidity, feature lighting, air

leakage through doors and existing grand facades. These and other challenges need to be addressed in innovative ways.

It has been estimated that building construction consumes 40% of the world's total energy, 25% of its wood harvest and 16% of its water.¹⁰

Sustainable building integrates building materials and methods that promote environmental quality, economic vitality and social benefit through the design, construction and operation of the built environment. Sustainable building merges sound, environmentally responsible practices into one discipline that looks at the environmental, economic and social effects of a building or built project as a whole.¹¹

Planners should work with architects to design for sustainability. The major areas where sustainability principles can be incorporated are in decisions concerning site, water, energy, indoor environmental quality, materials and waste.

Realistic feasibility assessments should be made when planning new museums to ensure that the scope and scale of operations are sustainable in the long term.

Factors to be considered include:

- passive solar design;
- the use of renewable energy sources such as solar/wind power;
- the use of collected rainwater to replace mains water consumption;
- on site treatment and reuse of grey water (non-potable water often from showers, washing machines, sinks etc);
- demolition of buildings only when it is not economical or practical to reuse, adapt or extend existing fabric;
- the use of appropriate plantings for external surrounds, for example deciduous or evergreen trees to create microclimates in winter and summer;
- life-cycle costs of products associated with construction, operation, maintenance and disposal;
- efficient use of resources and maximising use of local materials.

6.5 Procurement

Sustainable procurement has emerged as a responsible approach to the acquisition of products and services. It assumes that the life-cycle impacts of products are considered when procurement decisions are made, and that products and services purchased or used contribute to societal well-being.

Factors to consider in purchasing decisions include:

- Assessing the life cycle impacts of products and services;
- Investigating the claims of 'green' products and purchasing products that meet appropriate 'green' or 'eco' standards;
- Choosing suppliers who take back packaging for reuse, or purchasing packaging that can be recycled;
- Finding a supply of paper with maximum recycled content, bearing in mind the need for sound archiving practices;
- Investing in copiers and printers that do double-sided copying and printing;
- Using refillable toner cartridges for printers;
- Purchasing appliances with a 4-star (or better) energy rating;
- Developing and implementing a long-term sustainable purchasing policy and action plan;
- Appointing a sustainability manager/coordinator and a sustainability committee.

6.6 Waste Management

The dumping of waste in landfill can cause air, soil and groundwater pollution and contributes to global warming. Waste

disposal to landfill also represents a loss of resources. Waste minimisation, reuse and recycling should be practised to extend the use of natural resources and reduce energy use in the creation of new products. Where a local council does not have a policy for recycling, museums can develop an advocacy package to have one implemented.

Some examples include the following:

- Develop contracts and agreements that are environmentally sensitive with waste management providers;
- Conduct an assessment of waste in museum operations;
- Develop an exhibition masterplan that facilitates reuse and recycling of display props and furniture;
- Reuse goods and recycle items that cannot be used or repaired — donate unwanted goods to other museums, or to community charities;
- Ensure the availability of recycling facilities for the public and staff;
- Compost organic wastes from catering operations and lunchrooms;
- Appoint a waste management coordinator.

6.7 Water Management

Water is a precious resource and must be protected.

Examples of how to practise water conservation and efficiency:

- Be conscious of water used and investigate ways to use less;
- Replace water inefficient fixtures with water-saving devices, including spring-loaded taps, dual-flush toilets and low-flow showerheads.

6.8 Energy Management

Although there have been significant advances in 'green power', burning of fossil fuels is still the major source of energy production. Carbon dioxide produced from this burning adds to the world's greenhouse gas emissions, which are impacting on climate.

Examples of what can be done:

- Conduct an energy audit of operations;
- Conduct an energy efficiency campaign;
- Include energy-efficiency — and the feasibility of renewable energy — as a primary consideration during maintenance, upgrades, renovations and new building projects;
- Install solar hot water where possible;

- Choose the most energy efficient equipment;
- Purchase 'green power' if available, to encourage the development of the renewable energy industry;
- Air condition only those spaces that need it;
- Reduce air leakage through doors and shell of buildings;
- Minimise heat production in air conditioned spaces;
- Install energy efficient lighting.

6.9 Motor Vehicle Management

Cars and trucks using fossil fuels contribute to greenhouse emissions and thus to climate change. Vehicles also contribute to air pollution and harm human health.

Examples of action include:

- Purchasing energy efficient vehicles;
- Retrofitting older vehicles to use alternative fuels where available;
- Conducting green transport campaigns in the workplace, encouraging employees to travel by public transport, car pool, foot or cycle;
- Strongly promoting public transport availability in museum publicity.

6.10 Pollution Management

A key environmental issue is land and groundwater contamination. Contaminants enter the soil and groundwater through careless waste disposal, dumping of toxic waste, use of fertilisers, accidental spillages and leakage. Museums may contribute to contamination through their research and conservation laboratories, cleaning responsibilities, catering areas and ground maintenance activities.

Some construction/fabrication materials used in museums, such as medium density fibreboard (mdf), and some paints and carpets, may have an adverse impact on collections, human health and/or the environment through off-gassing.

Examples of action include:

- Dealing with existing problems and ensuring contamination does not occur;
- Undertaking an audit of chemical use and disposal — questioning whether there are alternatives to toxic chemicals used;
- Reviewing and updating Disaster Preparedness and Management Plans that deal with accidental spillage.

FURTHER READING

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6.11 Workforce Education

The success of sustainability initiatives in the workplace will depend on staff and volunteer cooperation and understanding. Education and training are vital.

Examples of action include:

- Holding regular meetings, encouraging input and ideas from all personnel;
- Including sustainability practices in occupational health and safety education and induction kits for new personnel;
- Highlighting achievements to staff, the public, sponsors, industry and government in reports, newsletters, websites and other media.

7 THIS DOCUMENT

7.1 History of Document

'Museums and Sustainability: Guidelines for Policy and Practice in Museums and Galleries' was initiated at the Annual General Meeting of Museums Australia in 2001.

The Policy Standing Committee of Museums Australia developed

this document during 2001 and 2002. On its recommendation, Museums Australia engaged Dr Sue Graham-Taylor as a consultant author. The document has benefited from comments received from the Regional, Local and Specialist Standing Committee of Museums Australia, as well as from the broad membership of the association. Comment on the draft document was sought from the Council of Australian Museum Directors, the Council of Australian Art Museum Directors, the Museums and Galleries Foundation of NSW, and Environment Australia.

The National Council adopted this document as a policy of Museums Australia on 26 February 2003. The same Council meeting supported the encouragement of museums to implement these guidelines, through articles in *Museum National*, through workshops and presentations at national and state (Branch) conferences, and through other strategies and opportunities that become available from time to time.

7.2 Review Process

The Council of Museums Australia will review this policy at the commencement of each newly elected Council's term of office (usually every two years).

