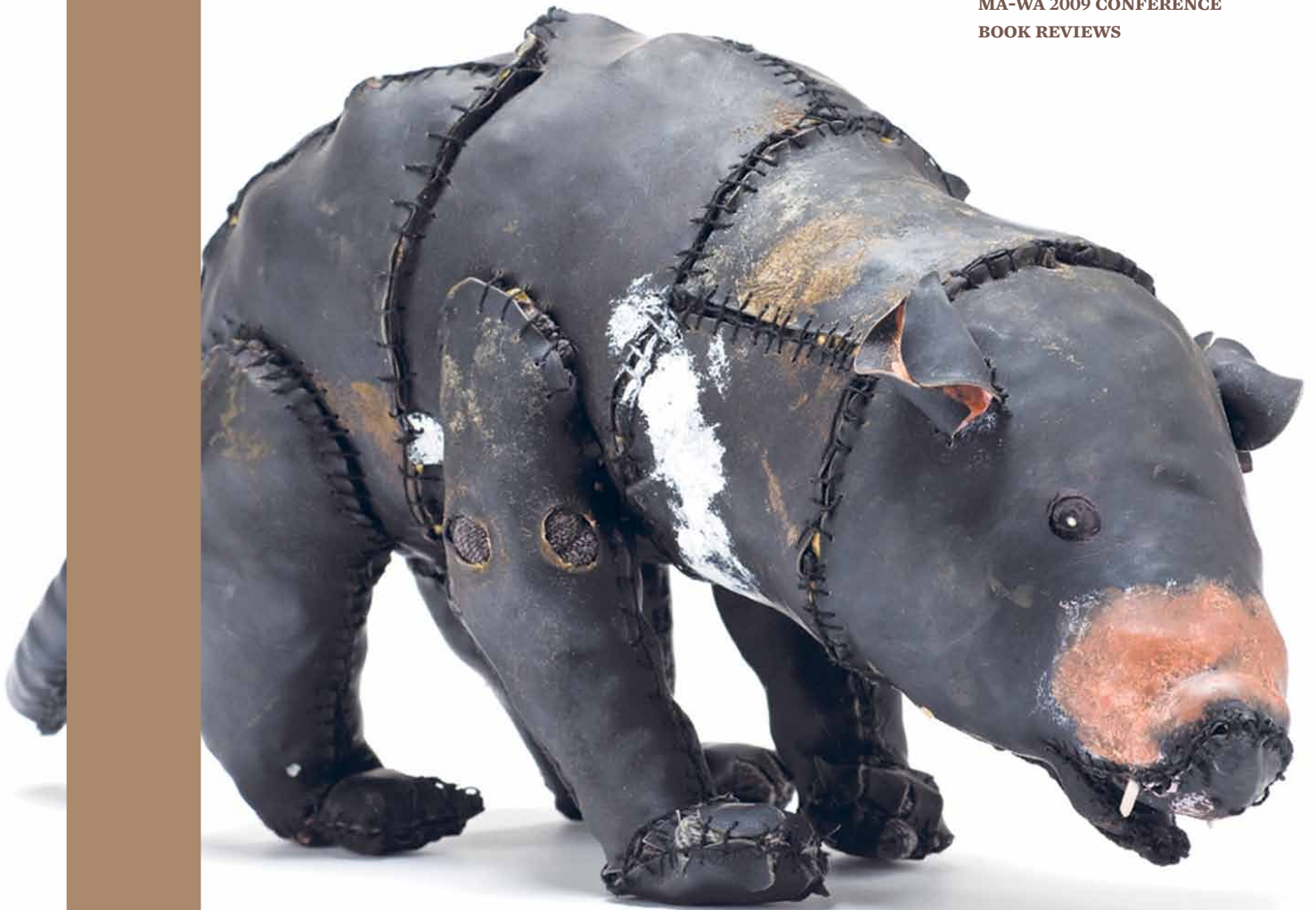


VOL 18 (2) – DECEMBER 2009

Museums Australia *Magazine*

MUSEUMS AND TOURISM
NEW KELLY GANG INSIGHTS
FRANCE HONOURS AUSTRALIANS
MAKING SCIENCE ACCESSIBLE
ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
MA-WA 2009 CONFERENCE
BOOK REVIEWS



Indigenous Australian
sculpture: enriching
audiences and collections



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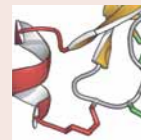
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Museums Australia Magazine
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Editor: Bernice Murphy

Design: Art Direction Creative

Print: Blue Star Print

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Museums Australia Magazine is published quarterly and on-line on the MA Website, and is a major link with members and the museums sector. Museums Australia Magazine is a forum for news, opinion and debate on museum issues. Contributions from those involved or interested in museums and galleries are welcome. Museums Australia Magazine reserves the right to edit, abridge, alter or reject any material. Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the publisher or editor. Publication of an advertisement does not imply endorsement by Museums Australia, its affiliates or employees.

Museums Australia is proud to acknowledge the following supporters of the national organisation:

Australian Government Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts; National Museum of Australia; National Film and Sound Archive; Museum Victoria (Melbourne Museum); Western Australian Museum; and Link Web Services (Canberra).

Print Post Publication No: 332582/00001 ISSN 1038-1694

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COVER IMAGE

Vicki West, Hella, 2009.
Mixed media, 26 x 19 x 58cm.

Courtesy of the artist.

Menagerie: Contemporary Indigenous Sculpture
(Object national touring exhibition)

President's message

Strategic vision for culture and heritage



Reviewing 2009, it has been a busy year for Museums Australia. While MA has greatly increased its advocacy focus through the National Office, and developed a record number of submissions to public inquiries affecting culture and heritage, much is changing in the wider landscape affecting the sector, especially in the context of some decisions taken by government itself.

As many are aware, some recent decisions by the Commonwealth government have crucial implications for the museums sector nationally. Three stand out: (1) the Cultural Ministers Council (CMC) resolved that funding to the Collections Council of Australia would cease on 30 June 2010 – which represents a significant change of direction and resourcing nationally, without an alternative policy direction or provision for continuing development of the 'National Collections Program' yet clarified. (2) Meanwhile the federal government's support to the national Cultural Portal (previously resourced and developed within DEWHA) will also cease in 2010. (3) A Cultural Ministers Council decision is awaited about the future location of the Collections Australia Network – following a recent governmental review of CAN through the Commonwealth department, DEWHA (which has been the financial source of CAN's staffing and recurrent operations in recent years).

Museums Australia is actively concerned to ensure that whatever collegial co-operation can be advanced to maintain important resources or initiatives developed through all of these facilities or agencies is not allowed to languish through lack of collegial liaison across the sector. Consultation across the four 'collecting domains' previously encompassed by the remit of CCA remains a very important issue for cultural heritage care and management nationally.

It is especially important at this moment to pursue continuing dialogue and interface between government and the sector on a range of common issues. Such discussion and liaison is crucial to ensure sharing of organisational and professional knowledge; to develop projects and advance cross-domain ventures undertaken to date; and to work collaboratively on future initiatives that meet both the strategic vision of Museums Australia and broader government objectives and priorities across the cultural sector.

There have been some preliminary discussions with the Department about ongoing liaison with the presidents/chairpersons of MA, CAMD, Libraries and Archives and related bodies, so that this cross-sectoral cluster of domains maintains regular discussion and consultation with the federal and state departments for the arts and heritage. This includes the objective

of holding at least an annual 'Common Ground' meeting (such as that organised by MA in Melbourne in September), where issues of common interest can be discussed, and strategic objectives shaped, with the involvement of all parties active as key institutions or agencies across the sector.

At the MA National Council meeting in Melbourne on 19 September 2009 (and our thanks to Museum Victoria for providing a venue for both the Council meeting and the Common Ground cross-sectoral meeting on the preceding day), some significant decisions were taken.

It was agreed to form three new Standing Committees of Council to advance some strategic priorities for 2010. These are as follows:

Digital Strategies

(chaired by the President): Issues of digital convergence and improved national access to the richness of Australia's collections are a priority for the museums sector. It was resolved as important for the MA Council itself to pursue a more active position in providing leadership towards best-practice standards involving digitisation of collections and resources – while continuing to liaise with CAMD (which is also developing a strategy/policy document on digital directions) – and to share such knowledge and best-practice protocols actively nation-wide among museum and gallery networks.

Membership

(chaired by Bill Storer of New South Wales). Membership Services is a critical issue for the organisation, and membership strategies need active support to be 'driven from the top' of Council's governance agenda and implemented through every part of the organisation nation-wide. It is also important that the standards and benefits of MA membership be equitable across all branches, and that any evolving issues reported by members are readily able to be aired and resolved within the Membership standing committee. A further objective of this committee will be to ensure that all branches, divisions, and National Networks actively canvass on behalf of members and seek to enlarge involvement in MA's services and programs by greater membership participation across the huge geographical footprint of MA's existing presence nationally – encompassing the smallest, volunteer-run regional organisations as well as our best-resourced institutions in regional areas and capital cities.

MA President chairing National Council meeting in Canberra.



Publications

(chaired by Andrew Simpson): This committee will review MA publications to assess their present value and determine their future potential for re-publication in digital or hard-copy formats. Council also suggested that an audit of all MA past publications be undertaken to determine what has been published and is still available (or not available), as well as considering which publications might be printed on demand or as an on-line resource.

National Networks and SIGs (Special Interest Groups)

MA Council further resolved in September that there would be merit in reviewing those Networks or SIGs that have not met for some time, to assess whether they are still needed or viable – and, if so, how they might be assisted to rejuvenate their activities and meet on a regular basis.

Federal Minister's development of a National Cultural Policy

Minister Peter Garrett delivered a speech in October at the National Press Club in Canberra, where he outlined his views about a proposed national cultural policy. The Minister's web-site provides a record of the speech delivered, as well as a blog page (open until 1 February 2010) seeking public input to policy ideas for attention by the federal government. Members have been encouraged in e-Bulletins to include their views about the desired focus and content of a new cultural policy – especially concerning its relationship to museums, cultural heritage and the cultural sector in a more holistic sense.

The National Office of MA is making a submission to the Minister. MA has already forwarded a summary of the Common Ground meeting held in Melbourne in September, stressing that it brought together representatives of a broad range of organisations to discuss issues of common interest.

Blue Shield Australia (BSA)

MA has been approached by Blue Shield Australia – for MA to join formally as an Associate Member – which I am confident will be endorsed by the Council at its next meeting. Blue Shield Australia will hold a symposium in Canberra on 6 May 2010, at the National Library of Australia, and this might provide a timely opportunity for MA itself to have its Annual General Meeting (since the usual conjunction with the National Conference is not possible in 2010, with the Melbourne Conference occurring later in the year (see below).

ICOM Australia AGM 2010

MA understands that ICOM Australia also plans to hold its AGM on the same day as MA's (in May, in Canberra). We will provide more information about both AGMs in due course.

MA National Conference 2010

Melbourne, 28 September – 2 October 2010

Planning for the 2010 National Conference is well underway through the Organising Committee in Melbourne, and invitations have been extended to the Victorian and the Commonwealth Ministers for the Arts to officially open the conference.

As 2009 draws to a close, I would like to thank the National Council as well state and territory branch councils, committees and Networks/ Special Interest Groups, as well as the National Office and state and territory branch offices, for all their dedicated and hard work during 2009. I wish all members best wishes for 2010. ■

Dr Darryl McIntyre, National President, Museums Australia

MA-WA 2009 Conference: 'Changing Landscapes'



Emerald Reserve lime kilns are one of the only remaining kiln sites that show signs of the workers living alongside their work. MA-WA Conference 09 Heritage Tour of Wanneroo. PHOTO: Natalie James

Anne Chapple

If the measure of a good conference is the amount of discussion it arouses, then Museums Australia (WA)'s annual conference 'Changing Landscapes' has certainly achieved this benchmark.

Whilst the usual aftermath of such an event for the administrative staff involves a fair measure of cleaning up, restoring equipment to its rightful place, writing thank-you letters and balancing the books, 'Changing Landscapes' has led to lots of phone calls, innovative ideas, renewal of networks, some changes in direction, and new and exciting partnerships for Museums Australia (WA).

So, how did all of this come about over the short space of two days?

