Socio-economics of archaeology in Victoria after the *Aboriginal Heritage Act* 2006

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Abstract

In 2012, the population of archaeologists in Victoria was estimated at around 260 individuals, with three quarters of them working in consulting archaeology, and the remaining quarter equally distributed in administrative posts and universities. It has been demonstrated that archaeologists' incomes in Australia, and to a lesser degree in Victoria, are particularly high compared to the rest of the world (Ulm et al. 2005, 2013).

This is related to the fast development of building and infrastructure since the 1990s, especially in the case of Melbourne, and to mining industry activity in Western Australia. However, development by itself cannot account for the relatively high earnings in archaeology. While development initiated the growth process in archaeological activities, legislation making archaeology compulsory facilitated this growth. This was especially true from 2007 onwards in Victoria, with the implementation of the Aboriginal Heritage Act *2006.*

These regulations put pressure on developers, and considerably amplified the demand for archaeological expertise for heritage protection. Developers had to gain the approval of archaeologists who, in exchange, and as defined by regulations, had to give both time and cost guarantees for the completion of their work. Now, despite the good financial situation in which this economic configuration has placed archaeologists, and as Kiriama (2012:73) has warned recently, the commercialisation of archaeology and its resultant financial dependence on clients/developers could compromise the practice of archaeology.

Contextualising the research

This contribution focuses on some specific aspects of the archaeological industry in Victoria, assuming that many characteristics of the profession are already known and understood by the reader. As such, this article contains some limited quantitative and mostly qualitative results on the working conditions of archaeologists in Victoria. The current results and discussion are based on an investigation conducted in Victoria in 2012, with material gathered from 35 actors who are active in the cultural heritage management sector. These actors were interviewed anonymously, and their names have therefore been changed.

After contextualising Victorian archaeology in the framework of its political economy in the first volume of *Excavations, Surveys and Heritage Management in Victoria* (Zorzin 2012:75–79), the next step has been to implement a critical analysis of the archaeological organisation of the state, from a socio-demographic perspective. By profiling the profession, I intend to describe and illustrate some processes of transformation in the archaeological sector here, with a particular focus on the major changes that have occurred since 2007 in Victoria due to the implementation of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act* (*AHA*) 2006 (Kiriama 2012: 67–74) — bearing in mind that the majority of archaeology in Victoria is Aboriginal, and also that the practice of archaeology is predominantly entrusted to consulting archaeologists.

Profiling the profession

The first step of this process is to identify and clearly define the population under study. The investigations presented by Ulm et al. (2005, 2013) in the journal *Australian Archaeology* are particularly important here. The surveys were conducted across the entire continent, and, more importantly, twice in 2005 and 2010. In the framework of my own research on Victorian archaeology, it would have been ideal to generate such a quantitative diachronic analysis of the archaeological community, but time and means were too limited to implement such a long-term strategy. I refer regularly to the data from Ulm et al. (2005, 2013), and from the corpus of data provided by the Australian Association of Consulting Archaeologists Inc. (AACAI).

The results of the qualitative research I conducted should complement the results from Ulm et al. (2005, 2013), and extend some of their interpretations even further. By associating the accessible data from Victoria

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with the oral testimonies of archaeologists about their activities and about their community, I attempt to portray the state of the discipline as accurately as possible.

Definitions and some issues related to population estimations

According to Ulm et al. (2013:34), Australian archaeologists comprise "anyone who used archaeological skills in paid employment during the calendar year preceding the survey census year", and "worked in Australia, or was based in Australia and worked overseas... including representatives from Australian universities teaching archaeology, professional associations, indigenous groups, industry groups and public sector employers". For the purposes of my research project in Victoria, I considered all individuals who have participated directly in compiling archaeological data and archaeological outcomes as being active in archaeology, and as participating directly in the running of the profession. As a result, I prefer not to refer to the term archaeologist stricto sensu, but to a broader definition which could be an individual active in archaeology, paid full-time or on a casual contract over a year (but financially dependent on archaeological activities), and using specific skills — being technical, scientific, interpretational or managerial — to participate in general archaeological processes, and to contribute to the building of various archaeological outcomes.

