



## Annual General Meeting 17 May 2012

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# Agenda Item 6. Annual report on the work of the Committee

for the year 1 Jan 2011-31 Dec 2011

### 1. Introduction

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Your ICOM Executive have been very active this year in implementing ICOM's mission in Australia. This ranges from the basic but vital processes of managing ICOM memberships, so that we can all enjoy the benefits that showing the ICOM card brings, especially when we travel internationally, to making a number of awards and bursaries.

### 2. Year in summary

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#### 2.1 Joint secretariat ICOM Australia-Museums Australia

The fourth year of operation of the joint Secretariat between ICOM Australia and Museums Australia has continued to operate successfully from ICOM Australia's perspective. The secretariat assists ICOM Australia to handle memberships, general enquiries and the provision of auditing and website services. I particularly thank Lee Scott who manages the ICOM Australia Secretariat and Bernice Murphy (National Director, Museums Australia).

#### 2.2 Executive Board

The Executive Board for 2011 was comprised of:

##### Office holders

Frank Howarth (Chairperson)  
Robin Hirst (Deputy Chairperson)  
Scott Mitchell (National Secretary)  
Don McMichael (Treasurer and Membership Secretary)  
James Warden (Public Officer)

##### Ordinary members

Jennifer Harris  
Nancy Ladas  
Chris Nobbs  
Deborah Tout-Smith  
Jonathan Sweet  
Annette Welkamp  
Roger Garland  
Barbara Horn  
Maisy Stapleton  
Grant Collie  
Louise Douglas

### **Ex-officio members (non-voting)**

Darryl McIntyre (Museums Australia)

Tarisi Vunidillo (Pacific Islands Museums Association)

### **Resignations during term**

Barbara Horn, Louise Douglas

### **Resignations on expiry of term**

I would like to thank all members of the Executive Board for their contribution, particularly given their often very heavy professional commitments. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of retiring Executive members Barbara Horn and Louise Douglas.

## **2.3 Membership**

Membership statistics remain encouraging, As at the end of September 2011 there were 374 members (including 20 institutions and 354 individuals, compared to a total of members 382 in December 2010.

My thanks to Don McMichael for his tireless efforts as Membership Secretary.

## **2.4 Web site**

The ICOM Australia web site has continued to provide a valuable means of communicating with membership and the general public. During 2011 the website received an average of 458 visitors per month. During the year the Committee has been scoping improvements to the ICOM Australia web presence, particularly in terms of our capacity to provide information on the international projects of the Australian museum community. Particular thanks again goes to Roger Garland for his efforts in maintaining the ICOM Australia website.

## **2.5 ICOM Australia international travel bursaries**

ICOM Australia continued to support the programs of the Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA) by providing funding for Tarisi Vunidillo, PIMA Secretary General, to attend the 76<sup>th</sup> Western Museums Association Meeting in Hawaii. ICOM Australia also provided financial support for Dr Viv Golding, Dept of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, to be a plenary speaker at the Museums Australia Conference in Perth. Dr Golding's talk, one of the highlights of the conference, was on the topic of developing creative connections at museum frontiers, encompassing her work on in looking at the diverse ways in which museums might widen their audience beyond the "traditional" museum visitor.

## **2.6 2011 awards for international relations**

At the Perth Museums Australia Conference we recognized the lifetime career achievements of Vinod Daniel in international museum relations, especially, in Vinod's case, in materials conservation. We also recognized the work of the exhibitions and cultural collections teams at the Australian Museum for the international links built with communities in Papua New Guinea as part of the Museum's Birds of Paradise exhibition.

Thanks to the ICOM Australia sub-committee for overseeing the awards: Annette Welkamp, Robin Hirst, Jonathon Sweet and Deb Tout-Smith.

## **2.7 Policy development and advocacy**

We are the international counterpart of Museums Australia and in that capacity ICOM Australia advocates on issues of international interest concerning museums and related matters. This year we made a strong submission on the Australian Government's discussion paper on potential immunity from seizure legislation for Australia (a copy of this submission is available on the ICOM Australia website).

We continue to strongly support measures to counteract illicit trade in cultural material, and to promote the ICOM Red List of stolen and looted cultural heritage. ICOM Australia also continues to be concerned about the commercial trade in Aboriginal secret/sacred objects, both nationally and internationally, and has contacted several dealers with concerns during 2011. ICOM Australia provided financial sponsorship to Museums Australia's "Museums, memory and ethics" symposium in Canberra where Bernice Murphy spoke in her capacity as Deputy Chair of ICOM International's Ethics Committee.

In June this year I attended the ICOM annual meeting in Paris at the ICOM HQ. We are working hard to improve the effectiveness of those annual gatherings and I am part of a small working party established by ICOM to propose ways to try and do just that. In Perth at the Museums Australia conference I also spoke in the closing plenary session of my aspirations for improved representation of museums at the global level, but most particularly in the Pacific rim and basin. I will continue to advocate for this and explore ways of achieving it, in partnership with other institutions in the Pacific area.

## **2.7 Blue Shield Australia**

Blue Shield Australia (BSA) is an international committee, working to protect the world's cultural heritage threatened by armed conflict and natural disasters. The BSA committee comprises representatives from the following Australian peak industry organisations: the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities, Australia ICOMOS, the Australian Library and Information Association and ICOM Australia. From July 2010 to June 2011 ICOM Australia took over the rotating chair of BSA, with ICOM Australia represented by Jonathon Sweet and Nancy Ladas (my thanks to both).

During 2011 Blue Shield Australia was active in assisting with responses to the flooding in Queensland and elsewhere, and in developing initiatives to enhance disaster preparedness and recovery amongst regional museums and galleries.

Frank Howarth  
Chair