NOTES

- 1 State of Oregon, USA, 'Development of a State Strategy Promoting Sustainability in Internal State Government Operations', Executive Order EO-00-07, May 2000, accessible at: http://www.oregonsolutions.net/execOrder/sustain_eo.cfm
- 2 Museums Australia's definition of 'museum' includes museums of art, history and science. See section 5.3 of the Constitution of Museums Australia.
- 3 Some argue that culture is so important in the achievement of sustainability that it should be a separate pillar of sustainability, so that instead of the 'triple bottom line', or the three pillars, social, environmental and economic, we should aim to address the 'quadruple bottom line'. Whether one agrees that 'culture' should be recognised as a separate 'pillar', or that it is part of social sustainability, cultural communities and creative industries are key economic and social drivers. The City of Toronto, for instance, argues that 'a lively cultural community and a healthy economy are like an equation.' Culture is an integral component of sustainability and should therefore be a part of a sustainability policy. See *The Creative City. A Workprint*, City of Toronto, 2001, accessible at: <http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/culture/creativecity.htm>
- 4 *Agenda 21*, UN Conference on Environment and Development, Rio Earth Summit, 1992, accessible at: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/agenda21.htm>
- 5 *Learning: The Treasure Within. Report of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century*, UNESCO, Paris, 1996, accessible at: <http://www.unesco.org/delors/treasure.htm>
- 6 See Hawkes J, *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture's essential role in public planning*, Common Ground Publishing and Cultural Development Network, Melbourne, 2001.
- 7 *Our Common Future*, World Commission on Environment and Development, OUP, Oxford & New York, 1987.
- 8 *Principle 15, The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, 1992, accessible at: <http://www.unep.org/unep/rio.htm>
- 9 The Museums Australia *Code of Ethics for Art, History and Science Museums* is one of the sources for this commitment.
- 10 Quoted in City of Seattle, *Sustainable Building Policy*, 2002, accessible at: <http://www.cityofseattle.net/light/conservesustainability>
- 11 *ibid.*

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DAVID HUTCHISON

IN DEFENCE OF MUSEUM HISTORIANS

The role of museum curators of social history is still evolving in Australia. When I was appointed Curator of History at the Western Australian Museum in 1970, it was the first appointment in the field in any Australian state museum. There were no courses in museology at that time, and curatorship had to be learned on the job. I learned quickly — I had to develop exhibitions for the Fremantle Museum, due to open within six months of my appointment. Fortunately I had the support of a very talented exhibition staff. We developed exhibitions incorporating artefacts, text and graphics, setting a style still in use.

I discovered that there was no recognised methodology in Australia for curators of social history in museums. I had to develop a system for recording data that placed objects in an historical context. At that time — only thirty years ago — computer hardware and software could not provide economic and efficient data processing for this purpose.

Museum curators essentially have to develop exhibits based on artefacts. Few historians are trained in the interpretation of material culture; I still advocate such training. I also discovered that curators of history have special problems in establishing systematic collections. They depend to a large extent on donations, and they are able to collect only those artefacts that have survived — partly by chance, partly by human choices that have biased the material. This is true to some extent of all records of human activity.

A curator of history cannot collect comprehensively in a given area in a way that a natural historian can conduct a biological survey in a particular location. A curator of history is like an archaeologist, having to collect artefacts that have survived randomly, in the hope that — over a period — collections will become systematic as gaps are filled. As Francis Bacon wrote in 1605 in *The Advancement of Learning*, 'Antiquities are history defaced, or some remnants of history which have casually escaped the shipwreck of time'. Most social history museum collections in Australia have some way to go to be comprehensive and systematic, despite curators' endeavours.

In 1996, following my appointment as one of the inaugural Honorary Fellows of the National Museum of Australia, I delivered an address in Canberra. This gave me the opportunity to reflect on some achievements, and on the work that still needed to be done. I expressed concern that:

'There may be pressure — subtle or overt — on a curator in a state or national history museum to be *ipso facto*, a state historian, constrained to present an 'official' view of history. Such pressure should not be imposed and should be resisted if it is. However, a museum is a public institution that will not survive if the public do not support it. How far can a museum go — especially a museum of society and history — in challenging the susceptibilities of visitors?'

There is nothing wrong in challenging those susceptibilities, as long as the exhibit is based on good scholarship. Historians, in museums and in academies, are right to address areas of our

history which have had little attention until recent decades. I said that 'Social history museums could help people to understand and celebrate diversity. I am not proposing that museums should have didactic agendas, or that they should be too solemn. Too few museum exhibits have any sign of humour ... or of joy.'

We seem to be afraid of vigorous open debate in Australia. It is healthy in a democracy for views to be challenged. A museum exhibit is a form of publication. However, it is a special form, based on artefacts and essentially visual, otherwise it will be overwhelmed with text. We still have much to learn about how visitors respond to museum exhibitions — particularly how they respond to the artefacts.

Modern technologies help, but cannot replace the essential base of those exhibitions — the collection of artefacts. The curator cannot employ in an exhibit the full range of scholarly apparatus: the opportunity to argue at length and cite sources, although this is possible in supplementary publications. Museum exhibits are, inevitably, *constructs*, but probably no more so than written histories. I proposed that all museum exhibits should be signed by their curators, text-writers and designers, and their names prominently displayed: 'an exhibit will not be seen as a statement by the museum, but as a statement by individual members of the staff who accept responsibility for the content of the exhibit. In short, exhibits ought to be recognised as a form of publication subject to review.'

The names of those who may have edited the texts must also be revealed. By review, I mean normal scholarly review combined with visitor comment. I am deeply concerned that the federal government has appointed a committee to assess whether displays in the National Museum are biased, or have distorted our history. Three eminent scholars — Geoffrey Bolton, Graeme Davison and John Mulvaney — have already assessed one controversial exhibit and found that, with trivial exceptions and within the constraints imposed by the available material, the curators have shown excellent awareness of the findings of social and cultural historians, and have put together a convincingly representative selection of Australian experiences.

The appointment assumes that there is an acceptable history to which everyone must adhere, and is alarmingly close to the establishment of Thought Police. It also implies that the government has little faith in the community's ability to accept challenge and to respond to it critically. Why should only museum historians be subject to review by a politically appointed committee? Scholars at other institutions — such as art galleries, or even universities — should be alarmed that this precedent has been set.

DAVID HUTCHISON, FORMERLY CURATOR OF HISTORY AT THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM, IS A MUSEOLOGIST AND HERITAGE CONSULTANT AND LIVES IN FREMANTLE

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The *James Craig*, under a full set of twenty-one sails
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MEGAN HICKS

THE PRESERVAT

Health and safety are paramount concerns in modern society. The health of a nation's people is a yardstick of its progress and prosperity. In Australia, provision of healthcare is always a hotly contested political issue at both federal and state levels. The availability of health services is an important factor that divides city from country. It is from the ranks of doctors, nurses and medical scientists that Australia has drawn many of its national heroes — 'Weary' Dunlop, Howard Florey, Vivian Bullwinkle, Flynn of the Inland, Fred Hollows, to name just some. Biomedical science is an area of scientific endeavour where Australia has excelled internationally. And while medical achievements are a source of national pride, the health of our Indigenous people is a source of national shame. Health stories are staples of the nation's media in news, current affairs and features, not to mention TV hospital dramas and medical soaps.

With health matters so prominent in the national consciousness and woven into notions of national identity, it is perhaps surprising that there is no large museum of health and medicine in Australia. Nor do many of Australia's major museums have dedicated collecting programs in this area.

Instead, medical heritage is observed and preserved in countless community museums around the country — a corner devoted to a local doctor or bush nurse, a showcase of instruments from the now defunct district hospital, an 'iron lung' bought by public subscription during a poliomyelitis epidemic. There are probably around 300 local museums in Australia that hold some medical material in their collections. In addition to these, there are another 200 or more specialist museums devoted to some aspect of health or medicine.

Some of these specialist museums have managed to annex whole hospital buildings, others amount simply to several glass cases in an organisation's foyer. Less than a quarter of them are fully staffed by paid curators or archivists. Another quarter are staffed by volunteers with some part-time professional assistance. The rest are run entirely by volunteers, most of whom have a background in medicine, nursing or some other health care profession, but no training in museum management. This means that, as with the rest of the 'distributed national collection', much of the movable heritage of health and medicine in Australia is in the care of honorary custodians.

Amongst people in the rest of the museum sector, health and medicine museums are often regarded as the domain of specialists and obsessives. But it is more likely to be pride than obsession that is exhibited in these kinds of museum — people's pride in their own profession, staff pride in large institutions, the pride of townships whose very existence once revolved around a medical institution in their midst.