During the survey of Ulm et al. (2005, 2013), it is very likely that a significant number of individuals were not included. As such, it is difficult to extract significant quantitative data about Victorian archaeologists from the figures in Ulm et al. (2005, 2013). In 2010, 399 answers were obtained for the Australian survey, 92 of which were from Victoria. As a first observation, this national sample probably represents approximately one third of the total population, according to the average rate of answers that were expected from a sample taken from different organisations and associations (i.e. the AACAI and Australian Archaeological Association (AAA)), equivalent to an internal survey, which was promoted online and completed by individuals on a voluntary basis (Baruch and Holton 2008:1139).

In Victoria, many archaeologists working in consulting archaeology are not part of the AACAI or AAA. For example, only 12.8% of Cultural Heritage Advisors (CHAs) in Victoria were members of the AACAI in 2012 (**Table 1**; a CHA is a person who is appropriately qualified in a discipline directly relevant to the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage, such as anthropology, archaeology or history, or who has extensive experience or knowledge of the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage (see s.189(1) of the *AHA* 2006)). More than 80% of CHAs are trained archaeologists (DPC 2012). Other unlisted people might be casual/short-term contract employees, or working in companies related in some way to heritage management. As a result, my estimation of the actual population of Victorian people active in archaeology will definitively be much higher than the 92 individuals for the state of Victoria who responded to the Ulm et al. (2013:36) survey in 2012.

In the United Kingdom (UK), field archaeologist and scholar Paul Everill stressed that the main association for UK archaeologists — the Institute for Archaeologists (IFA) — tended to ignore what he called 'the invisible

Education CHAs	**No Diploma**	**Bachelor (Hons)**	**Masters**	**PhD**	**Total**	**Members of AACAI**
Archaeology		103	23	18	144	21
Anthropology		4	4	1	9	
History		1	1		2	
Geology/geography/ biology/environmental science		6	4	1	11	1
Museum studies/ conservation			3		3	
Administering cultural property/cultural heritage		1	6 (all have a BSc/BA in archaeology)		7	1
Long experience in archaeology and heritage management	2				2	
Total	2	115	41	20	**179**	23
	1%	64.5%	23%	11.5%	**100%**	12.8%

Table 1. Educational background of individuals active in Victorian archaeology, and defined as potential Cultural Heritage Advisors

diggers', being practitioners of archaeology employed with a high level of job precariousness (Everill 2007:124). This corresponds to what are known in Victoria as 'casuals', 'subbies', 'extras', or even 'volunteers' (i.e. unpaid workers). However, this phenomenon seems much less problematic in Victoria than it is, because of a relatively favourable economic situation in Australia compared to other major world economies. In Quebec, for example, 76.3% of archaeologists were employed on short-term contracts in consulting archaeology in 2008 (Zorzin 2010:11), and 73% of diggers in the UK on temporary contracts in 2006 (Everill 2008:45).

In Victoria, it is the AACAI's restrictive admittance policy and high membership fees that render many active archaeologists invisible or unknown. As a result, there is clearly a discrepancy between the 92 respondents of Ulm et al. (2013) and the reality on the ground, but it is not necessarily the result of the casual phenomenon seen in many other countries.

Estimation of the population of archaeologists in Victoria in 2012

The estimate was compiled from three main sources: attendance at La Trobe University's inaugural Victorian Archaeology Colloquium in 2012; the database of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (OAAV); and the database of my interviewees.

First, around 125 participants — around 90 of whom were trained and recognised archaeologists — attended the first annual Victorian Archaeology Colloquium, which was held at La Trobe University on 3 February 2012 (Staniforth 2012). Considering that some archaeologists estimated the Colloquium attendees to comprise roughly one third of the active participants in the archaeological 'industry' at the time, it is conceivable that the total population of archaeologists in Victoria amounted to 270 individuals in 2012.

