

# Annual General Meeting 18 May 2013

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

for the year 1 Jan 2012-31 Dec 2012

Version 1.0

### 1. Introduction

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It has been another active year with respect to the ICOM Executive, whose activities range from administering ICOM memberships, supporting conferences and other professional activities, making submissions on relevant policy issues and making a number of awards and bursaries.

### 2. Year in summary

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

The fifth year of operation of the joint Secretariat between ICOM Australia and Museums Australia has continued to deliver a good result from ICOM Australia's perspective. The secretariat assists ICOM Australia to handle administrative requirements such as membership processing, general enquiries and the provision of 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 2012 was comprised of:

##### Office holders

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

##### Ordinary members

Jennifer Harris  
Nancy Ladas  
Chris Nobbs  
Deborah Tout-Smith  
Carolyn Forster  
Annette Welkamp  
Roger Garland  
Maisy Stapleton  
Alec Coles

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

Andrew Sayers (Museums Australia)

Tarisi Vunidilo (Pacific Islands Museums Association)

### **Resignations during term**

Grant Collie

### **Resignations on expiry of maximum possible consecutive term (6 years)**

Roger Garland, Jennifer Harris

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 Grant Collie, Roger Garland and Jennifer Harris.

## **2.3 Membership**

As at December 2012 there were 381 ICOM Australia members, up slightly from December 2011 (374 members). My thanks to Don McMichael for his tireless efforts as Membership Secretary.

## **2.4 ICOM Australia international travel bursaries**

In 2012 ICOM Australia supported member Dr Maria Friend, a retired museum professional holding an adjunct position at James Cook University, to travel to London and Brussels. Dr Friend is working with the ICOM Costume Committee to create an on-line resource to support the preservation and presentation of costumes by community based museums.

## **2.5 2012 awards for international relations**

At the Adelaide Museums Australia Conference we recognized the lifetime career achievements of Professor Amareswar Galla, for his extensive and ongoing commitment to museums, sustainable development and poverty alleviation through culture. We also recognized Sydney's Powerhouse Museum for its exhibition *Spirit of jang-in: treasures of Korean metal craft*. The exhibition was an outstanding example of the potential for museums to help with understanding and communicating the cultures of neighbouring countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

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

## **2.6 Policy development and advocacy**

In 2012 the Executive made a submission to the Commonwealth Government on the issue of an Australian Heritage Strategy. The submission explored a range of themes including the significant role of the Australian museum sector plays in protecting tangible and intangible heritage, the role of Blue Shield Australia and the significant role Australia plays internationally in heritage protection.

Having previously made representations to the Commonwealth Government regarding anti-seizure legislation, the ICOM Executive is watching the Commonwealth Government's progress on this issue closely. It is heartening to note that a number of ICOM Australia's recommendations, for example the need for public disclosure and the recognition of issues relating to Indigenous cultural property, appear to have been reflected in the legislation.

## **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. It is working to enhance disaster preparedness and recovery throughout the museum sector. 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. The ICOM Australia Executive is represented on Blue Shield by Nancy Ladas (for which my thanks).

## **2.8 Other ICOM Australia Activities**

ICOM Australia was a sponsor of the Museums Australia conference in Adelaide, and provided financial support for Dr Sarah Kenderdine from City University, Hong Kong to attend as a plenary speaker. Dr Kenderdine talk on the amalgamation of cultural heritage with new media art practice was a conference highlight. Executive member Maisy Stapleton was a member of the organising committee of the highly successful ICOM Intercom conference in Sydney.

I have also been involved in closely monitoring events at the Paris head office of ICOM, which has seen the apparent dismissal of two staff members, including the Director General. I (and others) have sought clarification on the issues behind these events, and the process by which they occurred. While the President of ICOM, Hans-Martin Hinz, has provided some information to National Committees, the issues and process still remain unclear and unresolved.

I also continue to be concerned that ICOM members seeking election to the ICOM Executive Council from this part of the world are seriously disadvantaged by distance, in that the Council meets mostly in Paris. I believe that ICOM Australia should continue to lobby for removal of that disadvantage.

Frank Howarth  
Chair