And yes, many of these museums contain the expected rows of shiny surgical instruments, gleaming bedpans, starched uniforms



A recreated ward in the Underground Hospital at Mt Isa, Queensland. Built during World War Two in case of air raids, the Underground Hospital was eventually boarded up, but community effort saw it reopened as a tourist attraction in 2001

Photograph by Megan Hicks

and polished badges. But they also hold flying doctor aeroplanes and horse-drawn ambulances, farm equipment and sporting paraphernalia, quarantine fumigators and miners' safety gear, Braille machines and charity collection boxes.

Health and medicine museums are the specialty stockists that other museums turn to for exhibition loans. Curiously, rather than feel resentment towards major museums and their ample resources, the custodians of many health and medicine museums express satisfaction in knowing that they have been able to save what the larger museums have not wanted to collect. The enterprise of medical science is probably better represented in volunteer-run museums than elsewhere; nursing museums were collecting the history of women long before it occurred to the larger museums to do so; and in the collections of medical and philanthropic organisations, there are glimpses of the

ON OF HEALTH

marginalized people rarely ever represented in mainstream museums — underprivileged children, people with disabilities and the mentally ill.

The Health and Medicine Museums SIG of Museums Australia (HMM) has members and subscribers all over Australia and New Zealand. The group aims to increase public awareness of health and medicine museums, and has had some modest success in helping to save threatened collections from extinction.

One of the group's most important functions has been to provide networking opportunities for custodians of specialist museums. Many of these are volunteers determined to preserve medical heritage in the face of opposition from bureaucrats and bean counters. While familiar with aspects of the health industry, many are working outside the museum and heritage industry. When HMM 'spotters' find them, they are relieved to find out that there are like-minded preservers of health collections all over the country.

HMM helps volunteer custodians find ways to develop their museum-related skills. As well as alerting members to professional development opportunities, HMM organizes a program of workshops, seminars and site visits. At these get-togethers there is a great exchange of knowledge between those with museum training and experience, and those with a background in medicine, nursing and health care. HMM believes it is important to facilitate this interchange of knowledge so, as well as full membership, there is a participation category for 'HMM subscribers'. These are people or organisations that do not (yet) see themselves as belonging to the museum sector and so have not joined Museums Australia.

With its limited resources, HMM is only able to arrange get-togethers in some Australian cities, so the group's main means of providing contact within its scattered membership is a substantial newsletter produced twice a year. A new venture is an email discussion list for HMM members and subscribers only, hosted by AMOL (Australian Museums and Galleries On-Line). Launched earlier this year, it has already attracted discussion on such topics as ambulance stretchers, war injuries archives and the Junior Red Cross.

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CAROL SCOTT

PRESIDENT'S REPORT MAY 2003

This is an important year for Museums Australia. This year, we celebrate ten years as the peak professional body representing the museums and galleries sector in this country. What better way to mark this anniversary than to reflect on the fundamental role that a professional association plays in the life of our industry?

A professional association is a conduit. It represents the voice of those who are working directly in the industry. With direct access to those who are operating day-to-day in museums and galleries, it can take the pulse of emerging issues that have overall significance and direct them to influence policy, planning and future national directions.

What issues concern us as a whole sector? Whether we are social history museums, art galleries, science museums; whether we are operating at a regional, local, state or Commonwealth level, we are concerned with issues of sustaining collections into the future through ensuring appropriate professional development, establishing standards for accreditation, guaranteeing adequate funding and formulating proactive policy that appreciates the central role that collections play in developing national identities and forging the new creative and knowledge economies.

THIS YEAR, WE CELEBRATE TEN YEARS AS THE PEAK PROFESSIONAL BODY REPRESENTING THE MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES SECTOR.

Across museums and galleries, we are confronting major issues related to the repatriation of cultural material, with competition from other leisure attractions, with the implications of intellectual copyright, with the impact of the information technology revolution and with policies of social inclusion.

Each year, the Association's national conference offers us the opportunity to come together to reflect on topics that are commonly shared and that unite us across the boundaries created by collections — those that divide us into natural history museums, science museums and centres, social history museums and art galleries.

This year, the national conference offers us the collective opportunity to address three of the most significant issues facing museums as they enter the twenty-first century:

- Social inclusion and the challenges that it raises in terms of representing difference and diversity and reflecting cultural change;
- Sustainability and its impact on museum practice, programs and resourcing; and
- Technology and its implications for interpretation, audience engagement and developing a discourse about its social impact.

In its practice, the conference itself has demonstrated its commitment to social inclusion by supporting the Remote and Regional Museums Conference and integrating its parallel vision into the main conference week. The opportunity that this initiative presents to hear regional voices, strengthen relationships across the sector and share perspectives is immense.

Importantly, the Association's commitment to regional museums and galleries does not end here. Through its strategic alliance with Regional Arts Australia, the Australian Federation of Historical Societies, the Australian Council of National Trusts and the Australian Library and Information Association we are planning to work collectively after the conference to promote the

role of culture in sustaining regional communities.

The need for a national body to oversee the collections sector in Australia is currently the subject of a feasibility study commissioned by the National Collections Advisory Forum on behalf of the Cultural Ministers' Council. The outcomes of this feasibility study concern us all and a progress report on the study will be the subject of a plenary session at the conference.

Finally, two policies will be at the forefront of our discussions in Perth. One is *Museums and Sustainability: Guidelines for policy and practice in museums and galleries*, which is published in this issue of *Museum National*. The second is the first stage of the revisions to *Previous Possessions, New Obligations: Policies for Museums in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* which will be the subject of a report by Peter Yu on the first day of the conference.

In summary, as we celebrate ten years of Museums Australia, we can reflect on the importance of a national association to enable us to work together to frame policies, programs and plans that advance our collective future.

CAROL SCOTT
PRESIDENT
MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA

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MOVING ON

Julie Baird has been appointed curator at the Newcastle Regional Museum.

Louise Denoon is now Curator of Community Collections at the Museum of Brisbane.

Brett Galt-Smith left the Strehlow Research Centre in Alice Springs in April to take up a research position at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in Canberra.

Shane Hersey is Acting Research Director at the Strehlow Centre.

David Gardner has been confirmed in the position of Director of the RAAF Museum at Point Cook, Victoria.

David Crotty, formerly of the Australian War Memorial, joined the RAAF Museum staff in January, as Curator.

Anne-Marie Schwirtlich, formerly Acting Director of the National Archives of Australia, has been appointed Director of the State Library of Victoria.

Ross Gibbs has been appointed Director-General of the National Archives of Australia.

Angus Trumble, formerly of the Art Gallery of South Australia, has taken up the position of Curator of Paintings and Sculpture at the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven, Connecticut.

Cranston Edwards, a well-known prospector and Kalgoorlie resident for twenty years, has become Director of the Mining Hall of Fame.

Kathryn Weir has been appointed Head of Cinema, and **Kate Ravenswood** has been appointed Head of Access, Education and Regional Services, for the new Queensland Gallery of Modern Art.

Mark Lenard has been appointed Director of Geraldton Regional Gallery.

David Sequeira and **Anthony White** have left the National Gallery of Australia. David will pursue his art career, and Anthony will teach at Melbourne University.

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CRITIQUING 'TANGLED DESTINIES' THE NATIONAL MUSEUM'S ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY EXHIBITION

Although there has been much commentary, review and visitor evaluation of the National Museum's permanent exhibitions, 'Tangled Destinies' became the first to undergo assessment by museum professionals. The critiquing session was held on 2 November 2002 by the ACT Branch which used an abbreviated version of the format now a regular (and popular) feature of Museums Australia national conferences.