Second, the OAAV provides a list of CHAs online (DPC 2012), which numbered 179 individuals in 2012 (**Table 2**), working in 66 companies, 10 of which could be considered major archaeological companies (i.e. ≥6 individuals qualified in archaeology or related disciplines). However, an issue remains with the CHA listing: admission is restrictive, resulting in under-estimations of the population, and it is not always logical in its selectivity, in that it also includes individuals not actually practising. The result, paradoxically, is an over-estimation of the population (Webber 2013:8).

Of the ten major archaeological companies in Victoria, which represent a little over half of the total population of CHAs (see **Table 1**), six are presented as being dedicated primarily to archaeology and cultural heritage management, one strictly to heritage management (often not involving excavations), and three are archaeology divisions within large engineering companies, mostly dealing with development and environmental planning. For the minor players, representing almost 25% of CHAs, almost 73% are active in archaeology and heritage management, and 27% are employed by engineering companies. Many companies were set up by single individuals, most of them by archaeologists (n = 25), some specialised in heritage management (n = 9), and some archaeologists or anthropologists were hired individually by engineering firms (n = 5).

As a result of these simple observations, we could consider those 179 individuals to be working in archaeology, but not necessarily as archaeologists, and also to be competent in various aspects of archaeological activities. It is thus a cautious assessment to suggest that the consulting archaeology industry employs approximately 200 active individuals in the state of Victoria. Webber (2013:8) compiled comparable numbers: 219 individuals for 34 companies and 42 sole traders.

If, to this list of people active in consulting archaeology and various corporations, we add academics with permanent or regularly renewed positions in universities (30 individuals minimum; **Table 3**), as well

Size of the firm **Core activity of the firm**	**Major Companies** (≥6 ppl per company)	**Minor Companies** (<6 ppl per company)	**Individuals** (sole proprietor-ship)	**Total**	**% of individuals/core activity**
Archaeology and heritage management	49 ppl in 6 companies	23 ppl in 8 companies	25	97	54.2
Heritage management and anthropology (no/rare excavations)	10 ppl in 1 company	9 ppl in 4 companies	9	28	15.6
Engineering and development	37 ppl in 3 companies	12 ppl in 5 companies	5	54	30.2
Total	96	44	39	**179**	100%
% of individuals/ size of firm	53.6%	24.6%	21.8%	100%	

Table 2. Numbers of CHAs by size of the consulting company and type of activities. Source: DPC (2012)

University Type of education	Deakin	Monash	RMIT	Melbourne	La Trobe	Total
Archaeology		8		6	13	**27**
Heritage management and others	2		1			**3**
Total						**30**

Table 3. Minimum number of archaeologists employed on a full-time basis in various Victorian universities

as archaeologists active in the OAAV, Heritage Victoria (HV), and various administrations and museums in Victoria (about 30 individuals), it seems legitimate to suggest that the minimum number of individuals working in, or for, archaeology in Victoria must be close to 260.

Daniel [in his 40s, Civil Servant, Victorian Government]: "When I started [working in archaeology], twenty years ago [around 1992], there were 2 or 3 archaeological companies who might have employed 4–5 people each. In the early 90s, we issued 8 to 10 approvals a year, and then now there are years we are over a hundred. You saw at the Colloquium at La Trobe University where there would have been over 150 practitioners… and still, this is probably less than a half of everyone working in the State. The size of the profession is now probably around 500 people involved in the industry in Victoria."

The estimate of 500 people working in the field of archaeology may be a bit excessive. However, it may not be that extravagant considering that Victoria has experienced a fast acceleration in building and infrastructure development, especially around Melbourne. Statistics suggest that the Melbourne population has grown 21% over the last decade, and will grow a further 60% over the next 40 years, to be one of the two most populated cities on the continent with 6.5 million inhabitants (State Government of Victoria 2012:3). From 2007, archaeology started benefiting greatly from this growth and, most importantly, after the promulgation of the new *AHA* 2006. The *AHA* 2006 implemented more systematic regulations, and reinforced the developer's obligation to manage cultural heritage. Here, it is important to note one critical difference between the *AHA* 2006 and the previous legislation: while the former is proactive and requires approvals prior to the issuing of any planning permit in advance of development, the latter was reactive to development. As a result, and because developers are, and have been, placed under pressure by the requirements of the *AHA* 2006 (i.e. to conduct meaningful heritage investigations), the number of archaeological surveys, potential instigation of excavations, or implementation of protections of sites has increased drastically (Kiriama 2012:67–68). The *AHA* 2006 has therefore become a major factor in the growth of the archaeology industry.