First, the fantastic venue showcasing, in particular, the new Wanneroo Learning and Cultural Centre was evocative in itself. Discussion of the facilities was evident and its conduciveness to a conference of this kind was quite clear. Moreover after Philippa Rogers and Envy Ngugen's papers, we understood the complicated and difficult process they had had to negotiate to arrive at such a wonderful, purpose-built building – with, as Natalie James confessed to the jealousy of all present: storage space! Museums Australia (WA) is very grateful to the City of Wanneroo for allowing us to use their premises free-of-charge and for the co-operation of staff, without whom the outcomes may well have been less successful.

Then we have the speakers. They informed, they provoked, they inspired, they challenged; they confronted and they made us think – proof of which were the afore-mentioned phone calls. Surely this is the

essence of any such gathering, where people from diverse backgrounds come together with a common interest.

At a time where we in the museums sector are feeling vulnerable, and as the winds of change are so palpably blowing, the conference speakers – each in their own way – reaffirmed our aims and objectives and gave us the confidence, support and encouragement necessary for us to continue.

We were fortunate to hear of some wonderful projects that are ensuring that Western Australian culture is being preserved. We heard of some great ideas to inspire our own exhibitions and public programs. We were able to clarify our thinking about such important aspects of museology as 'significance assessment' (with *Significance 2.0* recently published) and the National Standards for Museums and Galleries newly developed through national sectoral collaboration. Finally, we were able to see and hear about amazing advancements in new technology, and how we can use this to advance our museums and make them more relevant to our audiences.

The Trade Show was an innovation for the WA state conference. We were fortunate in that some of the suppliers to the museums and galleries sectors were so willing to come on board and support the conference, as well as hosting displays in the conference room. Our grateful thanks are extended to Sally-Anne and Andrew Whittington, from Mosaic, for their informative display and support; to Kay Soderland from Preservation Australia, who put on an excellent workshop in our pre-conference workshops and also displayed her wares for all to experience; to KE Software for their fabulous displays and delicious chocolates; and to Kim and Seisia from JumboVision, for an excellent display of what they can do for our museums.

Museums Australia (WA) also had another group of sponsors whose brochures were distributed in the conference bags. Our thanks for this great support. Being so far away from the Eastern States means that it is difficult to attract sponsors to this side of the country; however many sponsors generously came on board and helped to keep our overhead costs down.

In the Trade Show, participants also experienced a display that provoked many mixed emotions: despair, hilarity, disbelief and pure amazement were just a few of the reactions to our Archives Display.

Our Project Officer, Jenna Lynch and her valiant offsider, Cheryl Har, have recently worked through Museums Australia (WA) archives and unearthed a treasure-trove of old photos, minutes and all sorts of documents.

Unwilling to keep this interesting collection to themselves, our colleagues created a fascinating display of items found – uniquely for the benefit of conference-goers. I believe that it was the photos that provoked the previously mentioned emotions, with some of the subjects steadfastly denying that they had ever been so young! ■

Anne Chapple is Publications Co-ordinator within Museums Australia (Western Australia state branch)

Minister for the Arts and two distinguished museum colleagues honoured by France

Three Australians admitted to French Order of Arts and Letters

RIGHT: Australian Minister for the Arts, The Hon Peter Garrett, invested as an *Officier* in the *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* by French Minister of Culture, Frédéric Mitterrand, at a ceremony in Paris, June 2009.

Patricia Sabine and Ambassador of France, His Excellency Michel Filiou, after her conferral ceremony at the French Embassy, Canberra, 24 November 2009.



Bernice Murphy

In 2009, three Australians working in the arts were honoured by admission to the most prestigious French government order in the cultural field, the Order of Arts and Letters (*L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*). They are: The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP, Minister for the Arts; Dr Ron Radford, Director of the National Gallery of Australia; and Patricia Sabine, of the Australian War Memorial.

This Order was established in 1957 and has long been associated with André Malraux, France's first Minister of Cultural Affairs under President Charles de Gaulle. André Malraux, distinguished author, cultural traveller and later statesman, remains most known in the museum world for his concept of the 'museum without walls' (*Le musée imaginaire*), as described in his collection of writings, *Voices of Silence*, and in his autobiographical *Anti-memoirs*.

On 26 June 2009, at a ceremony in Paris, The Hon Peter Garrett, Australian Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, was invested as an *Officier* in the Order of Arts and Letters by the French Minister for Culture and Communication, Frédéric Mitterrand.

Later in the year, at an investiture in Canberra on November 24 at the Embassy of France, Patricia Sabine, Past President of Museums Australia, was named *Chevalier* (Knight) of the Order and decorated with the beautifully designed medal and insignia by the Ambassador of France, His Excellency Michel Filiou. Ron Radford's similar investiture formally by the French Ambassador will likely occur in 2010, and Museums Australia will feature his investiture and the contributions over many years to French-Australian relations that led to this honour, in a forthcoming issue of MA Magazine.

Patricia Sabine honoured for her advancement of Australian-French cultural relations when Director of TMAG, Hobart (1999-2002)

While Director of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) in 1999–2002, Patricia Sabine was able to extend French-Australian relationships through her personal commitment to a number of

projects developed from her vantage-point at the state museum in Hobart. TMAG significantly maintains the complex interplay between science, history and art in its collections and programs (as at Australia's Top End in the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin) – whereas such relations were divorced elsewhere through the historical development of separate museum institutions in other capital cities.

In her acceptance speech after her investiture at the French Embassy, Patricia Sabine touched upon some of the important and long-standing relations between Australia and France since early Pacific exploration and the colonial period of Australian settlement. She paid collective tribute to the many fine Australian scholars whose work since the 1970s has been crucial to general understanding of the ongoing role French exploration and scientific research has played historically in the development of Australia.

Particularly noted were:

Christine Cornell (State Library of South Australia), who in the 1970s made the first translation into English of Baudin's 1801-1804 log of the Voyage to the Southern Hemisphere; Professor Bernard Smith, long-standing Pacific scholar and art historian^[1] who, with Jacqueline Bonnemains, curator from the Musée du Havre, authored a fine volume presenting the exquisite natural history drawings of Leseuer and Petit – drawings developed through Baudin's voyage in Australian waters, and later by Baudin's special protégés;^[2] and Dr Edward Duyker (more recently) for his enlightening research and numerous publications about the 1792-1794 D'Entrecasteaux voyages in the southern Australian coastal region, with a legacy of place-names and links that survive and still vividly configure consciousness of history's living legacy in contemporary Tasmania.^[3]

Patricia then reviewed the significant centenary events and exhibitions of the historical maritime and scientific ventures linking Australia and France that have been celebrated nationally in recent years, noting important exhibitions and publications that have been developed by the Museum of Sydney, the Art Gallery of South Australia, and the Western Australian Museum.

1992: Bicentennial of Bruny d'Entrecasteaux's exploration of Tasmanian waters and coastlines (1792 & 1793)

Patricia recalled this commemoration held when she was still in Tasmania:

The 1992 Bicentennial was marked by a Royal Society of Tasmania excursion by boat down to Recherche Bay, via the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, past Bruny Island and the entrance to the Huon River. This day of re-discovery was made more remarkable on the return trip by a brilliant display in the southern sky of the Aurora Australis. We wondered if the French explorers might have seen a similar display 200 years earlier.^[4]

2002: Bicentennial of Nicolas Baudin's expedition and exploration of southern Tasmania (February 1802)

'In 2002', Patricia noted, 'the East Coast of Tasmania held the first *France to Freycinet Festival* to honour the bicentennial of Nicolas Baudin's remarkable voyage at the beginning of the nineteenth century':

The French expedition under Nicolas Baudin ... [sailing in the] *Géographe* and *Naturaliste* from anchorages in D'Entrecasteaux Channel between 19 January and 16 February 1802, surveyed parts of southern Tasmania not seen by earlier voyagers. When David Collins abandoned his Port Phillip settlement, Lady Nelson was despatched to examine Port Dalrymple as an alternative site. Arriving at Low Head on 1 January 1804, Murray sailed the vessel upriver to the present site of Launceston, returning by the river's western shore. In the event Collins relocated to the River Derwent. (*The Companion to Tasmanian History*, 2006)^[5]

Elements of the France to Freycinet Festival in 2002 (which now continues biennially) were set in towns sited on many of the coastal land forms that Baudin's expedition mapped and named, highlighted in a small travelling exhibition that identified significant landforms, gave biographical details of their historical namesakes and explained the roles they played in the Baudin voyage. This exhibition now has an ongoing life through its eventual relocation in the Bark Mill at Swansea.^[6]

Another vital extension and flowering of the rich maritime connections between Australia and France in southern waters has focused on Antarctica. Antarctica is an area of major interest to TMAG. It has had an ongoing impact on the state museum's collections and scientific research, and Hobart has for many years been the supply base for French Expeditions, with present-day French scientific ships, such as *Lastrolabe*, berthed regularly in the harbour in Hobart.

In Australia we continue to benefit from the work of those eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French naval officers and scientists whose cartographic skill and observational prowess bequeathed us such exact and exquisite maps. More importantly, they documented with care and sensitivity the first contacts with Tasmania's Indigenous people, recording now-precious information about their unique ceremonies, culture and lifestyle.^[7]

However in public awareness, perhaps the outstanding art exhibitions from France over many years have provided the most prominent demonstration of the rich harvest of ongoing cultural relations with France. The recent history of major exhibitions covered under successive Cultural Agreements with France was spurred by the outstanding venture of *French Painting: The Revolutionary Decades*,^[8] lent to Sydney and Melbourne in 1980.

Meanwhile another, very different connection has been recovered recently and received wide media attention, since it plumbs collective memory in Australia to profound depths.

Patricia Sabine's final tribute (sharpened by her present position at the Australian War Memorial) was reserved for the resonant, community-focussed bonds of sacrifice linking Australia and France that stem from the First World War: commemorating mutual loss and a legacy of connections that will only deepen and expand with the passage of time.

Museums Australia pays tribute to our distinguished museum colleagues for their individual honours from France and naming as *Chevaliers* of the *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*, and also honours Minister Garrett for his own investiture as an *Officier* in the same Order. ■

Bernice Murphy is National Director, Museums Australia.



1 Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific* (London: Ebenezer Baylis and Son) 1950.

2 Jacqueline Bonnemains, Elliott Forsyth & Bernard Smith, Eds. [& Australian Academy of the Humanities & Musée du Havre], *Baudin in Australian Waters: The Artwork of the French Voyage of Discovery to the Southern Lands 1800-1804* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press in association with the Australian Academy of the Humanities) 1988.

3 Patricia Sabine, extract from acceptance speech, *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* investiture, French Embassy, Canberra, 24 November 2009.

4 *ibid.*

5 *The Companion to Tasmanian History*, ed. Alison Alexander (Hobart: Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, University of Tasmania) 2006. Extract accessed (12 November 2009) at: http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/E/Exploration%20by%20sea.htm

6 Patricia Sabine, extract from acceptance speech, *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* investiture, op.cit.

7 *ibid.*

8 Arlette Sérullaz & Virginia Spate, *French Painting: The Revolutionary Decades 1760-1830* (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales & Australian Gallery Directors Council [& National Gallery of Victoria]) 1980.