Held at the National Museum so that critiquers and audience members could spend time looking at the exhibition, the session began with facilitator Vicki Northey establishing the usual ground rules and Dr Mike Smith, previously Program Director, describing the development of the exhibition's intellectual content. Matt Kirchman, Interpretative Planner, Amaze Design, Boston, via video conference, then outlined the key challenges from an interpretative planning design and perspective, and Dr Libby Robin (Content Developer) provided an overview of the Tangled Destinies in environmental history. Dr Richard Gillespie and Penny Morrison (both from Melbourne Museum) then presented their critique, with Dr Gillespie focusing primarily on the degree to which the intellectual goals were achieved and Ms Morrison concentrating on the visitor experience. The two hour session touched on many aspects of the exhibition — a selective summary appears below.

Dr Smith emphasised some of the contextual factors — for example, great debate was raging during the development period about 'black armband' history, the Museum's architecture and exhibition spaces were more or less finalised by the time exhibition designers were contracted, and the exhibitions had to be completed within an extraordinary timeframe. Conceptually, the exhibition was developed to explore the (somewhat old) idea that society is shaped by the way it responds to its environment and by the way environment influences society. However, the interpretive framework represented a new and innovative approach — a history of ideas or a history of ways of seeing the land. Importantly, Tangled Destinies was not to be an 'environment awareness' raising exercise, market research indicating there would be resistance and cynicism if it were. Instead, a series of stories would draw visitors in, and help them reflect on their own ideas about land. The exhibition was developed using a wide range of experts and specialists, with a number of workshops and summits feeding into content and design team's work. As a result, some original sections were deleted and some new sections added. A major reconfiguring of budget and exhibitions occurred quite late in the development process, adding extra pressure to the organisation and layout of the space.

Aspects of the Museum which were highlighted as successful included the ambitious nature of the exhibition — in terms of scope, scale and interpretive approach — with the concept of 'tangled destinies' worked particularly well in a number of sections (fire, rabbits and broncos). Contemporary concerns about the environment were evident in the shaping of the content, and the exhibition contained interesting new content not seen elsewhere. There were many 'points of engagement' for the visitor including

THE IMPACT OF USING PERSONAL STORIES COULD HAVE BEEN HEIGHTENED IF MORE DIVERGENT VIEWS HAD BEEN EXPRESSED AND MORE PERSONAL DETAILS ABOUT THE FEATURED INDIVIDUALS INCORPORATED.

the sections featuring the platypus, a 1939 recreation of a dugout and diprotodon cast (although surprise was expressed that the National Museum doesn't own its own!). The use of personal stories and quotes, children's labels ('spin rails' at children's height) and 'charming' elements such as poems was applauded. It was also noted that effective use was made of multimedia, especially the 'colonisation of nature' map.

Aspects which were noted as not so successful were often the reverse side of the success factors, for example, the ambitious intellectual scope that tended to create a 'snapshot', impressionistic experience. While there was some connection with contemporary issues, the critiquers felt this could have been stronger. The impact of using personal stories could have been heightened if more divergent views had been expressed and more personal details about the featured individuals incorporated. Text was seen as too dominant at times, with objects sometimes secondary to the storyline and intellectual threads. It was noted that there were too many panels with too many styles of labels, and that overall the different elements did not work together effectively.

Although he is an experienced interpretive planner, Matt Kirchman indicated that working on this exhibition reinforced a number of design principles including:

- lighting, reading distance and legibility are intimately connected: design for the worst case scenario.
- text panels are not objects.
- when displayed in association with artefacts and objects, text panels should not be overly decorative. Less IS often more in these instances.
- not every AV piece needs the 'A': silent videos work very well when the imagery is powerful.
- pause spaces are really, really, really important for visitor enjoyment: design them in — they are as important as signature objects.

This critiquing session deviated from the standard format when Dr Smith joined the critiquers and a panel discussion ensued. This proved a very positive and constructive exchange — which in the end is what critiquing is all about — and is recommended for anyone getting into the exhibition critiquing business.

LOUISE DOUGLAS AND VICKI NORTHEY ARE BOTH MEMBERS OF THE ACT BRANCH'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

REVIEWS

ELIZABETH BECKMANN

Perspectives on Object-Centred Learning in Museums.
2002. Edited by Scott G Paris.
Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence
Erlbaum Associates.
ISBN 0-8058-3927-5.

Many museums have recently enlarged their communication objectives so as to reflect more the concepts, abstract ideas and ways of thinking that are associated with the objects in their collection, rather than solely the facts and descriptions. Indeed, it sometimes seems as if museums have forsaken objects almost completely in the race to have the latest multimedia or virtual substitute. The research reported in this book is therefore a timely reminder that it is generally still the objects themselves that ultimately capture people's attention and elicit the 'wow' factor, high-tech presentations notwithstanding. For example, in my own recent research with ten- and eleven-year-olds in the Australian War Memorial's Anzac Hall, I found that it was the very authenticity of the tanks and other vehicles — large objects that had actually played a part in the lives of people at war — that impressed the children and allowed them to engage more deeply with the topic of war technology.

So it was with interest that I approached this book. As its title explains, it provides a range of perspectives related to the concept of object-centred learning in museums. Through nineteen closely-printed chapters, readers can follow three themes: 'Studying Learning with Objects in Contexts', 'Discipline-Based Explorations of Objects' and 'Conversations about Objects'.

Whether the objects in question are works of art, interactive science exhibits, maps, living plants or a burned-out bus, the thirty-two authors provide research data, observation, insights and conjecture into our current understanding of the kinds of learning that these objects stimulate, and the practical lessons that this understanding can give to museums.

The perspectives cover a variety of theoretical structures within which museum researchers and practitioners can frame their thinking. Most chapters make some reference to socio-cultural perspectives of object-mediated learning, so it is not surprising that Falk and Dierking's Contextual Model of Learning is placed centre-stage in the book's first chapter, written by Lynn Dierking herself. Many of the authors illustrate their explorations of theory with rich qualitative data — including many vignettes of people (usually children or families) actively engaged with objects in a specific setting — from their own research. This level of detail provides the reader with a set of case-studies to compare and contrast, from the discussion of objects in the University of Michigan's botanic gardens and arboreta (Michener and Schultz) to the consideration of representational objects such as maps, globes and videos (Callanan, Jipson and Soennichsen). When one finds similarities in learning behaviour, and notes that these are facilitated by similar social interactions, it is logical to consider the focal role of objects regardless of their disciplinary provenance.

Most authors are American, but three chapters provide important input from Australian

researchers. Barbara Piscitelli and Katrine Weier, from Brisbane, consider the role of social interactions in the way in which young children learn about art. By considering the roles of both physical and social environments in the learning experiences of young children visiting 'The Art of Eric Carle' (Queensland Performing Arts Centre, 1998), Piscitelli and Weier describe how encounters with individual works of art 'ignite and sustain the learning repertoire'. The authors believe that a better understanding of young children's learning can help museums, schools and families to build 'sustainable learning communities through collaborative partnerships'.

WA-based authors Leonie Rennie and Terence McClafferty also focus on young children, but this time the contextual discipline is science rather than art. Again blending a theoretical framework — this time based on play — with detailed observation of young children interacting with 'hands-on' exhibits at Perth's SciTech Discovery Centre, Rennie and McClafferty show that learning is more likely when the child is encouraged to think 'What does this object do?' rather than 'What can I do with this object?'. The authors also reflect on the incidental benefits of observational research — allowing the identification of flaws in exhibit design that actually impede rather than enhance learning.