Finally, according to the data presented here and the testimonies collected, the consulting archaeological industry in Victoria represents at least 200 individuals, or about 77% of employment for archaeologists, while administration, museums, and universities respectively account for slightly more than 10% of total employment, for a minimum total of 260 individuals active in archaeology. In comparison with the data assembled by Ulm et al. (2013:37), which asserted that 52% of Australian archaeologists were working in consulting, it seems that the proportion in Victoria is now close to that in the UK, at around 75% (Zorzin 2010:7).

Earnings and type of employment of archaeologists

Ulm et al. (2013:39) provide a particularly accurate depiction of archaeologists' earnings. The current favourable situation is very specific to Australia, and to some extent Victoria, and is characterised by high incomes. In places like the UK or Quebec, most archaeologists continue to earn about 15% less than the national average (Aitchison and Rocks-Macqueen 2013:107 — see also Atchison and Edwards 2008:71; Zorzin 2010:13). The situation is even worse in countries such as in Ireland (Irish Independent 2006) or Northern Ireland, where consulting archaeology is bankrupt, and the entire system of privatised archaeology is on the verge of collapse (Chapple 2014). So, why do archaeologists in Australia and Victoria earn such uniquely high salaries compared to the rest of the world?

Aurora [in her 30s, Casual Archaeologist for various archaeological and environmental consulting companies]: "I have had this conversation with people in the United States [about salaries], and when they told me how much they earned… I was like: really!? Is that all you make? […] Depending on who I work for, and where I work, I would probably get paid between $AUD38–50 per hour. Also, I try to always negotiate travel time as well. That's why so many people do it, because the money is good! Especially as a casual! In fact, the pays for permanent employees obviously aren't this good."

Clark [in his 30s, Senior/Permanent Archaeologist at an archaeological consulting firm]: "For instance, working in the field… it pays $AUD350–370 per day and I was getting $AUD28 per hour in the office […] It works out to getting… what? Something like about $AUD60,000–65,000 a year. It is a quite good income for a field archaeologist, and I am well aware of that because I have got people who I know who work in contract archaeology in the Netherlands and Britain […]. They get paid very badly there. I mean, I look at jobs in the UK. I know there is a practical economic situation now, but you know, the highest level of jobs that the BAJR [British Archaeological Jobs Resources] advertise is £34,000 per year [≈$AUD50,000] and that is for the highest level of manager… and yet you can get people doing their BA getting that kind of money in Australia and just for doing sh[ovel] work."

According to various testimonies collected in Victoria, the salaries of casuals are much higher than those of permanent employees, and close to the rates suggested by the AACAI (**Table 4**). However, despite the use of some flexibility with casual contracts, which always implies some level of precariousness, the archaeological industry in Victoria, together with the rest of Australia (and, lately, more so in the west, even if this has trailed off significantly with the global slowdown of the resources sector since 2012; Glynn 2013) remains a very attractive one globally, in terms of earnings and work conditions, as testified by Clark (see Table 3 in comparison with Quebecker salaries).

Presently, alongside the current investigations in Victoria, and knowing the difficult situation of archaeologists in Europe and North America (Schlanger and Aitchison 2010), the reason why archaeology appears to be so lucrative and growing in Australia remains an important question. As a result, I asked my interviewees if this unique situation could be related to a shortage of archaeologists in the market, creating a demand which could explain high earnings across the country. Here are some answers to this question.

Jay [in his 50s, Manager in consulting archaeology]: "I don't think there is any shortage of archaeologists in Australia. However, there is a shortage of people with proper experience, and properly trained. Occasionally, I have students approaching me asking for experience, but if they want experience, they will come as an extra, but not as one of my team. […] At the AACAI, they set a level of fees [see Table 3], but I don't think anyone actually complies with that in Victoria."