Learning and wonder

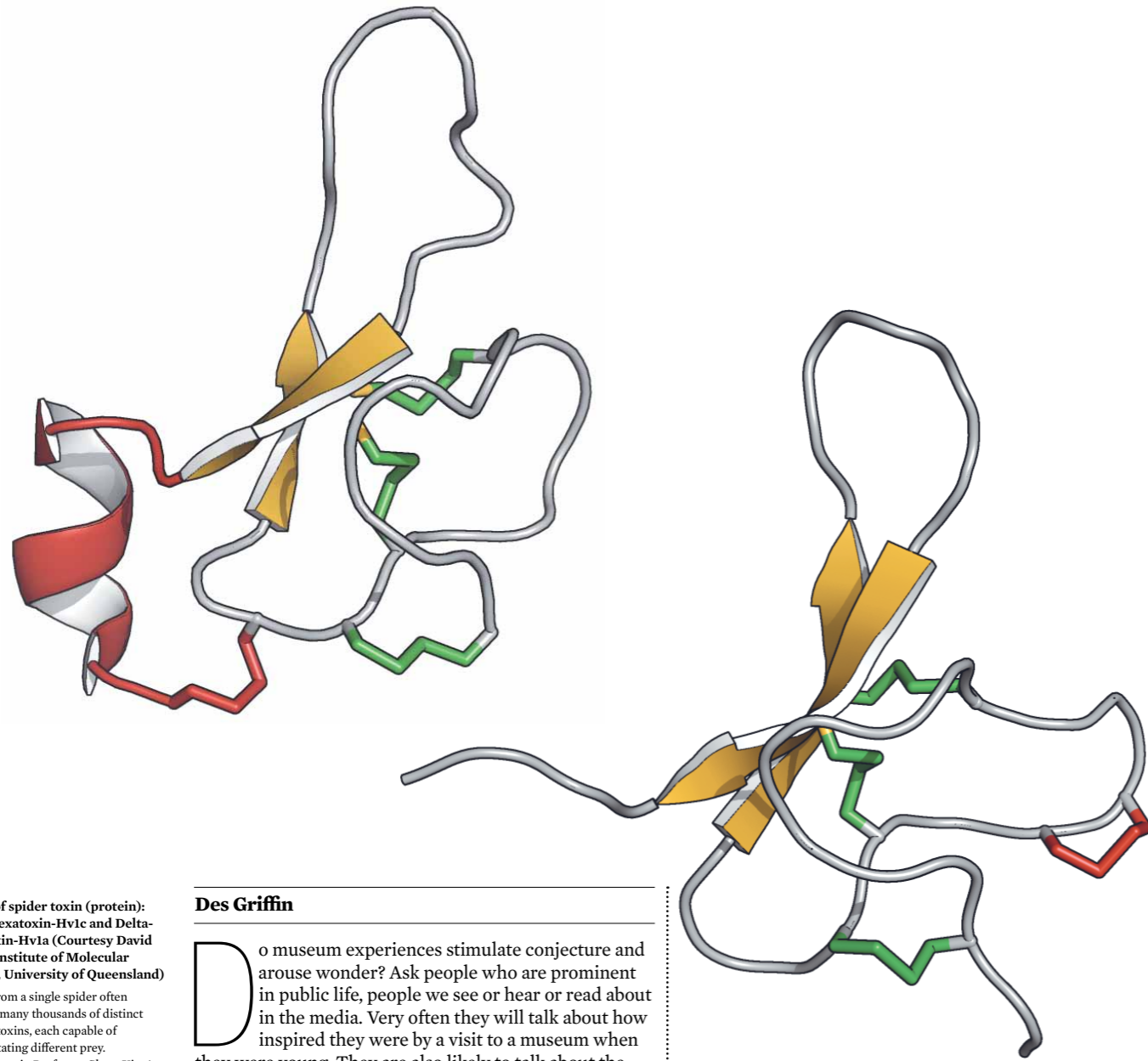


Image of spider toxin (protein): Delta-hexatoxin-Hv1c and Delta-hexatoxin-Hv1a (Courtesy David Wood, Institute of Molecular Biology, University of Queensland)

Venom from a single spider often contains many thousands of distinct types of toxins, each capable of incapacitating different prey. Researchers in Professor Glenn King's lab at the University of Queensland, together with Dr Robert Raven at the Queensland Museum and staff from Queensland Facility for Advanced Bioinformatics, are working together to discover and share information about these toxins. Shown here are 3D molecular structure models of two toxins, both from the Blue Mountains Funnel-web spider. The first, delta-hexatoxin-Hv1a, is the toxin lethal to humans, the second, kappa-hexatoxin-Hv1c, is harmless to humans but lethal to insects. Research into toxins such as these shows great promise in the development of organic insecticides as well as pharmacological uses. The researchers have set up a web site (www.arachnoserver.org) where information on these toxins is freely available.

Des Griffin

Do museum experiences stimulate conjecture and arouse wonder? Ask people who are prominent in public life, people we see or hear or read about in the media. Very often they will talk about how inspired they were by a visit to a museum when they were young. They are also likely to talk about the encouragement of one of their parents, or a friend or relative, to ask questions. About everything. Scientist and environmentalist Paul Erhlich, and molecular biologist at the University of Queensland John Mattick, each mention the influence of their mother.

Natural history museums play a very important part in developing people's understanding of the world around them. To those of us who work in museums this is not news. But the facts certainly don't accord with those who downplay the interest that people have in museums or the importance of museum visits to the development of both personal identity and a broader understanding of the world. Good museums are meanwhile transforming their facilities and engagement with audiences in a variety of ways – see,

for example, the wonderful recent development of Stage 2 of the Darwin Centre within the Natural History Museum in London.

Scientific learning in museums needs to be understood in the most far-reaching terms and enlivened by imagination rather than pedantry. Much of the focus on learning about science and the environment in schools and in museums still favours how people will be educated sufficiently to go on to become scientists themselves. This marginalises most students. A second and more insidious agenda is the focus on facts. Modern-day Gradgrinds see a museum visit by a school group, for instance, as of little value unless kids can immediately demonstrate what they have learned.



Outside the Natural History Museum, London, the new Darwin Centre is shown from the Wildlife Garden adjacent to the historic Waterhouse building. The new building links the Grade-I-listed Victorian Waterhouse building and Museum gardens, bringing together the old, the organic and the new.

<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/visit-us/history-architecture/architecture-darwin-centre/architectural-slideshow/index.html>

A similar notion of education and learning as absorbing facts often characterises revisionist attention to a universal curriculum.

Most school groups visiting museums are required to fill in worksheets; the students must write down answers to questions they are required to pursue by looking at the exhibits on display. This inhibits real learning and channels an otherwise unusual and enjoyable experience into just another version of the classroom. Simply talking excitedly about the life cycle of butterflies, the nature of stars or how dinosaurs evolved, may seem insufficient to a pedagogic mentality focused on quickly measurable outcomes.

Learning works best when it is enjoyable and when the learner is in control. After all, genuine learning is indicated by the ability to translate what has been learned to new situations: the goal is not just acquisition of knowledge but development of understanding.

Museums have a unique role to play in encouraging a grasp of science and how it works, unlocking the sense that it is fundamentally a human endeavour in which people deeply interested in the workings of things can chase after answers to specific questions and build them into some general principles, modifying or even discarding previous views in the process. The ability of museums to arouse excitement and promote an understanding of these processes is something that sitting in a classroom seldom achieves, notwithstanding the vast changes in current classroom practices.

Numerous reviews by experienced educational researchers have pointed out very strongly that too much of the school science curriculum is biased toward a very academic agenda, and too much of the teaching is still anchored in disembodied facts. Science is presented as a set of laws and numbers, scientific names and terms, equations and so on. This ignores the reality of scientific investigation, which has all the characteristics of risk and adventure. It is an exciting exploration of possible scenarios involving struggle and discovery, often wrested from seemingly unrelated events.

Consider the role that wondering why plates tossed across a refectory always wobbled played in the research of Richard Feynman, who went on to win the Nobel Prize. More recently Elizabeth Blackburn initially wanted to know how the cell worked, but began to conjecture why chromosomes gradually shorten and become dysfunctional, especially in people who are stressed. Her work was transformative and she was one of the 2009 Nobel Prize-winners. Meanwhile Melbourne astronomer Andrew Prentice had wondered why the motion of the far-distant planet Neptune seemed not to be consistent with the number of moons agreed as belonging to it. Many at first dismissed his views, which eventually turned out to be correct.

It is in the excitement of discovery, the joy of finding a greater degree of coherence in our perception and ability to explain the world that science has most to offer – while also realising that uncertainty will always be present and more challenges will continually unfold. And as presenter Robyn Williams pointed out on the ABC's Science Show recently, the major questions facing us as humans today are scientific ones concerning the environment – in other words, the dynamic changes impacting upon everyone's daily lives, no matter where we live.

However as Paul Erhlich and others have stressed time and again, many of our decision makers, including politicians and business chiefs, are simply not sufficiently informed to be able to deal sensibly with scientific issues. Some even join media sceptics in suggesting that contemporary science is largely a conspiracy hijacked by grant-hungry boffins.

Tell that to Elizabeth Blackburn, who comes from Snug in Tasmania! She provides a stirring example to young Australians of the ability to pose puzzling questions, to keep teasing them into possible answers, and ultimately to advance the frontiers of science. ■

Dr Des Griffin AM, former Director of the Australian Museum (1976-1998) and Founding President of Museums Australia (1993-1996), is Gerard Krefft Memorial Fellow, Australian Museum. He maintains a topical blog on museums and a variety of culture-related issues at www.desgriffin.com.

Science education: endangered futures



Henry Hudson

Australia's future development as a nation is unimaginable without the vital contribution of our oncoming scientists. Yet there is a lamentable lack of scientists, engineers, mathematicians and applied scientists being nurtured to shape our future. A Department of Education Report in 2006 indicated that by 2013, Australia will have a shortfall of 19,000 scientists and 51,000 engineers.

Underpinning this trend, we are already critically short of well-trained, passionate *teachers* of science and mathematics, without whom long-term curiosity may lie fatally unaroused in the critical phases of youth development. Other indications are similarly disturbing. For example, Dr Robin Batterham, when Chief Scientist of Australia between 1999 and 2005, stated that unless current trends are reversed, there might be no undergraduate science students at any university in Australia in twenty-five years time.

In February 1998, the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies held a forum in Canberra to discuss the issue, 'University Science: Crisis or Crossroads?' There were already serious causes for alarm.

The results of more recent research projects clearly indicate a decline in science and mathematics in

tertiary student enrolments. In October 2003, for example, the Australian Council of Deans of Science produced a 'Study of Trends in University Science from 1989 to 2002'. Results showed that interest in mathematics and physics generally had declined since 1993, and in earth sciences and chemistry since 1997. The decline in the popularity of the 'hard sciences' at university level correlates strongly with similar evolving trends in our secondary education system.

In 2005, the Royal Australian Chemical Institute reported on 'The Future of Chemistry Study: Supply and Demand of Chemists', from which thirteen recommendations were made to counter current trends in schools, universities and industry. The following year, in March 2006, the Education and Training Committee of the Parliament of Victoria reported on an 'Inquiry into the Promotion of Mathematics and Science Education'. This investigation resulted in twenty-three recommendations to address a perceived decline in these critical study areas.

The negative educational trends in the sciences, mathematics and engineering in Australia have aroused other organisations and individuals to take up the remedial challenge. One of the earliest organisations to address the problem was the Australian Scientific Industry Association, which in January 1990, in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Doncaster, organised a three-day program at Monash University to excite Year 9 students about science generally and hopefully, stimulate some towards a scientific career. This program was the first instalment of what continues today under the aegis of The Science Schools Foundation, which developed 'The Siemens Science Experience' – now simply titled The Science Experience (since Siemens, in Australia and New Zealand, withdrew annual funding). The Foundation today relies heavily on Australian Rotary Clubs for financial support and assistance in organising its activities. Thirty-seven universities participate, reaching approximately 3,000 Year-9 students annually throughout Australia.

Another initiative of Rotary International in Australia is the National Youth Science Forum (NYSF), offered on both sides of the country: in Canberra at the Australian National University and in Perth at Curtin University and University of Western Australia. This twelve-day program caters for about 450 Year 11 students who have indicated a commitment to the sciences, engineering or applied sciences. Entrance is very competitive, requiring assessment and interviews, which are auspiced and facilitated by Rotary.

A further university initiative involves the University of Newcastle, whose Faculty of Engineering developed the 'Science and Engineering Challenge' program in 2000. This development has been highly successful, with about 20,000 students participating annually throughout Australia.

In 1996, Engineers Australia began 'Engquest' in Geelong, with the aim of stimulating student interest in engineering, science and technology. A decade on (in 2005), this venture was operating in all states,



with the continuing involvement throughout of the Scienceworks Museum in Melbourne. Many universities, other tertiary institutions and Rotary clubs in Australia are involved in these very interesting – both practical and experimental – science programs.