The third chapter with Australian input is by Queensland Christina van Kraayenoord, in association with the book's editor, Scott Paris (University of Michigan). Entitled 'Reading Objects', this chapter compares the reading of texts to the reading of objects, and concludes that both practices

involve not only perception, decoding and comprehension, but also significant additional social, pragmatic and cognitive aspects, all of which contribute to the reader's (object viewer's) reflective engagement with an object.

Reading all the research findings that show the importance of the mediation of learning (adult to adult, adult to child, child to adult), one is left wondering whether, in over-indulging in the new technologies, some museums have lost sight of the inspirational impact of authentic objects. In fact, the chapter by Evans, Mull and Poling, which examines the child's eye view of authenticity in some detail, openly asks whether it is appropriate developmentally to immerse children in the world of virtual reality before they have more fully experienced the world of the real. Moreover, do museums do enough to facilitate the socio-cultural aspects of learning?

This book clearly has many strengths, but for me there were two areas of weakness. First, having attended the entertaining and heartfelt presentation by John Cross of Adult Learning Australia at the Australian Museum's 'Why Learning' seminar in 2002, in which he bemoaned the fact that relatively little attention is paid to meeting the needs of adult learners in museums, I noticed that the research described in this book is largely focussed on young children or on children-associated adults (parents, guides, teachers). Do adults respond to objects in the same way? Are we doing the necessary research?

Second, almost all the authors are based in universities (largely departments of

psychology) or other research institutions rather than in museums. While I applaud this as proof of the coming-of-age of research into museum-based learning, I wonder to what extent these findings and constructs will make their way into the marketplace and start influencing the way museum practitioners develop and design their exhibitions and programs.

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ROSEMARY HOLLOW

Anita and Beyond. Penrith Regional Gallery and the Lewers Bequest, 86 River Road, Emu Plains, NSW. 1 March–27 April 2003.

In February 2003 it was seventeen years since the death of Anita Cobby, a twenty-seven-year-old Sydney nurse who was abducted while walking home from a train station in Sydney's western suburbs. Two days later her body was found. Three weeks later five men, also from the western suburbs, were charged with her rape and murder. They were all imprisoned for life, with their files marked 'never to be released'.

The continuing impact of Anita's death became clear to Con Gouriotis after five years of working in Blacktown (a western suburb of Sydney) in the 1990s. Now Director of the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre in western Sydney, Gouriotis realised that the rape-murder 'was apparent everywhere... [there was still] the presence and impact of violence ... Something had to be done to address this impact; at least to

create to a reference point for others to build on.' He proposed an exhibition.

A curatorium was formed to oversee its development. It included Anita's parents, Grace and Garry Lynch; a journalist who reported and wrote about the case; police officers who investigated it; and the working curator of the exhibition, Lisa Havilah. This was no ordinary group of advisors for an exhibition.

It is, in fact, their exhibition, led by Anita's parents. The members of the curatorium tell the stories of their links with Anita and her family, both in the exhibition and in the provoking and detailed catalogue. To assist school groups grapple with the topic, they produced a Senior Visual Arts and Legal Studies Education Kit as well.

How do individuals and communities cope with the event and the aftermath of appalling personal violence among them? For Anita's parents, they and others co-founded the Homicide Victims Support Network. Other people responded with several books on the case. The exhibition curatorium commissioned twelve artists to create works.

The interaction of these artworks with more conventional displays of photos, television news clips, and newspaper headlines, evokes emotional reactions to the horror of rape and death.

I was enthralled with *Anita and Beyond*, even if emotionally drained. I was deeply moved by the fact that people with experience of the unspeakable set out to interpret it to the rest of us.

Despite its confronting nature, it is not a sombre exhibition. The atmosphere on a busy Sunday afternoon was much like that in any other gallery on a weekend, with more interest in some displays than others. Many visitors focused on the photos and artefacts of Anita's life, and the

re-runs of television newsclips and interviews of her death and the subsequent court case. The response to the artwork was mixed, with some people focusing on the installation artwork while totally ignoring the portraits of the perpetrators.

For the artworks are both subtle and confronting. Raquel Ormella screens two videos side by side: the 1986 re-enactment of Anita's last journey, and a re-creation of the original re-enactment. What makes this work so haunting is that behind the two television screens are Adam Cullen's huge images of the perpetrators: menacing faces painted in pastel colours.

Two multimedia works using black and white images and sound in darkened rooms remind us that the exhibition is also about other victims. These are Jasmine Hirst's evocative work *I'm sorry Anita Nothing's Changed*, which intersperses images of Anita with the names, dates and locations of other women raped and murdered. Debra Petrovitch projects video images onto three walls: the field where Anita was murdered, and the houses where the perpetrators lived. Eugenia Raskopoulos' installation work *No* juxtaposes the image of safe, girly bedroom with the loaded wording of the neon sign *no, never means yes* as a harsh reminder of the banality of rape.

With such works, the curatorium produce a powerful exhibition that is not only a tribute to the life of Anita Cobby, but also addresses the difficult issues of how communities deal with violence and how those affected by it — including the victims, the perpetrators and their families — respond.

A visitors' book and comment cards are available for the public to feed back to the exhibition. They will be given to Anita's parents when the exhibition closes, a gesture that makes

this simple visitor interaction exceptionally poignant. One of the visitor comments reads, 'My mom was murdered last year and I have to go to the trial ... I am afraid of it all ... Only those of us who are in the horror of it all really know ...'

It would be difficult to visit *Anita and Beyond* and not leave with a sense of shame about the violence that people suffer in our society. Although developed by and for the people of western Sydney, in addressing how the community lives with the consequences of rape and homicide, this exhibition deserves a broader audience. The Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre and the Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest are trying to raise funds to tour this exhibition. I hope they succeed.

The catalogue is available for \$20.00 from the Penrith Regional Gallery at galleries@penrithcity.nsw.gov.au

ROSEMARY HOLLOW WORKS WITH THE HERITAGE DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENT AUSTRALIA IN CANBERRA. SHE IS RESEARCHING THE MANAGEMENT OF SITES OF TRAUMA

ROB PILGRIM

***Making Histories in Transport Museums.* By Colin Divall and Andrew Scott. Continuum, London, 2000. ISBN: 0-7185-0106-3**

Colin Divall and Andrew Scott are railway historians working in the wastelands on the periphery of museum studies, an area where little research is carried out, and what is done is often self-justificatory show and tell.

As the authors themselves point out this is because, whilst some few transport museums have made moves towards social history presentations, they exist, by and large, on a

culp between private enthusiasm and the realities of large, often dangerous, shiny objects. On the whole, transport museums follow some way behind other sorts of museums in dealing with social context, and are more often concerned with the physical conservation of the working artefact than with exploring the social conditions in which the artefact was manufactured and used.

Few, then, venture into the analysis of the nature of transport museums, preferring to see them simply in terms of 'Boys and their Toys'. That is why this book is such a useful addition to Gaynor Kavanagh's series examining history making in museums.

Whilst Divall's and Scott's work is not as dense as some offerings in the series, it deftly analyses both the possibilities and limitations of a socio-historical approach when interpreting objects which are often the result of fetishistic, nostalgic collecting. They emphasise the importance of the need for an appreciation of both the genesis and psychology of that collecting. In this context it may be possible to show the ways in which collections of desirable lumps of metal, acquired by enthusiasts, can be turned into stories accessible to all through interpretation.

The authors' analytical perspectives are broader than the title might indicate, as they consider the whole gamut of museological practice in the context of the transport museum. They canvass many topics: the relationship between the interpretation needs of the museum and the desires of visitors and enthusiasts; the changing role of the historic object in society and in transport museums; and the historical development and present standing of exhibitions in transport museums around the world. They examine the differences between static and

mobile displays of objects that are mobile in their 'natural habitat'. They assess the exhibitionary limits of showing objects so large that their sheer size requires display rather than storage. Finally, they survey a range of possible futures for transport museums.

