

Editorial

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The inaugural issue of *Excavations, Surveys and Heritage Management in Victoria* Journal marks an important first step towards the unification of Victorian Heritage Practitioners. The Journal has brought together and made available a collection of papers on a range of Victorian Heritage themes, some of which were initially presented at the La Trobe University Colloquium on Victorian Heritage in February 2012. This journal represents an attempt to unlock opportunities for heritage research, management, and partnerships with Victorian Indigenous groups.

The Victorian Heritage industry has grown rapidly since the introduction of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*. The AHA 2006 has provided employment opportunities for heritage practitioners, students, and certain Aboriginal groups. Through its statutory mechanisms it has initiated archaeological investigations into the prehistory of Aboriginal Victoria on a hitherto unparalleled level of intensity. However, this surge of archaeological work has not benefited everyone equally, nor has it always led to best practice outcomes - the papers in this journal go some way to illustrate the nuances of the current dynamics.

Herman Kiriamas's unique perspective on the AHA 2006 seeks to analyse the legislation's contribution to the industry and looks at its ability to function effectively. As Kiriamas alludes, one of the more obvious benefits of the AHA has been in the development of Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) and their capacity to regulate projects on their country. Griffin et al go on to illustrate the effectiveness of RAP-Sponsor partnerships

in furthering heritage management practices. Partnerships such as this would seem to be a key ingredient to achieving management outcomes that are comprehensive and inclusive.

Unfortunately, RAP groups are yet to be appointed for approximately 50% of the state. Consequently, heritage projects in non-RAP areas must consider traditional owner groups with no legal standing. At times, several TO groups must be considered for comprehensive consultation to take place. John Guilding's descriptions of heritage works on the Murray River offers perspective on the latter as well as challenges affecting work along border areas in large river catchments.

One of the critical issues arising from the current heritage management trends is that of methodology. Considerable discussion and debate has developed from varying perspectives on best archaeological practice. This instalment of ESHMV boasts three papers that explore this issue. David Thomas's piece on open area excavation points to a future direction in Victorian Heritage Management as practitioners, supported by the regulators move away from shovel probe methodology concentrating on exposing larger contiguous areas. Meanwhile, Gary Vines looks into intuitive approaches to site prediction modelling with special commentary from Bryon Powell of the Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation. Will Anderson's study of landscapes reinforces the difficulties faced by most archaeologists working in a management context when attempting to define boundaries and features of landscapes.

Ultimately, the colloquium forum and the ensuing journal enable archaeologists and heritage practitioners from several sectors to gather and discuss ideas and issues affecting their various focus areas and disciplines. We believe that the latter is imperative to the healthy development of the industry. We foresee as an outcome, the formulation of effective and relevant university degrees, briefly discussed by Lawrence et al. We envisage the cross-pollination of the management sector with trends arising in academic environments, such as the techniques on offer in the Archaeological

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Science Laboratory at LTU, and the collaborative Shipwrecks Protection Project as described by Mark Staniforth. At the other end, the proliferation of data in the private sector should become available and known to the academic environment so that students and academics alike are able to source the grey literature and develop research in new areas. Traditionally historic/post-contact heritage practitioners have excelled at collaborations between the public, private and academic sectors. This was once again illustrated in the Ned Kelly Project, described by Jeremy Smith. More work is needed in the Indigenous research area to bring together the various interested parties.

Finally, the annual gathering and its accompanying journal promises to consolidate all of us as a community, which has formed the subject of a study by Nicolas Zorzin. Zorzin, as an outsider, has assembled a number of unique perspectives on the Australian archaeological community of practitioners. The community extends to all of us who practice archaeology and heritage in some

way, and includes academics, students, consultants, Indigenous peoples, regulators, and everyone in between. Importantly it includes different histories; prehistories, proto-histories, post-contact histories and contemporary histories. It is time that we accept that the disparate voices represent a larger community that needs to function together by communicating effectively.

We believe our initial effort has met with success. The papers contained within this first issue provide a reasonable cross section of work undertaken by practitioners in recent times. We encourage a greater volume of submissions for forthcoming issues, with a greater emphasis on archaeological reports which can stimulate further cooperation between the various sectors of the industry. Likewise, we anticipate a greater input from Indigenous communities so as to encourage their direct participation in directing the interpretation, dissemination and management of their cultural heritage.

Future directions in Victorian archaeology

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The Colloquium organised in February 2012 by the Archaeology Program at La Trobe University in collaboration with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria was a landmark event that brought together more than 100 people with an interest in the archaeology of Victoria. Representation from Aboriginal communities, government agencies, consulting archaeologists, students and academics ensured that a broad range of voices were heard, although notably absent were Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal archaeologies after European contact. Out of the deliberations a number of issues emerged around the themes of community involvement, methodologies, and outcomes.

It was clear that more space needs to be made for community voices and Aboriginal values in the CHMP process, so that archaeologists, managers, clients and communities themselves can develop better understandings of what is significant about local places and how the archaeological record contributes to that. It was also clear that there is a growing understanding that significance evolves and changes over time as we learn more about the archaeological record and as communities change and grow. While a commonplace in academic research, this provides a particular challenge in management as the significance and value of sites needs to be regularly re-assessed.

Fieldwork methodologies were of considerable concern to many of those at the colloquium. The general feeling was there needs to be more discussion and more consensus about definitions of sites and how definitions are applied. There was also a recognition that it is important to move beyond single sites and to look at broader archaeological landscapes. There were concerns about the relationship between shovel test pits, 1 x 1 metre excavations, and larger excavations, and about the comparability of data produced by each strategy. Concerns about data are wide-ranging. It should go without saying that data needs to be

of good quality, with consistent methodologies for collection and analysis, and with methodologies that are transparent and well-documented. Equally importantly, data needs to be reported fully and then made accessible so that it can be drawn on by others, whether for research, for management, for public interpretation, or for assessing significance.

Widespread interest was expressed in the outcomes of archaeological work, and questions raised about what to do with the information being generated. Clients, Aboriginal communities, and the public are increasingly requesting more information about the results of archaeological inquiry. Archaeologists need to become more attentive to how those results are presented so that they can be used for better public interpretation of sites and for better community understanding. Beyond reporting the results of work on a single site or project, better understanding often requires research, and participants generally agreed that more research is required. Comparative research needs to become more common so that broader patterns of land use and landscape change can be identified, and so that the significance of sites can be more confidently assessed. Synthesis of results is also needed in order to draw out meaningful conclusions from the wealth of data amassed.

Each stakeholder group has its own role to play. The university has the responsibility to train future graduates and to provide research direction. The skills graduates require to enter into the workforce are evolving. Responses to a brief questionnaire circulated at the Colloquium indicated general satisfaction with undergraduate training in archaeological skills but there is an increasing need for additional training in skills associated with cultural heritage management including report writing, consultation, and significance assessment. Although difficult to fit into the structures of a normal Bachelors degree, skills such as these may be best delivered through a coursework Masters program, such as that being developed at La Trobe. Other specific advanced training in lithic analysis, geomorphology and spatial analysis

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