Some individuals have also made outstanding contributions. Among many who have taken up the cause of raising awareness,¹ a very significant contribution has been made by the Governor of Victoria, Prof. David de Kretser AC, who hosted a 'Victorian Mathematics and Science Roundtable' at Government House, Melbourne, on 30 May 2007. The associated workshops for this event were described as an 'Inquiry into the Promotion of Mathematics and Science Education'. Three questions were addressed at the workshops: (1) 'What can be done to improve the quality of teaching in Mathematics and Science?'; (2) 'What makes students passionate about Mathematics and Science?'; and (3) 'What influences mathematical and scientific literacy and interest in the community?'

Professor de Kretser continues his interest in finding solutions to the problems raised. For example, he visited Deakin University, Geelong, in May 2009 to address approximately 300 Year-9 students participating in the 'Science and Engineering Challenge'.

Further affirmative actions to address the situation have been taken by the Victorian Government. For example, the Education Department of Victoria is encouraging scientists already in the workforce to consider *teaching* as a career – and has provided incentives as encouragement. The State Government has also provided funding to create five special science-focussed schools – through targeted enhancement of five approved existing secondary schools.

The Commonwealth Government has meanwhile provided funding for the pilot mentoring programs in Australia, through which retired scientists, engineers, technologists, nurses and others – after some training – will visit secondary schools to discuss, encourage, listen and develop projects for selected Year 11–12 students showing an interest in scientific or mathematical studies, and related future employment.

There is a need for museums generally – not only science-focussed museums – to take up these

challenges by positively assisting to increase the number of future scientists, engineers and applied scientists; to secure our research and development futures; to encourage science teachers; and to provide for industry's requirements across Australia. Such action would be rewarded and reinforced by all those individuals and organisations already involved in aiming to reverse the trends referred to.

Museums can play a vital role in mitigating an impending crisis through their special interface with many publics, their daily opportunities to expand interest in scientific concepts and achievement, and to encourage young people to imagine a future in the sciences or engineering. Many aspects of museum programs, facilities, operations and presentation of collections and displays are relevant to science. Museums of all types (including art museums) can inform visitors about branches of science that vitally support their public programs and operations (including climate control, conservation, lighting, security and physical care of works when exhibited).

Along with studies in the humanities and the arts, our society cannot be well-rounded, equipped to tackle complex problems, materially advanced or innovative without energetic commitment to scientific studies (and the maths on which they depend). Museums of many types provide ideal environments – through their skilled attunement to interconnecting leisure and learning opportunities for all ages, groups and backgrounds – to expand curiosity about the world and how it functions, according to principles unlocked by scientific understanding that enhance our grasp of life around us. ■

Dr Henry Hudson chairs the Board of the Maritime Museum of Victoria, Melbourne, and is Deputy Chairman of the Science Schools Foundation, Melbourne. He devotes considerable time to advancing science and mathematics education among young learners as an important national cause.

1. Dr Robin Batterham and Dr Jim Peacock, both former Chief Scientists of Australia, have independently discussed declining trends with the Board of the Science Schools Foundation; Prof. Alan Bond, R.L. Martin Distinguished Professor of Chemistry at Monash University, spoke similarly at a Rotary International Institute meeting on 18 November 2006; and Prof. Julie Campbell, NHMRC Professorial Fellow at the University of Queensland, addressed the National Press Club on 'Science Education in Australia' on 2 July 2008.

Making science accessible

Leonie Rennie

In December 1987, I made my first visit to the Natural History Museum in London. Always intrigued by dinosaurs, I was overwhelmed to see my first-ever, complete dinosaur skeleton close by the entrance. 'Wow!', I said excitedly, 'a real, live Stegosaurus!' My then 8-year-old daughter looked at me scornfully. 'Don't be stupid, Mum', she said. 'It's not a Stegosaurus, it's a Triceratops, and it's not alive!'

Well, I knew that! I was just so excited that my tongue forgot to communicate with my brain.

Where else but in science museums and science centres can one experience this kind of excitement about things scientific? But enjoyable though the experience may be, does it last? Do science-related experiences at such places contribute to one's awareness and understanding of science? If so, how does this happen?

Science museums were originally established to display the wonders of (then modern) science and technology. Because they were based around machinery, often working models, they had an early role in training apprentices. Now their role is more strongly historical, with much to contribute about the development of science and technology and changing social contexts.

Science centres are much younger, with San Francisco's Exploratorium and the Ontario Science Centre, both established in 1969, generally recognised as the earliest of their genre. A fundamental difference is that whereas science museums are usually anchored by original artefacts requiring both preservation and conservation, science centres display purpose-built objects designed to demonstrate particular science phenomena. They are frequently interactive, requiring intervention by the user. Often there are clusters of such exhibits that contribute to a science-related theme, such as energy or space or nanotechnology.

In setting up the *Exploratorium*, Frank Oppenheimer used human sensory perception as his theme. The pedagogical effectiveness of hands-on interaction appealed to Oppenheimer, who believed that one could not learn how anything worked unless one was able to thoroughly explore and manipulate its operation.

Since that time, interactive exhibits have proliferated, not just in science centres but in science museums and many other places as well. They are of variable quality, and sometimes have been denigrated as favouring set-ups where children learn to push buttons, and not much else! Certainly I have seen children run past exhibits, pushing buttons or turning handles as they zoom by, not waiting to see what happens; but not very often. Usually I see people playing, looking engrossed or puzzled, or triumphant when they have figured something out. There is no doubt that learning about science happens at these exhibits, and at science centres and science museums in general; however it depends on people taking notice of, and thinking about, what they are doing.

According to Richard Gregory (founder of the *Exploratory* in Bristol in 1978, the first hands on science centre in Britain), learning is all about

perception, or 'meaningful seeing'. Richard Gregory (2001) believed that thinking about the 'hands-on' experience could lead to what he termed 'hand-waving' explanations of the phenomena witnessed. These intuitive hand-waving explanations, although satisfying, might be unjustified or misleading, but they are the precursor to real understanding. Gregory described this as 'handle-turning' (from mechanical calculators) – referring to the mathematically based explanations that are so important to scientists.

Gregory argued that the major aim of hands-on science centres should be to stimulate curiosity and interest, setting up the 'hand-waving', intuitive explanations that are essential for meaningful seeing, and underpin the more rigorous, science-based explanations. Gregory's notion of 'meaningful seeing' is not limited to vision but engages perception through all of the senses. The accompanying image (opposite) shows a young girl fascinated as she experiences the phenomenon of sound: 'perceiving' it at once aurally – through the paper 'horn'; by touch as she feels the horn's vibrations; and visually as she registers the tooth-pick 'needle' moving on the record.

Richard Gregory has suggested that the traditional science museum tended to offer insufficient opportunities for scientific learning, or to grasp how things actually work scientifically. With so few exhibits able to provide a hands-on experience, it is a challenge for curators to ensure that their static exhibits are displayed and interpreted in ways that promote 'meaningful seeing' – and hence *meaning-making* – by visitors.

Nevertheless, the diversity of exhibits in science museums and in science centres ensures that there is something to interest almost everybody. There is a variety of ways to engage with the exhibits, to stimulate curiosity and challenge, and to encourage social interaction amongst visitors. Research has also disclosed that science centres and museums are great places for inter-generational learning, through promoting discussion amongst visitors of all ages, who frequently teach each other.

However the picture is not always perceived so positively. Science centres have been accused of focusing on entertainment at the expense of education – even though most of them refer, at least implicitly, to education in their mission statements. They have been criticised for their tendency to portray science in terms of its achieved (or completed) knowledge, rather than revealing the imprecise and often tedious processes by which such knowledge is built. By ignoring the tentativeness of theory, and the uncertainty and risk that often accompany science-related decision-making, science centres may make science look too easy and stable.

Some of this criticism is justified. Science centres have to generate income to sustain their activities, and their advertising often focuses on fun and enjoyment to get people through the doors. Furthermore, creating exhibits that demonstrate science as a human, cultural endeavour is a tricky undertaking.

Presenting more than one side of a science story has



Girl listening to recording through paper horn. Image courtesy of the Fremantle Light and Sound Discovery Centre, Western Australia.

the potential to confuse visitors. On the other hand, exhibits that are very easy to understand often make science look too fixed, robbing scientific endeavour of its tentative exploration of multiple possibilities. These questions involve judgements as to balance.

Over the last decade, innovative science-based exhibitions have been developed to try to encompass such balance, aiming to portray science-related issues in the social context of our everyday lives. One such ongoing exhibition is *A Question of Truth*, developed by the Ontario Science Centre in Canada. This presentation is designed to challenge widely-held beliefs about differences between people. Such issues-based exhibitions, although sometimes confronting, have been shown to evoke emotion and stimulate dialogue and debate on the issues raised, thus increasing awareness of science and understanding of the nature of scientific knowledge.

In Australia and most western countries, there are currently shortages of skilled science and technology workers, and an accompanying tendency for mistrust in science. Large-scale international survey results indicate that students have a declining interest in science at school.

These issues highlight the important educational role that science centres and science museums can play for students and adults alike. My colleagues and I have argued for much closer links between schools and community resources – such as science museums

and science centres – to exploit the contribution they can make to science education (Stocklmayer, Rennie & Gilbert, in press).

Fortunately, the science-related experiences available at these places are not limited to school children. Pre-schoolers and post-schoolers (like me), as well as the 8-year-olds who know more about dinosaurs than their mothers, can have fun as they learn by engaging with science. ■

Leonie Rennie is Research Professor at Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Western Australia, and a Board Member of Scitech Discovery Centre. She is passionate about science and science education and is especially interested in working with ways to promote engagement with science in schools and in the wider community.

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‘Menagerie’ in context



prevented an earlier project's potential to achieve national impact. Through self-critique and raising the bar on what is possible, Object has extended its efforts and achieved two perfectly formed Indigenous exhibitions. They have been conceived from the start as achieving both a quality publication (extending research values) and an expansive audience outreach gained through a national tour.

Brian Parkes, Co-curator of the Menagerie project, provided some insights below for MA Magazine [Ed.]

Museums Australia: What have been some key outcomes of the *Menagerie* project, in particular through linking the resources and different perspectives of both Object and the Australian Museum in this collaborative undertaking?

Brian Parkes (Object): *Menagerie* has been valuable in a variety of ways. For Object, it has fulfilled the organisation's commitment to promoting the work of Indigenous artists – particularly modes of work that are less well promoted through other means or institutions – and doing so in innovative ways and contexts. The clear and engaging nature of the ideas underpinning this show enabled the development of many important partnerships, notably the collaboration with the Australian Museum, to support the early development of the project and to pursue some ambitious funding targets that were necessary to realise it to its highest potential.

For the artists making sculptural works, and the Art Centres and galleries that represent them, the exhibition has provided a significant endorsement of the cultural and commercial value of sculptural practice within the broader contemporary Aboriginal arts sector.

For the Australian Museum, the project offered an opportunity to develop and present an exhibition in a new way, and to reaffirm the museum's dedication to engaging with the contemporary culture of Australia's

object-based and three-dimensional works. They have incorporated work by men and women from the full range of Indigenous contexts and practices today, encompassing both remote communities and urban-based artists and collectives.

The back story to the achievement attained in these two projects reverts to an outstanding earlier exhibition that failed to travel. A beautiful exhibition curated some years ago for Object by Diane Moon, *Inland / Island*, was tragically unable to tap suitable resources at the time: either to publish it in a quality catalogue or secure the national touring potential it deserved. Object's senior directorial team, Steven Pozel and Brian Parkes, had felt confronted by the lost opportunity of this exquisite and powerful earlier show, which remained confined to the audiences who saw it in the headquarters gallery in Sydney.

Menagerie therefore deserves to be understood along with *Art on a String* as benchmarking exhibitions that have directly addressed and resolved some institutional scoping and resource constraints that

Interview with Brian Parkes

Object (the Australian Centre for Craft and Design, Sydney) has accomplished two significant, commissioned exhibitions in the last decade that profile the vitality of object-making and sculpture evolving in Indigenous communities today: *Art on a String* (2001) curated by Louise Hamby and Diana Young,^[1] and *Menagerie* (2009) curated by Nicole Foreshaw and Brian Parkes.^[2]

The exhibitions have significantly extended beyond and augmented the already high-profile attention to Indigenous painting secured through a great variety of exhibitions in our museums and art galleries since the 1980s. *Art on a String* and *Menagerie* have richly unfolded the complex design values and innovative extension of materials embodied in Indigenous

1. Louise Hamby & Diana Young, *Art on a string: Aboriginal threaded objects from the Central Desert and Arnhem Land* (Sydney, Surry Hills: Object/Australian Centre for Craft and Design, & Canberra: Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, ANU, 2001).