Zorzin: "In terms of salaries, it seems that people are quite happy to do archaeology here?"

Jay: "I think the legislation made a big difference here."

According to Jay, it is not necessarily a problem of national shortage that creates a high demand for archaeologists in Australia. Data presented in Ulm et al. (2013) confirm this idea, by showing that, in their sample of archaeologists, 28% of the respondents were born abroad, which is relatively high compared to the UK (7%), but with a decreasing tendency since 2005 (down 5%; Ulm et al. 2013:35–36). If an effective workforce shortage was ongoing in Australia, the tendency would have been towards an increase in archaeologists from abroad. As such, and as suggested by Jay, the reason for these high incomes is more closely related to the effects of various legislations (state or federal ones), as we are going to see now.

To the same question, archaeologists Hugh and Roger suggested more complete and comprehensive answers:

Hugh [in his 40s, Archaeologist/Civil Servant involved in the *AHA* 2006]: "First, it is the legislation that makes [archaeology] mandatory. Second, it's the amount

Earnings ($AUD1 = $CAD1)	**Trainee/ Technician**	**Grade 3/ Assistant**	**Grade 2/ Assistant**	**Grade 1/ Assistant**	**Specialist Assistant**	**Sub-consultant**	**Consultant/ Manager**	**Average earnings (archaeologists)**	**Average Salaries (all industries)**
Australia (suggested by AACAI)	≤30[1]	35–45[1]	41–50	51–60[1]	70–80[1]	100–160[1]	120–200[1]	**44.6**[4]	**29.5**[3]
Victoria (2012; evaluations based on interviewees answers)	0 (voluntary work) –30 (casual)[1]	20 (permanent) –35 (casual)[1]	20–50[1]	20 (permanent) –59 (casual)[1]	20–80[1]	30–100[1]		**N/A**	**26.4**[3]
Canada (2008)	15.5[5]						>30[5]	**19.6**[5]	**20.2**[2]
Quebec (2008)	15–16[1]	18–20[1]	18–20[1]	20–27[1]	20–27[1]	22–33[1]	33–42[1]	**20.3**[1]	**19**[2]

Table 4: Average salaries in consulting archaeology in Australia and Canada (N.B. $AUD1 = $CAD1 on 1 June 2012). Sources: (1) personal data collected in Quebec in 2008 and Victoria in 2012, and published in Zorzin (2010); (2) Statistics Canada (2013); (3) Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013); (4) Ulm et al. (2013); and (5) Payscale 2012.

of work that is involved here, and it is all mandated so you cannot get out of it [it needs to be done to comply with the law]. Third, I also think that the pool of archaeologists is not big, and you also have got the mining boom, which is attracting archaeologists towards Western Australia, where they are making hundreds of thousands of dollars a year… Why would they stay in Victoria and make little money compared to that? So, it creates [an internal] shortage and the shortage here means that the archaeological companies bump up their prices. The market is operating the way the market should but this is why, because of the lack of supply, you end up with high costs [and high salaries]."

Roger [in his 30s, Senior Archaeologist in consulting archaeology]: "Archaeologists have come from a system where a small number of archaeologists were highly specialised and where they could charge a high amount of money. Then, the new system came in 2006, and [it created] a bit of an imbalance. Now you have got lots of "expert" archaeologists [with only a BA or MA; see Table 1], but a lot of them are not that qualified and are still charging the same rates [as the senior and experienced archaeologists]. […] Now, it's a free market, and when the *AHA* 2006 came out, the archaeological firms didn't have the personnel. There weren't enough archaeologists here, so no one needed to undercut anyone else. Suddenly, there was more work than they needed."

As such, legislations — and more specifically for Victoria, the *AHA* 2006 — created the conditions for a growing archaeological sector, in charge of assisting developers in complying with reinforced legal obligations, and of making the integration of the archaeological processes more reliable and predictable for developers (Kiriama 2012:73). The reasons for the high wages are thus related to the strict requirements created by the legislation in the planning system, generating high demand for archaeologists' services.