Although most of what the authors examine has been analysed elsewhere with reference to a wide variety of museo-types, they enter truly new territory towards the end of the book with their analysis of what they call the *technological sublime* and *picturesque*. In essence these are two elements of a mimetic approach to transport history whereby those preserving old equipment and infrastructure attempt to present a vision of 'the past' by enabling visitors to experience its grandeur or its charm. The result is often a staged facsimile of transport history, such as a journey on a restored railway in a restored carriage propelled by a restored engine (or in a historic aeroplane, but oddly, rarely in a historic car).

Interpreting such a journey can be fraught with problems. The smells, sights and sounds of old machinery — especially steam machinery — working, can be very evocative of a nostalgic past. The critical faculties of visitors may be lulled by the past as presented since it 'feels real', although there may be very little relationship to the actualities of past working 'reality'.

Divall and Scott also draw parallels between the recreated rail journey and the circulation pattern of visitors to country houses, where access to the working areas (servant's quarters/mechanic's bay) might be denied. They argue that by reworking the visit experience of the railway itself, museum railways could provide opportunities for visitors to develop skills in decoding the social meanings of the spaces and landscapes through which they pass. They further argue

that local communities along the route of such working historic railways could be empowered through an emphasis on a holistic comprehension of place and landscape, using ecomuseums as a possible model for such interpretation.

Scott and Divall introduce few new ideas about museology and meaning-making in this work, but their application of approaches used elsewhere to the often conservative world of transport museums is very valuable. This book represents the slow paradigm shift that is occurring in some transport museums. The move is away from the mere display of attractive objects, away from formalist, visual catalogues of specimens, and towards a more contemporary socio-historical interpretive strategy where the objects are used to tell stories. It is a long awaited, necessary first step if transport museums are to join the contemporary museum world.

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ROSLYN RUSSELL

The British Museum: A History.
By David M Wilson. The British Museum Press, London, 2002.
ISBN: 0-7141-2764-7

After World War Two, Cyril Gadd of the British Museum's Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities wrote an inscription in cuneiform script on the wall of a quarry that had housed collections evacuated there during the hostilities: 'In the year of our Lord 1942, the sixth year of George, king of all lands. In that year everything precious, the works of all the craftsmen, which from palaces and temples, were sent out, in order that by fire, or attack by

an evil enemy they might not be lost, into this cave under the earth, a place of security, an abode of peace, we brought [them] and set [them].' (p.251)

The inscription encapsulates the tone of David Wilson's history of the British Museum, written for the 250th anniversary of what he describes as 'the greatest museum in the world'. (p.344) The theme of the inscription — the collection and preservation of the treasures of the world — is also the organising principle of this work. Wilson, Director of the BM from 1977 to 1992, has compiled a history that generally celebrates and affirms its mission as a great universal museum, but does not avoid pointing out errors and mistaken directions (except, some would say, in the case of his treatment of the current Parthenon sculptures controversy in what amounts to a scant page). (pp.322-3)

The book, dense and filled with detail, is not to be skimmed through. Every page merits close inspection, lest the reader miss the vignettes and deft characterisations that enliven the narrative.

The BM's story begins with the originating collection (in combination with two others, the Cotton and Harleian libraries) offered by Sir Hans Sloane to the nation in his will. The eclectic nature of Sloane's collection, combined with the two library collections that formed the original foundation, set the tone for much of the Museum's development over the next couple of centuries. Wilson carries the story from 1793 to the opening of the Museum's Great Court in 2001 and beyond.

One problem was confusion about the institution's identity: was it principally a library, with some material culture and natural history appended? Should it focus on foreign material, or include British culture, ancient and

contemporary? Should it collect decorative and fine arts, or ethnographic material? Should it mount its own archaeological excavations? What should its chief executive be called?

Answering these questions, and developing a coherent collecting policy, took up much of the 19th and part of the 20th centuries. The British Museum's chief officer was for many years called 'Principal Librarian'. The fact that the BM has in its turn given birth to several other institutions — the Natural History Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum, and the British Library — indicates that it was always a 'broad church', encompassing a wide variety of collections.

Wilson looks at the Museum's leaders — Anthony Panizzi, Augustus Franks and many others — with a judicious eye, and empathy derived from sharing the same heavy responsibilities. His sketches of these characters, and of the host of lesser players, are the book's chief delight. Two examples: A.M. Hind, Keeper of Prints and Drawings in the 1930s, 'loved to exert control; by means of a series of buttons and lights he summoned staff to his room with a minimum of trouble to himself and a deal of pain to his colleagues'. (p.233) The perils of benefaction are demonstrated in Wilson's assessment of Lord Duveen, 'prince of picture dealers and a totally tricky customer', and donor of the gallery housing the Parthenon sculptures. (p.241)

By the 1970s the necessity for more systematic planning was apparent: 'The British Museum for a long time seemed to run on serendipity. Things happened, but nobody seemed to know how they came about'. (p.306) On becoming Director, Wilson ordered that every basement be inspected, revealing, among other things, a 'freelance cycle repair workshop', 'a man doing yoga',

and a number of 'unofficial canteens'. (p.326)

By 2002, Wilson charges, things had gone too far the other way: the Museum, famed for its collections, scholarship and display of the world's cultures to millions of people, was facing 'the philistines at the gate' — a cost-cutting, unsympathetic civil service. But despite the impact of these less spacious times, 'it provides excitement to the people who in increasing numbers visit it, drawn by the sort of curiosity of which Sir Hans Sloane would have approved when he set the scene for the foundation of the Museum 250 years ago', and is an 'exciting place in which to work, an exciting place to visit'. (p.344) Long may it survive to fulfil that vision!

ROSLYN RUSSELL IS EDITOR OF
MUSEUM NATIONAL

IAN STEPHENSON

Creating a Gothic Paradise: Pugin at the Antipodes. A Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery Touring Exhibition, showing at the National Library, Canberra until 18 May and at the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney: 4 June–20 July 2003.

This remarkable exhibition represents the fruit of over a decade of research and fieldwork by Brian Andrews in discovering the Australian work of England's most influential theorist of the Gothic Revival movement, Augustus Welby Pugin.

Pugin was born in 1812 and worked variously as a designer of furniture and theatrical sets. In the 1830s he set about training himself as an architect through comprehensive study of medieval buildings. His passionate nature plus his conversion to Catholicism



Chalice veil, A. W. N. Pugin, 1840s, John Hardman Powell, c.1853–54
Made by Mrs Lucy Powell and the Misses L. and W. Brown, Birmingham, 1854.
Archdiocese of Hobart Museum and Archives
Photograph: Simon Cuthbert, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

turned his interest in the Middle Ages into a moral crusade. For him, Gothic ceased to be simply a style and became an ideology excluding all other architectural forms.

The Roman Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 and the great increase in England's Catholic population, coupled with a dash of patronage from the Earl of Shrewsbury, gave Pugin many commissions to design new churches. Often these embraced all the design requirements including building, furniture, vestments, stained glass and metalwork.

Meanwhile in the penal colony of New South Wales, fine architecture was not a high priority. The lack of trained architects was felt acutely by Australia's first Catholic Bishop, Bede Polding of Sydney, and his confrere Robert Willson, Bishop of Hobart Town. Well educated, civilised and imbued with the ideals of reviving the piety of medieval England in the Antipodes through the erection of archaeologically correct Gothic Revival churches, they found no local architect understood their requirements or had the expertise to fulfil them. Equipping their churches

from Australian sources with all the proper accoutrements such as vestments, furniture, stained glass and church plate was even more difficult.

Bishop Polding solved the problem by ordering church designs from a number of English Catholic architects including Pugin, while Bishop Willson patronised Pugin exclusively.