2. Nicole Foreshaw & Brian Parkes (Eds.), *Menagerie: Contemporary Indigenous Sculpture* (Sydney, Surry Hills: Object/Australian Centre for Craft and Design, 2009).

Indigenous peoples. Building on its existing contemporary collections through acquisitions from the planned exhibition was also seen as an important opportunity for the museum's own continued evolution of its collection strengths in Indigenous areas.

The final touring itinerary for the exhibition (now confirmed) has also secured the objectives of national impact and outreach. That the exhibition will be seen in eight prominent venues, by possibly more than 300,000 people around Australia during its tour of two and a half years, will be enormously valuable in expanding public awareness and understanding of this important aspect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art.

Museums Australia: The possible acquisition of the exhibition *in toto* by the Australian Museum is a significant prospect. Museums have not tended to acquire total exhibitions of Indigenous art at the time of their realisation since the 1980s, when the Power Gallery, later MCA Sydney, commissioned *Objects and Representations from Ramingining*, curated by Djon Mundine in 1984 from a home-base in the Ramingining community – which was later acquired in full over three years.

Brian Parkes (Object): The collection of works is the result of substantial research by the curators and is very well documented. The body of work represents a significant survey of sculptural practices as well as artistic, cultural and political concerns at this moment.

OPPOSITE:
Lena Yarinkura, *Camp Dogs*, group of five, 2008. Pandanus fibre, wood, paperbark, ochre and feathers. Dimensions variable, longest 104cm. Courtesy Maningrida Arts and Culture. © Lena Yarinkura, Licensed by VISCOPIY.

ABOVE:
Craig Koomeeta, *Neetan (Camp Dog)*, 2008. Wood (Milkwood) and ochre. 40 x 17 x 72cm. Courtesy Wik and Kugu Art and Craft.

Indigenous Australian sculpture enriching audiences and collections

OPPOSITE:
Danie Mellor,
Red, White and Blue, 2008.
Dimensions variable, tallest
105cm, mixed media. Courtesy
Caruana and Reid Fine Art.
PHOTO: Australian Museum

BELOW:
Patrick Kunoth Pwerle,
Thipe (Yellow Bird), 2008
wood (bean tree) and acrylic
paint, 92 x 18 x 20cm. Courtesy
Mossenson Galleries.



3. Brian Parkes (Ed.), *Woven forms: contemporary basket making in Australia* (Sydney, Surry Hills: Object/ Australian Centre for Craft and Design, 2005).

As the Australian Museum began to consider possible works for acquisition, the greater notion of preserving the collection in its entirety became a compelling objective, and was championed by the Museum's new Manager of Cultural Collections and Community Engagement, Amanda Reynolds. A fundraising campaign has now been launched to raise \$300,000 to accomplish the acquisition, and the Museum is confident of securing this sum.

Thirty-three artists, representing every state and territory, have produced 52 extraordinary works: a snapshot of Indigenous perspectives on animals at a single point in time, and a survey that can never be replicated. This is an opportunity to enrich any permanent collection handsomely in one comprehensive acquisition.

Every tree, every rock, every animal, every river in Australia has a story about how it was created, and sculpture offers one of the most exciting new languages for these stories to be told. The collection represents both ancient dreaming stories and new stories, with the artists using a mixture of traditional and contemporary materials and techniques in their works. These stories about the human connection to the land are the stories the world needs to hear now because they contain such important messages about sustainability and our unique Australian identity. (Allison Page, a Tharawal woman from La Perouse and Trustee of the Australian Museum)

Museums Australia: How does *Menagerie* link back to *Art on a String*, and how have you encompassed the resource-development to support a more ambitious vision of Indigenous art's coverage through Object?

Brian Parkes (Object): With the *Art on a String* exhibition curated by Louise Hamby and Diana Young in 2001, we began a series of projects with very specific aims – especially to showcase less well-known forms of making by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists in the broadest and most public way available to us.

The Visions of Australia program seemed the most appropriate avenue to build better support for future projects. *Art on a String* was successful in receiving both Development and Touring funding through separate grant rounds of the Visions program; a major, commercially distributed publication was achieved to support higher production goals, and the show toured to ten venues nationally. The publication, tour and the many related public programs, while stretching our resources, actually ensured a greater and more appropriate impact ultimately.

The second exhibition in the series was *Woven Forms: Contemporary basket making in Australia*^[5] – which brought the work of Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists together. Once again, with Visions and other sources of support, a major catalogue, an extensive tour and wide-reaching public programs were all successfully developed.

However one further objective remained elusive. A particular disappointment for Object in this series had been the ultimate failure to facilitate acquisition of

the entire collection of works in *Art on a String* (with its accompanying detailed documentation), since the whole contents brought a significant body of work together that was larger than the sum of the parts. Lengthy negotiations with two major institutions unfortunately were unsuccessful.

With the Australian Museum's likely acquisition of the *Menagerie* collection, a further objective of the series will have been achieved that takes the whole outcome much further, leaving a significant and enduring legacy after an exhibition has accomplished its initial purposes and life-cycle.

In retrospect, this series of exhibitions has influenced and contributed to a quickening momentum in the presentation and promotion of lower-profile forms of art making and cultural production in Australia, ensuring that they have the same dedicated exposure as more familiar and higher-profiled forms.

Object has sought to ensure that Indigenous creativity, in all its contemporary diversity, is profiled within the broader landscape of contemporary design, craft and object-making for which our national organisation has been known and well regarded for a long time. We have also successfully bridged the huge spectrum of contexts in which Indigenous design and creativity are evolving today, from so-called traditional communities and ritually connected practices to all forms of urban design.

Animals, as subject matter, can sustain many levels of resonance. They can carry embedded narratives; a sculptural practice; the recording and preservation of traditions and community assets; and the celebration and re-interpretation of knowledge, from one generation to another. The sculptures within Menagerie raise many questions: What are animals? How do we order them? What sorts of relationships do animals have to humans? What can animals, and their relationships to humans, tell us about ourselves? Combined, the answers to these questions are written and moulded into these sculptures, and shared through our interaction with the works and the conceptual ideas underpinning them, which now physically stand as theoretical structures of an animal world.

(Nicole Foreshew, Co-curator, *Menagerie*.) □

Brian Parkes is Associate Director, Object (Australian Centre for Craft and Design), Sydney, NSW. The Director of Object, under whose leadership an evolving commitment to contemporary Indigenous art and design has been steered for a decade, is Steven Pozel – who in 1997 moved from his position as Director of The Power Plant in Toronto (Canada's leading contemporary art space) to work in Australia and join the then Executive team of the MCA Sydney. Steven Pozel has been Director of Object since November 1999.

The Editor of *Museums Australia Magazine* is Bernice Murphy.



New Kelly gang insights



Telegram sent from Benalla Post Office to Chief Commissioner, Victorian Police, 28 October 1878.

Elizabeth Marsden

The Kelly Outbreak of 1878–1880 represents one of the most controversial chapters in Australian history. Collections of objects and documents related to this group of criminals are highly prized and dispersed across many institutions within Victoria, nationally, and amongst private collectors.

Just when we thought we knew almost everything there is to know about events surrounding the gang, the Victoria Police Museum in Melbourne has recently uncovered a collection of 366 letters, memoranda, telegrams and police reports detailing police operations, resources and difficulties faced by law enforcement authorities during this period.

The Police Museum – as part of the Museums Australia (Victoria) Museums Accreditation Program – has undergone an intensive registration program over the past three years. One consequence of this process is that many items previously hidden from view in the museum’s archival vaults are slowly coming to light, as the collection is systematically examined. The surfacing of the rich cache of Kelly material is just one example.

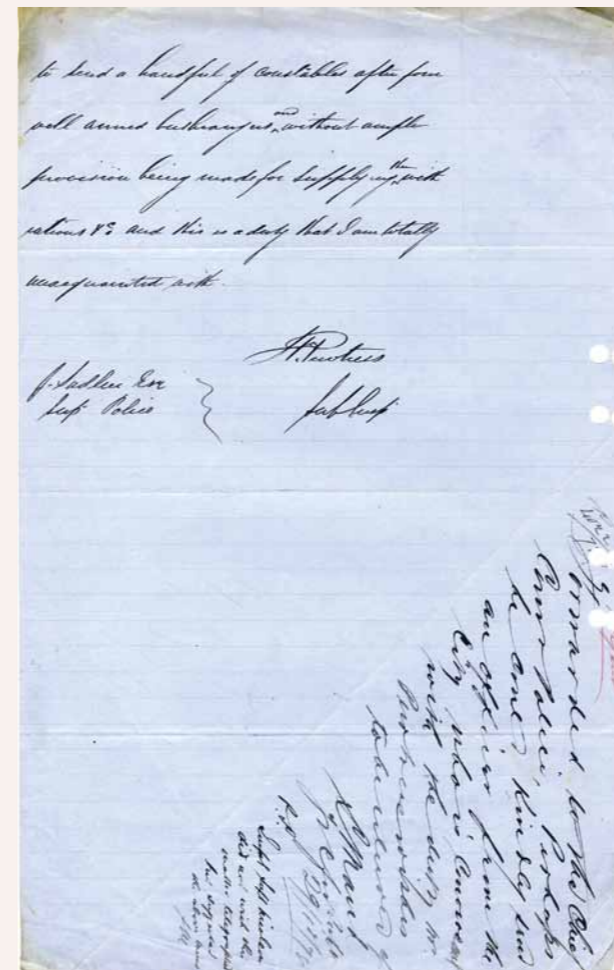
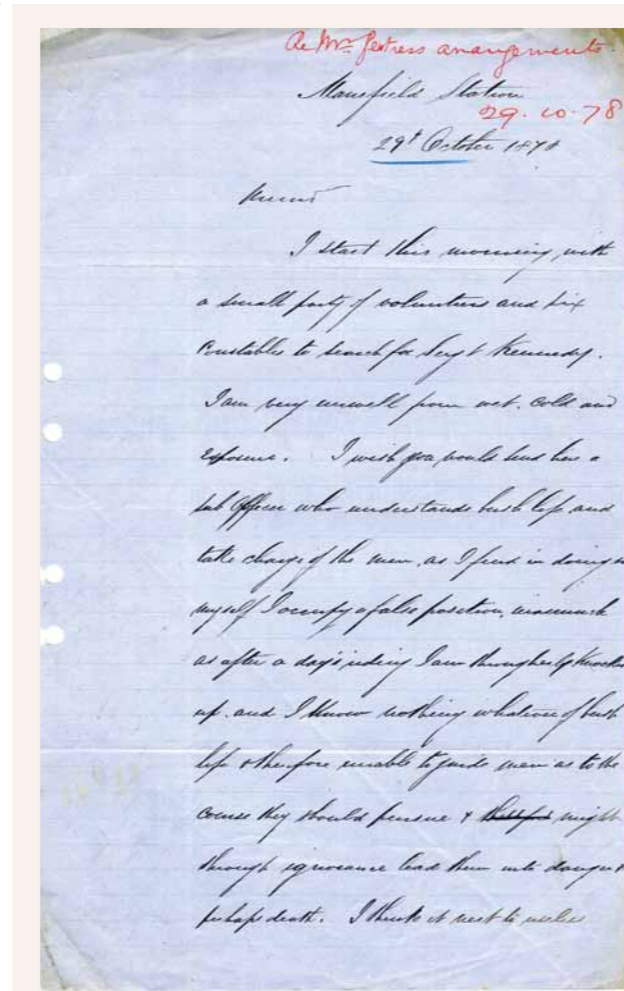
The Kelly Archive represents an invaluable resource, revealing police conditions and actions undertaken during the police hunt for the Kelly gang. It also provides crucial background on police involvement in relation to the Constable Fitzpatrick incident and Stringybark Creek murders.