However, it would be misleading to think that, because wages in Victoria and Australia are high relative to the rest of the world, it is expected and logical to have high archaeological wages. In 2014, the average gross annual income in the USA ($54,450) and Ireland ($50,764) is higher than in Australia ($44,983), which is comparable to the UK ($44,743) and Canada ($42,253). In all these countries, except for Australia, the average salaries for archaeologists have been dramatically low in the last decade, and far below national average wages (Zorzin 2011:120; see also **Table 3**).

What happened in Victoria is that fast land development and legal pressures on developers resulted in full employment in the archaeological sector. Full employment generated a so-called Kaleckian 'labour problem', which meant that the lack of available qualified archaeologists to fulfil the demand generated by the *AHA* 2006 created strong, and probably initially unexpected, wage-push inflation. The multifaceted socio-political and economic context in Victoria might explain the high wages of archaeologists, and even higher wages in the west, where earnings are proportional to the interests at stake for corporations exploiting global resources.

Ethical compromises, self-censorship and casualisation processes

Despite the favourable economic conditions created by the legal system, and the relative high demand for archaeological expertise, most archaeologists are now employed in commercial structures (75%) and exposed to neoliberal organisational standards, implying cost and time reductions, competition within the market economy, efficiency in activities and fragmentation of tasks. These are all characteristics of privatised structures that provide services and seek profit optimisation (Zorzin in press). Some of the employees in such structures are called 'casuals', and this phenomenon, which affects work around the world, needs to be investigated further:

Aurora [in her 30s, Casual Archaeologist for various archaeological and environmental consulting companies]: "[…] by casual, I mean: they ring me up! They say: "I have a job. Can you work?" and I say: Yes, or No! […] The problem is, as a casual, you might only work one day in a week! You have to understand that. So, and plus, there is no holidays, no sick pay, but there are other advantages like a higher salary [than permanent employees]."

In Victorian archaeology, casual or short-term contracts, like precarious positions in universities and high turnover in administrations, are a typical phenomenon of the late extension of capitalism, also called 'flexploitation' (Bourdieu 1998:82–85). This phenomenon disfranchises people from their professional status by not allowing them to firmly belong to a potentially united professional community, and it does not allow them to set up a collective agenda to produce something understandable and beneficial for society and their own group. In Victorian archaeology, precariousness through casualisation is a reality like any other sector, but it is, compared to Canada or the UK, largely compensated for by higher salaries (cf. 'Salaries' section above), and by a recent collective effort of Victorian archaeologists to regroup and communicate — as attested by the inaugural Victorian Archaeology Colloquium in 2012 — and by relatively financially strong consulting firms which have been able to support permanent staff since 2007 (DPC 2012). However, even if the situation seems better in Victoria than anywhere else in the world, some aspects of the organisation of archaeology in its commercialised/consulting form might be concerning, in some circumstances, and invite

scrutiny:

Patrick [in his 30s, full-time Senior Archaeologist at an archaeological consulting company]: "We employ 'subbies' [sub-consultants/sub-contractors], but we actually employ them as casual employees of the company, so we cover their insurances. A lot of archaeological companies in Victoria will employ people only as 'subbies', so without insurances and it's a very legally risky thing to do for the company and for them, because if they get hurt, they are not covered by work compensations. In our company, we actually put them in a contract as casual employees, for a certain period of time but with flexible hours. So, that is the way we do it!"

Tiffany [in her 40s, Director of an archaeological consulting company]: "Before 2007 it was a one-man show using some 'subbies' here and there. In 2007, we had to start getting permanent staff on for the first time, just because of the boom in Melbourne [i.e. development and effects of the *AHA* 2006]. So, you grow fast, which is all lovely, but the pressure that comes with it and the time pressure… it's very challenging!"