This use by Australia's early prelates of English architects had been long forgotten. No original plans for these buildings had survived and architectural historians assumed they were either the work of builders or designed by amateurs from pattern books. In the case of St Stephen's in Brisbane claims by local historians of Pugin authorship were treated with extreme scepticism.

Joan Kerr, the art historian, was the first researcher to hunt down Pugin in Australia. In her 1977 D.Phil thesis *Designing a Colonial Church*, she convincingly established that Bishop Polding used Pugin's exemplar designs for St. Augustine of Hippo, Balmain; St. Francis Xavier, Berrima; St. Benedict's, Broadway (Sydney); and St. Gregory's, Queanbeyan.

Since then, Brian Andrews has hugely expanded the knowledge of Pugin's Australian work, particularly in Tasmania.

Bishop Willson of Hobart Town was a personal friend of Pugin. Willson understood the difficulties of procuring good design and church furniture in Van Diemen's Land and was determined to arrive in his new diocese well prepared. He turned to Pugin for '40 large chasubles!!! several tombs 2 altars compleat, fonts & c tiles & 3 models of small churches'.

Some of these objects, brought out to Hobart in 1844, are included in the exhibition. In addition there are many of Willson's later purchases.

The liturgical vestments are especially interesting and illustrate both the splendour and quality of the Pugin ideal and the way in which his standards had to be compromised in Van Diemen's Land in order to meet financial exigencies. Most exquisite are those made by Lucy Powell of Birmingham to Pugin's designs. At the next level of quality are the 'exceedingly cheap chasubles' by Thomas Brown of Birmingham, while the chasuble made in Richmond, Tasmania, by a local seamstress has a Pugin form but uses the most basic of fabrics.

Brian Andrews identifies two Tasmanian churches — St Paul's, Oatlands and St Patrick's Colebrook — as having been derived from the architectural models which Willson brought to Hobart. He also attributes three more mainland churches, St Patrick's Parramatta; St Charles Borromeo, Ryde and St Stephen's, Brisbane, to Pugin.

The exhibition further examines the churches designed from 1856 by the Hobart-based architect Henry Hunter. Under Bishop Willson's influence these very closely followed Pugin's designs.

Pugin's influence on secular taste is illustrated by the inclusion of five items of Gothic

Revival furniture made by G. Trollope and Sons of London for Government House, Hobart, in the 1850s. They are modelled on Pugin's furniture designs for the Palace of Westminster, his most famous commission.

Creating a Gothic Paradise: Pugin at the Antipodes is a major exhibition of international significance. There are over 280 items on display including furniture, embroidered silk textiles, facsimiles of carved stonework, metalwork, books, paintings and engravings and architectural photographs and drawings. It is accompanied by a scholarly catalogue that will surely become a major and lasting reference book on the introduction of the Gothic Revival to Australia.

IAN STEPHENSON IS DIRECTOR OF ACT HISTORIC PLACES, COMPRISING LANYON, CALTHORPES' AND MUGGA MUGGA HOUSE MUSEUMS

JONATHAN SWEET

Journal of the History of Collections, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2002: special theme: The Making of the South Kensington Museum: Curators, dealers and collectors at home and abroad. Guest editors: Charlotte Gere and Carolyn Sargentson

During a long career (1942–1999) at the Victoria & Albert Museum, Clive Wainwright often dressed in tweed suits cut to 19th century patterns. A mature beard inflated the air of antiquarian scholarship, and gave him an uncanny resemblance to William Morris. Above all he was a pillar of the Furniture and Woodwork Collection and a pioneer of the study of 'antiquaries' and collecting. *The Romantic Interior* (1989), a book in which he unpacked (warts and all) the great

collections of historical personalities such as Horace Walpole, William Beckford and Walter Scott, has been a useful model for many people's (including my own) research.

Wainwright's work on the formation of the V&A collections provides the heart of this edition of the *Journal of the History of Collections*. Here, published posthumously, he explores four themes that shaped the identity of the museum: the relationship with the Government Schools of Design, modern manufactures and the Great Exhibition, collecting abroad, and the antique trade. Each article is based on archival material, including the diaries and correspondence of the first Director, Henry Cole, as well as others from the South Kensington circle.

Cole is a pivotal figure, and Wainwright is an admirer. For instance, in the article on collecting abroad he details the intrigue of the great race to acquire Italian Renaissance sculpture in the 1850s, enthusiastically summing up: 'It was remarkable how many masterpieces had been collected in such a short time. When the Sculpture Catalogue was published to coincide with the 1862 Special Loan Exhibition, they already included two Donatellos... the twelve Luca della Robbia 'Labours of the Months'...and two Antonio Rossellinos, [including] one of the most famous pieces of fifteenth-century Italian sculpture.'

However, this enthusiasm is also tempered: in his discussion of architectural acquisitions he shows that museum collecting was also opportunistic and not always to the ethical standard we advocate today. He writes, while 'architectural plundering had been halted in France in the 1830s... Italy was not so quick off the mark.' It was another thirty years before laws were enacted to preserve

Italian cultural heritage, to the obvious advantage of the acquisition program of the V&A and other museums.

Design historians Charlotte Gere and Caroline Sargentson have edited these papers with scholarly care and have integrated new material in a secondary reference system. Other contributions include an excellent essay by Anthony Burton appraising the usefulness of the V&A collections. Was the museum successful in using the collections to achieve its mission to improve public taste? We might ask our art museums today the same curly question.

In general, international serials such as *Journal of the History of Collections* serve a number of purposes. Apart from introducing the results of primary research around a central theme, they provide a forum for ideas and suggest lines of enquiry. Now in its second decade, the *JHC* has a distinguishing aim to provide 'the clearest insight into all aspects of collecting activity.' A survey of back numbers reveals fascinating articles on the motivations, actions and taste of wealthy individual collectors and on the transformation of private collections to the public realm. There are also articles on collection dispersal and object forgery.

While fine art and design collections seem privileged, the theoretical approach is wedded to the new approaches to art and design histories, which emerged in the late 20th century. Contributors often explore the social and economic contexts in which objects are made, valued and traded by individuals, and the political and cultural context that inspired and shaped museum collections. As Dr Christopher Marshall concluded in a case study of a Neapolitan artist as dealer (from 2000), the 'implicit belief in the close interconnections between art

and economics' and 'a rich tradition of enterprise involving painters' was 'now receiving the attention it so richly deserves' (*JHC* 12/1, 28–9). In the current number, a groundbreaking article by Wainwright on the influential curiosity dealer Murray Marks illuminates the shadowy zone between art museum acquisition practice and the antique trade — suggesting a potential line of research in Australia.

Browsers will also find articles on non-art collections. Case studies include scientific instruments, natural history specimens, books and machines, including one on the collection at the National Motor Museum. Notably however, there are very few articles on collecting in the 20th century, and unfortunately, unless I have missed them, there are no articles presenting aspects on the Australian experience. This leaves a number of very significant gaps where this international journal might foster scholarship in the next decade. There also seems to be a need to explore less high-end collecting practices and less prestigious collections.

The many articles in the *JHC* confirm that each collection is formed through a unique juncture of personalities, historical processes and resources. And, as with all good journals, dedicated readers can make useful connections, discern general collecting patterns across space and time, and contribute to the creation of knowledge. It's well worth maintaining contact with this journal.

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LINDA YOUNG

***Creating Colonial Williamsburg.* By Anders Greenspan. Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002. ISBN: 1-58834-001-5.**

Colonial Williamsburg must be the mother of all heritage sites — not necessarily the oldest, perhaps not even the biggest, but arguably the most famous. It is certainly the most thoroughly analysed.