The archive provides examples of police methods, communication and resources available during the most significant criminal investigation undertaken by Victoria Police in the late nineteenth century. Offering invaluable insights into the nature of early forensics, police procedures, information management and technologies used at the time, it significantly demonstrates the disadvantages faced by the untrained and poorly resourced mounted constables whilst hunting for the accused killers.

Interestingly, many of the documents refer to a desperate need for ammunition, guns, horses, and most importantly, men with bush skills – since more than 80 per cent of police at the time were recruited immigrants from industrialised Ireland. Shortage of police ammunition meant that

shooting-practice was out of the question. In fact many police of the period had never even fired a weapon. This is in direct contrast to the Kellys, who were making their own bullets and well known for their skills in shooting and horsemanship. Documents found in the archival collection refer to bullet moulds being found during searches made on the Kelly homestead following the Fitzpatrick incident.

This collection represents a unique asset to the Victoria Police Museum



This archive offers intimate insight into the living conditions of some people encompassed by the newly disclosed records, notably the Kelly family and the families of the murdered police officers. In many ways it also demonstrates the intricacies of the sympathiser network in the Mansfield area, as well as concern, fear and outrage many in the community felt as events unfolded.

A large number of the letters are written by concerned members of the public to Victoria Police, including Crimean war veterans and retirees, offering to volunteer in the search. Others offer suggestions, albeit sometimes quite farcical, of ways to catch the killers. One such example includes a letter by a Mr. Smith of Creswick, who suggested that bringing a circus to town would be a perfect ruse to tempt the gang from their hideouts:

[A] circus in one of the towns bordering their haunts would bring them out, we all know the love of feats of horsemanship bred in those wretches ... they could never resist this... (VPM6213.258)

From the start of this project digitisation was deemed a priority, because of the obvious significance of the collection and its research potential. Digitisation will not only reduce unnecessary handling but also increase ease of accessibility. It is also the intention of the museum eventually to have this archive made available via the museum’s web-site.

The archive’s contents provide a more balanced view of many of the controversial issues and themes in the history of Victoria Police, including the Fitzpatrick incident, police interactions with the Kelly clan, and the Stringybark Creek police murders. It illustrates the conditions and resources available to police in the late-nineteenth century, and highlights many of the disadvantages police experienced in regional and remote areas of rural Victoria during the Kelly outbreak.

This collection represents a unique asset to the Victoria Police Museum and the Australian community. It complements other Kelly gang-related objects and documents held by the Museum,

TRANSCRIPT

Re Mr Pewtress arrangements
Mansfield Station
29th October 1878

I start this morning with a small party of volunteers and six Constables to search for Srgt Kennedy. I am very unwell from wet, cold and exposure. I wish you would send here a sub officer who understands bush life, and take charge of the men, as I fear in doing so myself I occupy a false position, inasmuch as after days riding I am thoroughly knocked up and I know nothing whatsoever of bush life therefore unable to guide men as to the course they should pursue and might through ignorance lead them into danger and perhaps death. I think it next to useless to send a handful of constables after four well armed bush-rangers and without ample provision being made for supplying them with rations and this is a duty that I am totally unacquainted with.

J Sadlier Sup Police
H Pewtress Sub Insp

Forwarded to the chief commissioner police. Perhaps he could kindly lend an officer from the city who is conversant with the duty Mr Pewtress wishes to be relieved of.

C Maud clerk for Sadlier
29/10/78

P.S. Inspect Supt Nicolsen did not wish this matter telegraphed but suggested the above amend



Sub Inspector Henry Pewtress

including the largest collection of original Kelly gang armour in the country. Most important of all, it enhances our ability to interpret the Kelly gang myth from new perspectives, whilst adding new riches to the Museum’s own research database. ■

Elizabeth Marsden is Collections Manager, Victoria Police Museum & Historical Unit, within Victoria Police, Melbourne. www.police.vic.gov.au.

The Level of Significance 2.0

James Warden

A significant thing about *Significance* is the absence of international impact that it merits. The nearest comparable document is the Australian-generated *Burra Charter*, which seems to have gained a place in the wider world of ICOMOS.^[1]

Significance^[2] and its new edition, *Significance 2.0*,^[3] should be adopted by ICOM as a model for understanding the value and importance of objects and collections – to evaluate significance. Its authors, Roslyn Russell and Kylie Winkworth, have produced a humdinger. Sue Nattrass, Veronica Bullock and Ian Cook were all heavily involved in the project. Margaret Birtley also. They are to be congratulated. It will

be especially useful for smallish museums, galleries, libraries and archives, and ought to be used by the big ones too. It will also be an invaluable resource for teaching new generations of museum professionals.

The original edition of *Significance* was produced in 2001 by the Heritage Collections Council. It has been rewritten in a new version by its successor body, the Collections Council of Australia. Based in Adelaide, under a ministerial council, and representing Museums, Galleries, Libraries and Archives, the CCA was most unfortunately defunded in October 2009. The CCA had produced some really useful work of the highest quality and of great relevance to the sector. It had a small and excellent staff. The CCA did not wish to be in Canberra but should have been – it might have survived better. . . Poetically and sadly, *Significance 2.0* seems to be its last expression. It is a really splendid contribution, beautifully designed, thoughtfully arranged, well written and useful. The words are good and the pictures are nice too.

The value of *Significance 2.0* lies in the following: It was produced by an authoritative organisation and expert authors; it represents the best current thinking on the topic; it is a complete and representative statement with high interpretive value; and most of all, it is globally rare.

ICOM^[4] has plenty of publications and a stream of international and national, regional and local events on all manner of museum-related practices. However very little of ICOM's published work is concerned with assessing, evaluating, understanding or explaining the significance of material culture. The two standard museum training manuals developed through ICOM (and published by UNESCO) are *Running a Museum: A Practical Handbook* (2004) and *Running a Museum: A Trainer's Manual* (2006). Neither asks the question as to why any given object should be acquired, accessioned, conserved, loaned, exhibited, deaccessioned or the subject of any number of other tasks associated with the contents of museum collections. In other words, ICOM offers no guidelines or criteria for understanding significance. In the ICOM literature, any hypothetical object is seemingly just assumed to merit possible collecting. So there is a crucial gap in the field that no other text has yet filled.

Another, perhaps less obvious, context for *Significance 2.0*'s international contribution is provided through the continuing implementation of the 1970 UNESCO *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*, which Australia ratified in 1990 under the Hawke Government. UNESCO Conventions of course turn on terminology and entrench certain keywords. Yet the 1970 Convention rather casually refers to 'importance', and in some places 'significance', but lacks the rigour or consistency that *Significance 2.0* might provide.

The 1970 UNESCO Convention (as it is generally known), its ancillary documents and resultant active strategies for controls on illicit trafficking, theft, looting, restitution, fraud and so forth, is the background

against which *Significance 2.0* could provide a framework or calibration for the identification of those objects that the Convention endeavours to cover. *Significance 2.0* offers clear statements of the assessment process, assessment criteria and statements of significance that could be applied in any jurisdiction. The process can be used for single items, part or whole collections, and even for cross-collection projects. Ten stages of action are detailed that form a statement of significance. Nine principles for good practice are offered. And a glossary of terms is provided. This matrix could be universally applied to a recognised international standards instrument and advance its acceptance.

The Australian legislation to give force to the 1970 UNESCO Convention, and to regulate Australian domestic practices on movable cultural heritage, is the

Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act (PMCH Act) of 1986. However the Act is strangely spare in defining or explaining either the importance or significance of an object that may be controlled by its legislative protection. Such definition is available only in the Regulations to the Act. It is in the Regulations that the nearest to an official framing of the concept of *significance* is provided.

Embedded in the Regulations are therefore criteria that are similar to those expressed in *Significance* and *Significance 2.0*. Oddly, neither edition of *Significance* has strenuously or adequately made this point. This is especially curious since one of the authors is also a member of the Commonwealth committee on movable cultural heritage.

Significance 2.0 thus informs the law of the land. It is not just an excellent document for the building of social capital or validation of nostalgic affection for heritage collections.

The 1986 PMCH Act is currently under review, and a long-awaited report is due to go to the federal Minister in the new year (originally due in May 2009, but an unexpected flood of submissions has slowed the process).

There remains one overarching point to make. As we all keep saying: At last we have a Minister of State for Environment, Heritage and the Arts in charge of both the collecting institutions and heritage places. This remains a good framework. The Minister has multiple acts to administer and a veritable city of silos to oversee.

However the concept of 'significance' does not currently align with, nor synthesise, the main pieces of Commonwealth legislation or their regulative implementation. It ought, but cannot do so. Moreover the language used within different Acts is inconsistent, where consistency would have ensured greater force and regularity in legislative provisions by the Australian Government to protect Australia's heritage.

For example, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (the EPBC Act) encompasses 'values' (S 324D). The criteria for securing these values are stated in the accompanying Regulations [10.01A(2)]. Similarly, the Burra Charter (developed through Australia ICOMOS some years ago, and now a world-standard instrument) also utilises the language of 'values'. Meanwhile, for the *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act* of 1986 and its Regulations, the key word is 'significance'.

These differences – at such a critical level of value-setting around which all legislative efforts revolve – is extremely regrettable. By contrast, a *chain of significance*, interconnecting objects to places (and interweaving the values of intangible heritage) would have had both grace and elegance, both symmetry and coherence. For example, in the current state of legis-

Significance 2.0 5


Distributed collections and significance

Items and collections held in archives and art galleries, libraries and museums across Australia help to tell our national stories. We have chosen to look at two of these stories—of Australia's great folk hero, Ned Kelly, and our most famous extinct animal, the thylacine. Preserved in collecting organisations and at heritage sites, the essential records and artistic expressions of Ned Kelly and the thylacine will continue to demonstrate their significance into the future.

Ned Kelly's story across collections

Perhaps no other story in Australian history has exerted such a strong influence on our visual and literary culture as that of the outlaw or 'bushranger' Ned Kelly, and his gang. It has inspired artists and musicians, historians and novelists, film and documentary makers and cultural tourists, and evoked a range of opinions about the outlaws. Were Ned Kelly and his gang vicious murderers, or champions of the poor and oppressed? Was Ned, their leader, a hero or a villain?


The diversity of collections relating to Ned Kelly underlines the need for a common language to describe the meaning and values of objects, documents, works of art and heritage places. The following 'statement of significance' introduces a presentation of Kelly memorabilia overleaf.



Statement of significance

A website devoted to Ned Kelly, *Ironoutlaw*, claims that 'From stamps to movies to the opening of the 2000 Sydney Olympics, Ned Kelly has become one with the Australian psyche'.¹⁹ Material held in archives and art galleries, libraries and museums across Australia has allowed Kelly's story to be researched, viewed, and interpreted for over a century. Preserved at the time when the exploits of Ned Kelly and his gang were capturing the attention of Australian colonists of the 1870s and 1880s, items and collections relating to Ned Kelly have been mined ever since to tell his story and to explain its grip on the nation's consciousness. These items and collections are thus of great historical significance. Australian artist Sidney Nolan in his Ned Kelly series of paintings created an icon—a stylised black helmet—that acts as a visual shorthand for Kelly's story, and evokes instant recognition in Australians, a distinction it shares with only a handful of other works of art created in this country. Nolan's Ned Kelly series is thus of great artistic significance for its evocation of the stark figure of Kelly framed in the vibrant colours of the Australian landscape, and for the paths of his story captured in paint. Kelly's story is still being investigated at archaeological sites such as that of the siege of Glenrowan, where excavated material has research potential to shed more light on those fateful events. And the enduring story of Ned Kelly, described as 'our greatest folk hero' and 'one of the unsuspecting fathers of Australian nationalism' by the *Ironoutlaw* website, has immense social significance as successive generations of Australians identify with aspects of his story.

Armour worn by Ned Kelly and members of his gang is held in collections around Australia. This helmet is from the State Library of Victoria's collection, and was shown in the National Library's travelling exhibition, *National Treasures from Australia's great libraries* (2005–07). Reproduced courtesy of the Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria.