Casual jobs in Victorian archaeology are well-paid, and the situation seems to have improved since the new 2006 legislation. However, competition between companies is particularly strong in this kind of system. This might result in a different form of precariousness, where the origin lies in the macroeconomic dependence on development and, by extension, in the financial dependence on clients/developers (Zorzin 2011:124–128). Such external pressures on archaeological activities, formalised by law and regulations, favour or even solicit and reward a 'certain level of cynicism' (Bourdieu 1998:84), and potentially favour profits over protecting heritage (Kiriama 2012:73).

Aurora [in her 30s, Casual Archaeologist for various archaeological and environmental consulting companies]: "[In consulting archaeology] most issues are related to report writing. First of all, you are responsible to your archaeological company and their overarching desire to make money [*laughing*]. Then, as a result of that, you can sometime be compromised in what you might have to negotiate on behalf of the client, and what the clients want is not necessarily in the best interests of the Aboriginal communities. There are definitely ethical issues. [However], nobody says: "Do the wrong thing" or "We know this is not right but you must do it", but there is an undercurrent that you have to do what's best for the company because you have to have a certain amount of billable hours. You have to complete the job to the satisfaction of all parties, and you have to have the reports accepted by AAV [now the OAAV] or the different Aboriginal communities. So, at the end of the day, if you have to have a report approved, it has to be approved not only by the Aboriginal community but by the client, so you can just, by the nature of what you're doing… you can be compromised. […]

I had had issues where I worked on a particular project. I was trying to negotiate what should be salvaged on a site because there were a number of different sites. Because of their proximities to each other I was trying to say it was one site, but the client said: "No! You have to keep them as separate sites because that will keep the boundary smaller"… which means we won't have to salvage that much. In the end, the size of the site was reduced, which was against what I had fought for […]."

As illustrated here by the testimony of freelance archaeologist Aurora, the economic model used for consulting archaeology does affect archaeologists directly, by creating a context where different degrees of compromise become unavoidable during fieldwork, and most noticeably in the case of casual/precarious employees: "Casualization of employment is part of a mode of domination, based on the creation of a generalized and permanent state of insecurity aimed at forcing [individuals or groups of individuals] into submission, into the acceptance of exploitation" (Bourdieu 1998:84). However, this phenomenon also occurs for full-time staff and compromises, as well the quality and truthfulness of archaeological practice:

Lars [in his 30s, full-time Senior Archaeologist at an archaeological consulting company]: "If you want to be a successful company: "Don't find stuff!" There are companies that do that. There are companies that don't find stuff intentionally or don't record it.

[…] What these contracts get paid to do is to produce a report which will become apparently a legal document. What is the quality of these legal documents? From an archaeological point of view: extremely low. […] Although the pay is high, the budgets are small for projects. […] In terms of the archaeological data, it is very poor […] or sometime non-existent. I have seen, even in a short experience in this field, so much fraud going on. A lot of time, it is just people pretending to do archaeology, not actually doing it."

Daniel [in his 40s, Civil Servant, Victorian Government]: "We had problems here where, within an organisation, people will be subcontracting within the organisation [but these subcontractors] don't really have the qualifications and certainly don't have the expertise or professionalism. That's very hard for us to monitor. We really issue an approval to the director who we know, whose work is good, but often it won't be that person that does the work. Now, we can put that into our approvals and our permits, but it is very hard to

monitor in every case who is actually doing the work."

Wendy [in her 30s, Consultant Archaeologist in a government-owned statutory authority]: "Once, a RAP [Registered Aboriginal Party] told me a story about a consultant digging a 1 x 1m. He took pictures of each side, but then, with the GPS, uses 4 different points, and uses those photos to say that there are different pits, so like he has dug 4 pits… and the RAP told me that was not so uncommon. I just don't understand how you could do this every day and… [*sigh*]. There is a massive variation in the quality of the work."

The pressure to compromise is particularly strong and, as shown here by Aurora, Lars, Daniel and Wendy, often a self-inflicted one, aiming to preserve employability, and to guarantee profits and then viability in the long-term to the archaeological consulting companies — themselves employed by developers.

Zorzin: "What do you think about this idea of making archaeology profitable?"