In this light, Anders Greenspan's account of Williamsburg offers a workmanlike account of its foundation in 1932 and subsequent development into the 1990s. The story is solidly set in the context of the shifting politics of United States history, and of the history of US politics. Australian readers who know little of this larger backdrop will find that such contexts illuminate both the apparent clichés of Revolutionary representation and the radical interpretive innovations of the late twentieth century, for which the institution is famous.

Colonial Williamsburg (CW, for short) was designed to incarnate the 'spirit' of the 1776 American Revolution. It manages to be both charmingly English-colonial and yet anti-English: Georgian, but American. This is not its only contradiction, but it is central to understanding 'the restoration' and its place in American life.

Americanism — the booster-culture of 'the land of the free and the home of the brave' — inspired CW's first forty years. To begin, it was an Americanism reacting to great surges of European immigration, perceived in the early twentieth century to risk diluting Anglo traditions. Come the second world war, the institution took on a role to educate the military in the rationale of what they were fighting for. After the war, CW adopted an explicit policy of

countering international communism by featuring the virtues of republican democracy, epitomised in the orientation movie, 'The Story of a Patriot' (1956).

At the same time, the contradictions of denying representation (and even visitor accommodation) to black citizens stirred some consciences in CW management. Greenspan's history, drawn from internal records including letters from visitors, highlights this thread with the perspective of hindsight, but his account is disturbingly apologist. The temptation to identify with one's subject can bewitch historians, and it requires more detachment than Greenspan musters.

However, his account of pressure from the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and the social history movement of the 1970s makes Chapter 6 a specially fascinating study of convergence between social and museological changes. So is Chapter 7, recounting the arrival of historian Cary Carson and his development of a new interpretive framework for CW: 'Becoming Americans' would follow the lives of both black and white Williamsburgers through the later eighteenth century.

The strains of retrofitting critical social history onto CW's tradition of Americanist patriotism showed up in many aspects of the site's management. Even employing an appropriate proportion of black interpreters (fifty-two per cent of the Williamsburg population had been black in the 1770s) would be a major human resources effort, and it seems that more than twenty per cent has never been achieved.

Then there were effects on visitors. Black history programs, launched in 1979, soon outgrew merely presenting black presence, but the emotional drama of acting out a slave auction, introduced in 1994, shook both black and white audiences. This kind of

confronting history rocked the on-going marketing image of genteel charm, to the alarm of those responsible for bringing in the customers. Cary Carson had to agree that there are limits to how much an old institution can accommodate new history. Thus 'The Story of a Patriot' remains in the orientation program, albeit with a caveat about shifts in historical understanding.

Critics had attacked CW's presentations since the 1960s. Ada Louise Huxtable, the famous architecture commentator, often lambasted it for fakery. The simple old verities of white patriots invited regular deconstruction in the 1970s. And even after social history arrived, CW went under the microscope again, this time considered by anthropologists. Eric Gable and Richard Handler published their ethnography of CW's presentation and interpretation, *The New History in an Old Museum*, in 1997, showing gaps between the site's historians, behind the scenes in suits, and those on the front line, in costume. It is the kind of scrutiny most heritage sites need, but do not enjoy.

Yet *Creating Colonial Williamsburg* is not an ideal alternative. The book barely discusses the content and style of interpretation through the years, referring to practice only incidentally. Nor does it trace a clear genealogy of management policy — or perhaps it never existed. Greenspan draws heavily on statements by the two generations of Rockefellers who bankrolled the site, and on the comments of visitors, journalists and occasional pundits. But the story needs a more detached overview of heritage management in the United States to be really satisfying. There's room for yet another book on Colonial Williamsburg!

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PUBLICATION DESIGN
AWARDS 2003**

The vaults at the Gold Treasury are overflowing with hot contenders for the 2003 MAPDA Awards. The judges are faced with a daunting 650 publications from 170 different museum organisations across Australia and New Zealand. The judges are Andrew Abbott, senior advisor, government design policy, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Victoria; Janet Boschen, studio manager, Philatelic Group, Australia Post; Peggy Cole, museum education consultant; Steve Grocott, director multimedia, Nine Lanterns; Aurore Harden, website creator and Year 12 student; Matthew Harris, client services, and Bec Smith, creative director, Morpheum; Marylou Jelbart, arts broadcaster and reviewer; and Fiona Sweet, principal of Sweet Design, the Awards design sponsor. See the shortlist on the MA website. Be at the conference in Perth for the Awards announcement on 27 May.

**COMING IN
MUSEUM NATIONAL**

AUGUST 2003

'The Other Side', articles from the Museums Australia annual conference, Perth, 25-30 May 2003

NOVEMBER 2003

The 'wired museum'

International Museums Day

Museums all over the world will celebrate International Museums Day on 18 May. This year's theme is 'Museums and Friends', and pays homage to the valuable role played by volunteers, museum partners and benefactors. ICOM President Jacques Perot has said that 'Museums must place themselves at the heart of society and ensure that they are open to the communities around them. The development of our institutions depends in large part on the support of the public, and we must offer that public opportunities to support our aims and involve themselves in our activities. So it is important that museums and their friends work together in a spirit of creativity and innovation.'

Come to 'The Other Side' for the Museums Australia Annual Conference, Perth, WA, 25-30 May 2003

More information can be found on the website: www.promaco.com.au/conference/2003/museums or the Museums Australia website: www.museumsaustralia.org.au

'History, Community and Environment', 12th State History Conference, SA, 24-25 May 2003, History Trust of South Australia

The conference explores some of the histories of South Australia and South Australians, through the twin lenses of environment and community.

Renmark Hotel, Renmark, SA. For information contact Dr Sally-Anne Nicholson
Tel: 08 8226 8576
Fax: 08 8226 8580
Email: snicholson@history.sa.gov.au

Community Heritage Grants 2003

This popular grant program for the preservation of documentary heritage turns ten this year. Grants of up to \$8000 are available for preservation projects undertaken by community organisations which hold documentary heritage collections of national significance, such as local historical societies and museums, public libraries and Indigenous and ethnic groups. Community Heritage Grants are funded and supported by the National Library of Australia, National Archives of Australia and the Commonwealth Government through the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.

For Community Heritage Grants Guidelines and an Application Form, contact The Coordinator Community Heritage Grants National Library of Australia Canberra ACT 2600
Tel: 02 6262 1147
Fax: 02 6273 4493
Email: chg@nla.gov.au
Web: www.nla.gov.au/chg/

The Best in Heritage — an annual presentation of the best museum and heritage projects, Dubrovnik, Croatia, 18-20 September 2003

Under the patronage of the International Council of Museums, UNESCO, Europa Nostra, and the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia.

For more information visit the website, www.TheBestInHeritage.com

GLAM — Galleries, Libraries, Archives & Museums: Different Professions, Common Goals

Australian Society of Archivists Annual Conference 2003
17-20 September 2003, Adelaide

What are GLAM's common goals? How do our professions remain relevant in this 'knowledge' age? Learn from successes and disasters in the record keeping arena. How do record keepers make themselves indispensable to their communities and power brokers? Will web technology be the saviour? Come to Adelaide and help to determine the future place of the cultural enterprise.

Conference convenors:
Kylie Percival
Tel: 08 8303 5830
Email: kylie.percival@adelaide.edu.au
June Edwards
Tel: 08 8226 4783
Email: edwards.june2@saugov.sa.gov.au

Interpretation Australia Conference 2003 Refreshing the Interpretation Toolkit

Grand Hyatt, Melbourne, 1-4 September 2003

The conference theme presents the opportunity to explore the essential tools of the interpretation trade, showcase new technologies, and to reconnect with our industry partners such as graphic designers and fabricators.

For more information see www.interpretationaustralia.asn.au or go direct to the conference page at <http://iaa2003.ausunique.com>

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