Photograph of Edward (Ned) Kelly aged 25, shortly before his execution in November 1880. From the Kelly papers collection (PICK) V916 S15/P0 Central Register of Male Prisoners, Unit 17, No.10026

Photo: Charles Hettleston
Reproduced with the permission of the Hanger of Public Records, Public Record Office Victoria, Australia



Front cover of *Significance 2.0*. All images used on the cover are acknowledged in the book, available at <http://significance.collectionscouncil.com.au>

1. ICOMOS is the International Council on Monuments and Sites, formed in 1965, of which the Australian National Committee, Australia ICOMOS, was formed in 1976.
2. Heritage Collections Council: *Significance: A guide to assessing the significance of cultural heritage objects and collections*, Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Commonwealth of Australia, 2001
3. Roslyn Russell & Kylie Winkworth, *Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections* (Adelaide, South Australia: Collections Council of Australia, 2009). www.collectionscouncil.com.au
4. ICOMOS is the International Council on Monuments and Sites, formed in 1965, of which the Australian National Committee, Australia ICOMOS, was formed in 1976.



lative protection, Ned Kelly's things are 'significant' while Ned Kelly's places are deemed to have 'values'. Unifying these fields – to achieve greater coherence and consistency of regulative implementation – appears now too difficult to achieve, as objects and places seem more 'en-siloed' by different international terminologies.

A final note: A level of *cultural significance* should never be confused with a level of *statistical significance*. Indeed this is why 'level' is not used as a cultural heritage term and 'degree' is favoured instead. In statistics, the level is a number that expresses the probability that the result of a given experiment or study could have occurred purely by chance. This number can be a margin of error ("The results of the public opinion poll, that museum visitor research advocates are not worth feeding, are accurate to five percent"); or it can indicate a confidence level ("If this experiment were repeated, there is a probability of ninety-five percent that our conclusion on museum visitor research advocates would be substantiated").

Dr James Warden is Director of the Donald Horne Institute for Cultural Heritage, University of Canberra.

International Museum Day 2009: Museums and Tourism (Perth round-table)

‘Museums and Tourism’: a marriage made in heaven?

RIGHT:
Dr Stefano Carboni
(Director, Art Gallery
of Western Australia)

Paige Luff

Richard Offen, Executive Officer for Heritage Perth, led a panel of speakers for an MA-WA event staged on International Museums Day, 18 May 2009, in Perth. The theme of ICOM's IMD in 2009 was 'Museums and Tourism'. Below are extracts of a report on the Perth event, framed through the quizzical exploration of a marriage between partners of very different backgrounds.

Vicki Northey (President of Museums Australia-WA) had backgrounded this event by referring to the statement of Alissandra Cummins, President of the Paris-based International Council of Museums (ICOM), in launching the 2009 IMD theme: 'Museums and Tourism' encourages museum professionals and volunteers to work together with visitors and tourists, creating interactions with local communities in order to experience heritage both inside and outside of the museum walls.^[1]

This statement framed much of the discussion by the panel in Perth on 18 May 2009.

Richard Offen (Executive Officer for Heritage Perth) opened with the traditional view of museums as embodied in a building or institution dedicated to the acquisition, conservation, study, and exhibition of objects. He asked the question: Does tourism detract from museums' core business and jeopardise their representation of history? With statistics suggesting that 60% of museum visitors are tourists, and that of the ten top tourist attractions in the UK, eight are museums, we have to allow a substantial shift from simply collecting, documenting, and exhibiting towards providing visitor-oriented activities.

Dr Diana Jones (Acting Director of the Western Australian Museum) stated with pride that the WAM is the second most-visited museum of twenty-one surveyed in Australia, attracting 892,000 visitors



‘Dr Carboni proposed that if we put together the liveliness of a diverse crowd thronging in St Mark’s Square in Venice; a mini-version of a program such as the one offered at the British Museum; the ‘museum without walls’ concept; an indoor/outdoor experience similar to those created in Egyptian buildings (an analogy used for the similarity in climate); and a more versatile version of the rooftop experience offered at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York: with all these elements intertwined we could be well on the way to creating a more vibrant Art Gallery and Cultural Centre in Perth.’

annually. Visitor expectations are high. They expect to learn, to have new experiences, and to be entertained. They also seek authenticity in their experiences. We need to be working closely with this tourist potential, Dr Jones urged, and expanding the concept of the ‘museum without walls’.

Dr Stefano Carboni (Director, Art Gallery of Western Australia) outlined some of the characteristics of major museums in the world and how they are successful. He stated that whilst the Art Gallery of Western Australia could not compete with the ‘big guys’, there is nevertheless much to be learned from them.

Veronica Jeffery (Director Portfolio, East Perth Redevelopment Authority) spoke about the Cultural Centre and the EPRA relationship as one where the Redevelopment Authority has planning responsibility, but acts as a facilitator to bring people together to gain the best of a place. She proposed the need to work with the notion of the ‘power of ten’: of identifying ten things that visitors can do at a place, to activate the space for people and encourage people to stay there – rather than the Cultural Centre being a zone for people in transit.

Some goals for the Perth redevelopment project are better security and safety; coordinated programs to enliven the area, including exhibitions, markets, and events; and better landscaping and seating – with lack of seating being identified as a major present problem, but one that can easily be remedied. She argued that there have been too many unproductive reports over the years, and we need to focus on some simple, achievable goals.

Kate Lamont (Tourism WA and Committee for Perth Board Member) focused more broadly on tourism. She advocated replacing a ‘bread and butter’ attitude with a ‘champagne and caviar’ approach – since

this aroused expectations of the exotic, delicious, celebratory, and pleasurable. She was pleased to note that all speakers endorsed a ‘Yes’ case for tourism and museums working together.

Kate Lamont asserted that although the tourism sector is difficult to define, it is a sector that cannot be ignored. In Western Australia it creates 80,000 jobs, \$7 billion in income generation, and sits with

RIGHT:
Alec Coles, new Director,
Western Australian Museum

resources and agriculture as the engine room of the State. She proposed that for a museum to be significant it must be dynamic, relevant, entertaining and commercially minded. It must have temporary and travelling exhibitions, refresh its permanent exhibitions regularly, and be ever-changing and interesting. It must also be contemporary and look towards the future, as well as being an advocate for history and heritage.

With regard to commercial orientation: a museum must have cafés, retail outlets, function and conference venues, and provision for special events. It is also necessary to be encouraging small businesses within the Cultural Centre. Kate Lamont noted that 40% of visitors are tourists – which, aligning with Richard Offen's statement about the WA Museum's catchment, means that about half of its total visitor-numbers are sourced through tourism.

It is also evident that tourists spend money, so there is a need to focus attention on this kind of activity. Most important, tourists need to be provided with an abundance of reasons for return visits, and be word-of-mouth advocates for museums. Noting that Perth's Cultural Centre has, at present, nothing spectacular or unique about it, the case was put that the Centre must be turned into ‘a place to go to’. It must also be marketed effectively as delivering on the promise of being a place people actively choose to visit, with plenty of things to do.

In thinking about tourism and museums as being like a marriage made in heaven, *marriage* may not be the best metaphor, though it is obvious that the two parties inescapably ‘go together’ today, and good marriages still certainly abound. It is quite appropriate to focus upon the need to make a commitment; nevertheless the metaphor of marriage perhaps tilts towards traditional attitudes and a too-predictable trajectory for long-term relationships. It can also fatally fail to capture and include those innovative, vibrant, and culturally diverse relationships that challenge the mainstream and advance the energies of a progressive society.

A linking metaphor for museums and tourism should also not forget the potential of relationship-building mobilised by well aroused anticipation – the ‘champagne and caviar’ approach. The reality of *de facto* partnerships flourishing alongside marriage nudges museums to be continually aware of the changing social realities surrounding their traditions and expertise.

Perhaps ‘fidelity’ often encourages museums to rely on their past and curtail future potential. A slightly promiscuous imagination might not go astray in our institutions, encouraging more dialogues between museums and galleries, arousing more inventive connections, broadening the number and types of relationships of which the huge range of our institutions are capable. As Veronica Jeffery reminded all present in May: We've had endless reports over the decades looking at how to reinvigorate the Cultural Centre in Perth. This time we need to be doing



New director appointed to WA Museum from the UK

After nearly eight years as Director of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums – responsible for twelve museums, galleries and heritage sites in the north-east of the UK – Alec Coles was announced in December 2009 as the new Director of the Western Australian Museum, in Perth.

Alec has nearly 30 years of experience in the cultural and heritage sectors, including more than 20 spent in the North East of the UK. His previous positions include Chief Executive of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust.

He takes up his new post on 22 March 2010, where he will manage the WA Museum's six sites, its Collection Research Centre and a number of maritime heritage sites. In particular, he will be responsible for developing the business case for a major new State Museum in Perth.

something. We need some practical achievable goals in the short, medium, and long term that are simple and realistic; and we must be able to deliver these goals, to live up to our audiences' high expectations.

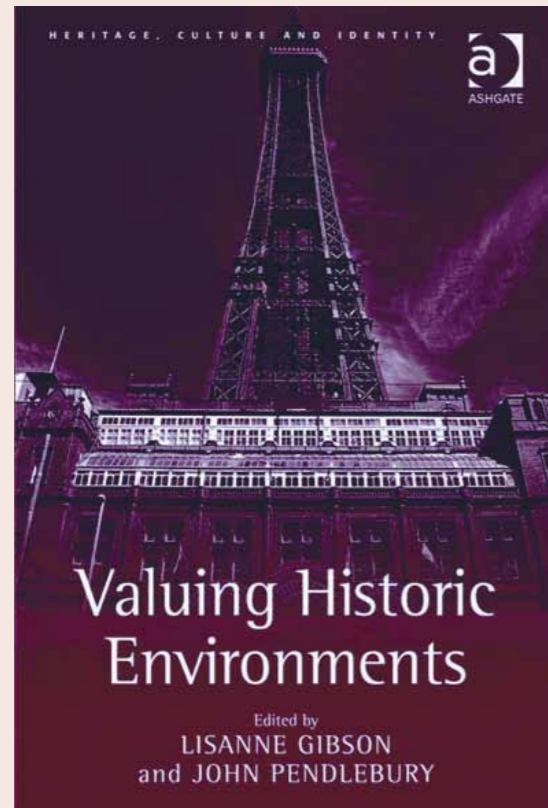
After hearing so many interesting and inventive solutions from participants at this critical engagement discussion on International Museums Day 2009, it is more than obvious that we have the answers to make the Perth Cultural Centre a viable, exciting, and engaging place. After all, Frank Sinatra captured the relationships-challenge years ago: *Ask the local gentry, and they will say it's elementary.*^[2]

Paige Luff is an artist, librarian and writer in WA, and has experience in working in GLAM (Gallery, Library, Archive, and Museum) sector institutions.

1. International Council of Museums (ICOM), Paris; 'Media release, ICOM and WFFM launch: International Museum Day 2009 on 'Museums and Tourism' (ICOM, Paris, 2009). Accessed 14 August 2009 at: <http://icom.museum/release.tourism.html>.

2. Frank Sinatra, *Love and Marriage* (1991). On *Sinatra Reprise: The Very Good Years* [CD]; California: Warner Bros. [Excerpt:] *Love and marriage, love and marriage/ Go together like a horse and carriage/ This I tell you brother/ You can't have one without the other.*

Book Review: Valuing Historic Environments



Valuing Historic Environments, edited by Lisanne Gibson & John Pendlebury (Ashgate Publishing Company, Surrey, 2009, 220 pp).

Valuing Historic Environments is the most recent in the Heritage, Culture and Identity series, edited by Brian Graham from the School of Environmental Sciences, University of Ulster, UK.

Papers from a research cluster of workshops, funded through a cross-council program 'Preserving Our Past' – supported by English Heritage and four Research Councils, with contributions from both academia and heritage practitioners in Australia and England – form the basis of this dense and discursive hardback. It is always pleasing when a group of specialists not only meets to discuss a contemporary, critical and challenging issue, but also achieves a meaningful outcome – in this case, a publication yielding comprehensible, accessible and useful research.

The publication aims to address practical issues in the management of historic environments and cultural landscapes as *heritage* – issues that arise from accepting the imperative of considering different

cultural, historical and social *values* equitably when determining what is considered 'heritage'. Embracing the complexities of this task is seen as the most significant challenge facing contemporary heritage management and policy. Historic environments from England and Australia are usefully included in this volume to illustrate the often confronting, sometimes confusing and always complex, issues that arise from the evolving construct of 'heritage' today.