Aurora: "It's actually serving me well, so I can't be too critical, but it's a conundrum you know. I make money out of what is becoming a big business in this country…"

At the level of the whole profession, the effect of competition between consulting companies to win contracts tendered by the client/developer has led to its commodification. By accepting this economic logic, archaeologists took the risk of validating their compliance with development needs. What I would like to point out here is that, fundamentally, without strong state legal support (eventually provided by the OAAV and HV) and the tools to both sustain and implement it, in such a situation consulting archaeology is, by definition, economically inclined to compromises. However, within the archaeology industry, many individuals are resisting in any way they can, and either fail to or succeed in improving their standard practices (Zorzin 2014:158–160). In the end, it is understandable that individuals, fearing job discontinuity and financial struggle, make ethical or methodological compromises in archaeological fieldwork.

In reaction to this, Daniel (employed by the Victorian Government) suggested a few directives to cut down on these compromises:

1. Getting rid of the 'straw man'. "To avoid that phenomenon [in the case when the person doing the job is not the one supposed to be doing it], we have to make the [archaeological process] recognised as understandable and acceptable by all — especially developers."

2. Monitoring fieldwork. "By representing public interests, we [the Victorian Government] need to be actually there [i.e. present during fieldwork] to monitor archaeological activities."

3. Monitoring reports. "We need to monitor the quality of work. We will read the significant reports and we do send them back when we have problems with… I wish we had a more resourced [office] to be able to monitor everything that consultants do: whether it's their reports or their individual site's assessment. […] It will be good to have more resources to be more rigorous, because we've set the policy but it is not possible to check everything that comes in. We've got about one report every day. I've got about 300 reports a year coming!"

4. Prosecuting. "[…] for the next case [of fraud or obvious compromises], I think that [prosecuting] is what we will do. We can prosecute for breaching a condition of a permit. The first responsibility that we have is to give clear advice about what is expected and maybe give one warning. It is the same with developers: it might be the only way for people to take notice. So, we have the authority and we are not far away from looking to use that [prosecution]. After advices and warnings, we need to be prepared to follow that up."

Now, even if the *AHA* 2006 has been designed positively to systematise archaeology, make it more professional, efficient and accountable, and was incredibly successful in doing so (Kiriama 2012), it has also succeeded unexpectedly in discouraging: (1) second thoughts about the technicalisation of the archaeological activities (i.e. discouraging in-depth or alternative interpretations of sites and materials, thus making archaeology politically inoffensive), and; (2) resistance against a potential loss of meaning within the profession, by serving legal requirements for development (Zorzin in press). As such, archaeology in Victoria has, despite its economic prosperity of late, been fundamentally commodified by the competitive nature of the market economy. As suggested by Daniel above, a solution to the issues related to the market economy could come from a stronger re-involvement of the State, through regulations and effective control.

Finally, the relationship between heritage management and Aboriginal communities — including consideration of how Aboriginal people have been affected by the distribution of wealth from the heritage sector — has not been tackled in this short paper, but is the subject of in-depth discussion in Zorzin (2014). In 2012, the clear feeling among some Aboriginal communities was that the profits of cultural heritage management were ending up with CHAs, and not the community to whom the heritage belongs (Kiriama 2012:73). This issue is on the agenda as part of the review of the *AHA* 2006, and we shall soon be able to see the results of any modifications.

Conclusion

To conclude on a more positive note, the advantageous financial situation in which Victorian archaeologists, and those in the rest of Australia, find themselves presently (even if the economy has shown signs of weakness since 2012–2013; Webber 2013:10) is rare in the world — and yet it should not be an exception. Archaeology has often proven its value and the meaning it can have for people. Years of demanding studies, tremendous efforts and endless hours spent on conducting good research, preserving heritage, assembling data and producing strong outcomes largely justify decent salaries for archaeologists. Decent incomes are thus not ethically compromising per se, but are more the obligation of providing a technical and predictable service to a developer. It is precisely 'profitability' and 'providing a service' to corporations that can affect our abilities to be scientifically and socially relevant to people, and that is true not only for Victoria, but for anywhere in the world where archaeology has been fully embedded into development industries.

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