Implicit in the notion of *historic environment* is the idea of *place*, and examples of traditional heritage environments – such as the country house, and the iconic Georgian house – are importantly extended to encompass those more current and potentially controversial candidates, such as tangible manifestations of the 'recent past' in a seaside village experiencing declining and changing seasonal visitation, along with graffiti in city laneways and 1970s social housing.

Historic environments from England and Australia are usefully included in this volume, to illustrate the often confronting, sometimes confusing and always complex issues that arise from the evolving construct of 'heritage' today.

There is an obvious parallel with decision-making addressing the value (or significance), and the collection and conservation of contemporary art: What is to be collected? On what basis are such decisions to be made? And how should this 'recent past' be best preserved (and it should be added, accessed)?

Valuing Historic Environments is divided into three parts:

Part One addresses Values and Heritage Stewardship. It contains a significant essay by David Lowenthal, who argues that heritage, 'which as a whole is in a perpetual state of emergency' (p.20), is engaged in a constant struggle to ensure the survival of a valued past financially, socially and historically. However it needs to shift its attention from the current generalised 'politics of memory' and resume an earlier role as reliable purveyor of public education and heritage awareness in the community.

Laurajane Smith focuses upon the social values of the country house – such as Audley End, in Essex, with its sense of comfort offering a special connection to visitors and arousing a personal projection of identity – to assert recognition that 'heritage' does not *have* value, as such; rather, it involves a *cultural process* that is about re/creating, negotiating and transmitting certain values – among them social values – that society, or sections of society, wish to preserve and 'pass on' to the future (p.33).

Peter Howard provides a reminder that 'All environments are equally historic' (p.51) – at least potentially – and that historians select some of the particular candidates for preservation according to narrow limits. This means that the term 'historic environment' should enable a necessarily broader stakeholder-access to a *shared recent past*. He accordingly charges those in the landscape field of heritage 'to devise new methods to democratize the decisions as to which heritage is [deemed] important' (p.61).

Part Two explores Cultural Landscapes. It contains an essay by Lisanne Gibson, who embraces the concept of 'cultural landscapes [as] spaces with real political, cultural and social effects on the present' (p.67), using official and community responses to monuments of significant moments in Aboriginal history in Queensland – as contrasted with attitudes towards non-Aboriginal heritage – charging the heritage sector to empower communities to improve their articulation of a more inclusive framework for heritage.

John Schofield looks at the expanded contributions possible through the inclusion of individuals' engagement with everyday heritage, and the enriched contribution this would make to a more balanced heritage management practice. John Walton and Jason Wood focus on the advantages that the remaking of 'heritage' would bring to the English seaside town of Blackpool. Tracey Avery meanwhile addresses the conundrums associated with valuing as cultural heritage (and therefore worthy of preservation) such contingency-driven cultural practices as graffiti art in an inner city Melbourne street – which by its very nature is transitory.

Part Three considers the Heritage of Housing. It includes essays by Peter Borsay – on the process and implications of elevating the Georgian House to heritage icon; and John Pendlebury, Tim Townshend and Rose Gilroy – on social (welfare) housing as heritage in Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne, where the mid-twentieth century approach to solving housing problems of the working class in estates is now newly designated as 'heritage' – and highlights the challenges this arouses, for both the heritage sector itself and those who continue to use the estates as their *homes*.

Peter Malpass raises some of the issues and tensions surrounding the fluidity and interchange between *housing* and *heritage*, including protective legislation and its practical implications, and the heritage aspects of housing: with impacts raising far more tasks for heritage management attention than the mere listing of the physical fabric of buildings in Whose Housing Heritage?

It is important that the authors in this publication remind us that heritage is *made*, not *found*; that there are many definitions of heritage; that it is usually the heritage 'professional' who decides what is valid and therefore valued; and that the ramifications of such decisions need to be carefully considered, since there are ongoing implications for practical and effective heritage management.

The strength of *Valuing Historic Environments* is in the willingness of its experienced authors to provide a current, informed audit of heritage concepts and processes, and to address their implications across a range of contemporary cultural landscapes and built environments.

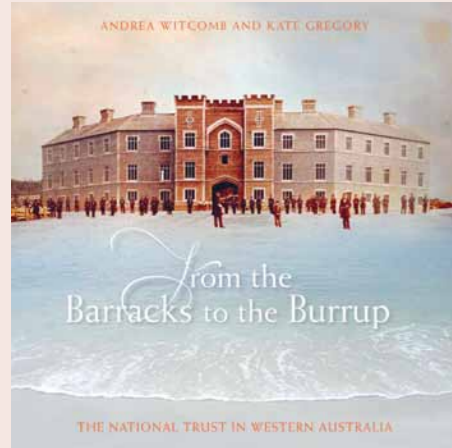
Particularly engaging is the essay on the potential impact of listing a housing estate in Newcastle Upon Tyne, England, and its dispassionate analysis of views from a variety of stakeholders who concluded that the listing – whilst valuing the estate – did not adequately articulate what residents felt was *special* about the place, which was neither architectural nor historic. Indeed the *social values* of the precinct (innately more intangible than definable aspects of 'built heritage') were unable to be adequately captured and preserved, owing to the elusive nature of change itself in communities. Whilst this chapter was a little clumsily written, the ongoing narrative of this quest for more complex ways of valuing different notions of the communal past is important, topical and worth pursuing.

This publication would have benefited from a more engaging cover, better reflecting the richness of its contents. Otherwise, it is a timely reference-volume on a challenging and relevant topic. It addresses significant issues arising from a contemporary vantage-point on the nature of 'heritage', explores the thought-provoking ways that heritage can be managed as an encompassing historic environment, and focuses the challenging questions such an approach can entail.

Perhaps a future volume in this valuable series could not only briefly update the outcomes of theory and practice five-to-ten years on, but also narrow and deepen its focus. **□**

Dr Suzanne Bravery is General Manager of Programs and Services, Museums & Galleries NSW, Sydney. She is a member of the National Council of Museums Australia.

Book Review: From the Barracks to the Burrup



From the Barracks to the Burrup: The National Trust in Western Australia by Andrea Witcomb and Kate Gregory (University of NSW Press/National Trust of Australia (WA), 2010).

Indigenous heritage is no longer the heritage of the 'other'. The past the Trust is fighting for is not only more inclusive and reaching back to deep time – it is also a landscape in which it is possible, indeed necessary, to practise a politics of care for one another.

Institutional and organisational histories tend towards chronicling major events and acknowledging those who played significant roles. *From the Barracks to the Burrup* accomplishes this basic task, but moves several steps beyond to provide a critical interpretation of the history of the National Trust in Western Australia. This history is set in the larger context of the state's social and economic development and is presented in

relation to broader heritage issues with local, national and international resonances.

All the controversies, vested interests, personalities, policies and priorities that have reigned at different times are given their due. There is potential for disorder involved in writing a lucid book about such a complex history, but this innovative and beautifully produced volume succeeds in presenting a coherent account of the many intersecting influences that produced the built heritage organisation of the WA National Trust.

The book is structured in three main, broadly chronological sections. *Part One* looks at early concerns about history, heritage and the origins of the National Trust in Western Australia. This is set within the broader frame of the clash between development and commercial interests – referred to here as 'modernity', and the development of a sense of place, its significance and its endangerment.

Part Two deals with the difficult and ever-changing issues of conservation, preservation, interpretation and presentation of built heritage. The last section charts the development of heritage legislation and the usually conflicting aims of community, heritage groups, developers and governments.

Some readers will no doubt want to argue with the emphasis given, or not given, to the many and varied elements of the Trust and its role in the state's heritage protection. I would like to have seen more on intangible heritage and dissonant or conflicting heritage. Others may well wish to see less. Similarly there will be different views on the political aspects of the Trust's activities, and of heritage generally in relation to state and local governments.

The Conclusion provides a valuable discussion of the issues involved in Indigenous heritage, and the inevitable tensions between those interests and those of resource development – particularly in relation to the unique petroglyphs of the Burrup Peninsula. In this respect, the authors here point out that:

Indigenous heritage is no longer the heritage of the 'other'. The past the Trust is fighting for is not only more inclusive and reaching back to deep time – it is also a landscape in which it is possible, indeed necessary, to practise a politics of care for one another.

Optimistic though these lines might seem in development-obsessed Western Australia, they are well worth highlighting. In many

ways they can stand for the history, present and likely future of the Trust, as its volunteers, paid officers and supporters pursue an often rocky road to bring heritage concerns to the attention of the broader community. While segments of that community may frequently need convincing of the value of heritage – especially where it conflicts with monetary interests – over its fifty-year existence, the Trust has ensured that place and past are firmly on the agenda in any proposed development.

The authors, editors and publishers of this book have made a significant contribution to a developing hybrid genre: the sumptuously illustrated and presented coffee-table book that includes a scholarly account and analysis of its subject matter. Despite the complexity of many of the matters addressed, the text is always clear and readable without 'dumbing down' the issues. The illustrations chosen, while visually appealing, are well presented and captioned, extending and amplifying the text rather than simply decorating the pages. The sources include oral history interviews, organisational records, government and other reports, letters and a range of secondary historical, theoretical and heritage works. These are all deployed deftly in support of the arguments presented.

From the Barracks to the Burrup is a success in every sense, establishing a new standard and model for future attempts at similar projects. As one product of an Australian Research Council Linkage grant in which academics partnered with the Trust, this book also shows how professional scholarship and community aspirations can combine to produce outcomes of enduring value for all concerned. ■

Dr Graham Seal is Professor in Australian Folklore Research at Curtin University, Western Australia.

ICOM-ASPAC: Asia-Pacific Conference in Tokyo 5-7 Dec 2009



Inkyung Chang

It is a great pleasure to report on the ICOM-ASPAC General conference held in Tokyo, Japan, in December 2009. The ICOM-ASPAC event was held over three days at the National Museum of Nature and Science in Tokyo.

Under the main theme, 'Rethinking of Museums' Core Values and Regional Heritage in Asia-Pacific', three sub-themes were discussed in separate sessions: 'Regional Heritage in Asia-Pacific'; 'Network Building for Museum Information in Asia-Pacific'; and 'Human Resources Development for Codes of Ethics in Asia-Pacific'. There was also a model training workshop on the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*, involving all delegates in a testing of this training model for adaptation in their various national and cultural contexts (while being based on the *ICOM Code* as the 'base-model' code of ethics for the museums sector internationally).

Approximately 150 participants from 20 countries participated in Tokyo, and ICOM President Alissandra Cummins, Vice-President Richard (Rick) West, Director General Julien Anfruns, and Chairperson of the ICOM Ethics Committee, Bernice Murphy, were also present at the Conference. Alongside senior professional colleagues, various presenters who had been specially targeted among younger professionals in the region gave presentations marked by diverse and dynamic contents that displayed the most recent development across the ASPAC museums sector. Eva M. Lauritzen (ICOM Norway, and member of ICOM's Ethics Committee) was

also a significant participant, and introduced the Ethics-in-Action model Workshop training method for the first time for ICOM-ASPAC members.

The most significant outcome of the ICOM-ASPAC Conference 2009 is the 'Tokyo Declaration', ratified by all participants and delegates on the final morning. The 'Tokyo Declaration' is the next step after the Shiraz Declaration from a previous gathering: seeking to strengthen networks among museums and regional professionals. Along with these efforts, I believe that some concrete outcomes will be advanced by the time colleagues meet for ICOM's triennial Conference and Assembly in Shanghai, in November 2010.

The main sponsors of the ICOM ASPAC Conference were the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science & Technology and the Agency for Cultural Affairs of the Japanese Government. In addition, ICOM, Asia/Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO and private companies offered grants.

Thanks are due to Dr. Shinji Kondo, the director of the National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo, for his leadership, and to all members of the Organizing Committee in Japan for their impeccable preparation of this successful Conference on behalf of ICOM Asia-Pacific members of ICOM.

Detailed information about the ICOM-ASPAC Conference can be found on the official web site: www.kahaku.go.jp/english/icomaspac2009/ended/ ■

Inkyung Chang (ICOM Korea) is chairperson, ICOM-ASPAC (ICOM Asia-Pacific Regional Alliance).

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