

# Annual General Meeting

## Agenda item 6

# 5 June 2018

---

## Annual Report on the Work of the Committee

### For the period June 2017 to May 2018

---

#### 1. Introduction

---

The 2017 calendar year has seen some outstanding highlights for the ICOM Australia executive, including:

- ICOM Australia Awards 2017 presented at the 2017 Museums Galleries Australia annual conference
- Sponsorship of a plenary speaker at the Museums Galleries Australia annual conference
- International Museums Day student essay competition
- Design and production of outstanding colour brochure promoting ICOM Australia

#### 2. Year in Summary

---

##### 2.1 Executive Board

The ICOM Australia Executive Board for 2017 was comprised of:

<b>Chair</b>	Mr Alec Coles OBE	Western Australian Museum
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	Ms Deborah Tout-Smith	Museums Victoria
<b>National Secretary</b>	Mr Ian Thilthorpe	Western Australian Museum
<b>Treasurer</b>	Mr Scott Mitchell	Western Australian Museum
<b>Membership</b>	Ms Louise Douglas	National Museum of Australia
<b>Secretary and Public Officer</b>		

---

<b>Ordinary Members</b>	Ms Nancy Ladas	Museums Victoria
	Ms Judith Coombes	Powerhouse Museum
	Ms Cherie Mc Nair	Australian Centre for Photography
	Ms Mariea Fisher	Unaffiliated

	Ms Carolyn Forster	National Museum of Australia
	Mr Roger Garland	Unaffiliated
	Ms Mirna Heruc	The University of Adelaide
	Ms Robyn Daw	Logan Art Gallery
	Dr Jonathan Sweet	Deakin University
	Ms Suzanne Bravery	National Museum of Australia
	Mr Robert Swieca	Unaffiliated
	Dr Liz Bonshek	Museums Victoria
	Ms Christine Tarbett-Buckley	Unaffiliated
<b>Ex-Officio</b>	Dr Robin Hirst	Museums Galleries Australia
<b>Ex-Officio</b>	Ms Tarisi Vunidilo	Pacific Islands Museums Association

---

## 2.2 Chair and Board of ICOM Australia

2017 was a busy year for ICOM Australia with a combination of public focused activity as well as addressing some internal governance matters.

The highlight was without doubt ICOM Australia's presence at the MGA Annual Conference in Brisbane, where both the sponsored keynote plenary session and the ICOM Australia Awards attracted significant attention.

It was a great pleasure to introduce John Ryan, Creative Director of New York's *Local Projects*, at ICOM Australia's sponsored session – the opening plenary session of the Conference. John's subject, *Where High-tech meets the Human Touch*, described how new landscapes are emerging that blend technology, architecture, and the people that inhabit them in increasingly complex ways. He asked: *How can such museum experiences be designed to foster meaningful human connections and interactions?*

At the 2018 Museums and Galleries Australia conference to be held in Melbourne (4-7 June) ICOM is once again sponsoring a keynote address. The address will be delivered by Angelita Teo, Director of the National Museum of Singapore and Chair of the Singapore Museums Round Table.

The ICOM Australia Awards provided two exceptionally popular winners with the individual award going to celebrated curator Hetti Perkins and the institutional award going to Campbelltown Arts Centre.

It was pleasing to see membership continue to rise: a trend that we hope to continue as the importance of international perspectives continues to increase.

ICOM Australia's Deb Tout-Smith represented us at the ICOM 32<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly in Paris.

Deb was also instrumental in the creation of the inaugural ICOM Australia student essay competition, in partnership with Deakin University, for International Museums

Day. The winning essay, which took the International Museums Day theme, *Saying the unspeakable: contested history in Museums*, was authored by Justin William Croft and is available on the ICOM Australia web site. In 2018, the competition will be opened up to students across Australian universities.

Work on the ICOM Australia Partnership Program has focused on working with the Commonwealth Association of Museums in supporting a training and development program in Fiji, *Museum Education in the Pacific – Building Resilience*, to be delivered in February 2018. This partnership will mean that the ICOM Australia funding contribution will be significantly levered to achieve a much greater outcome.

One of the more time-consuming, but necessary, activities has been the long-awaited amendments to our constitution which reduces the size of the Board along with a number of other important changes.

2018 is already shaping up to be a very busy year with a renewed push to persuade the Federal Government to ratify the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. Adopted in the wake of massive destruction of cultural heritage during the Second World War, it is the first international treaty with a world-wide vocation focusing exclusively on the protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict and yet has never been ratified by the Australian Government. The terrible and, often wanton, destruction of heritage sites and portable cultural heritage that we have seen across the globe in recent years should be reason enough for our Government to come to the table.

## **2.3 Membership**

ICOM Australia continues to grow as membership increased yet again, raising the total number of individual and institutional memberships for 2017 to 582, compared to 562 for 2016. This included a total of 33 institutional/organisational members. The annual renewal rate remains strong at 95 per cent.

## **2.4 ICOM Australia Awards**

The once again proved to be a highlight of the year and the MGA conference dinner. These awards recognise and celebrate the outstanding work undertaken by ICOM Australia member institutions and individuals. The work must be considered to have strengthened international relations and contributed to the cultural richness of our region. This year we were delighted to present two awards:

### **Individual Award: Hetti Perkins**

Presented to Hetti for her outstanding contribution to museum practice and her commitment to a national and international profile for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. Her expansive curatorial practice provides innovative ways to bring Indigenous art to a wider public within Australia and internationally.



1. Hetti Perkins with *Waterbrain* by Rusty Peters (2002), Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney  
Image (detail): Susie Hagon



2. Alec Coles (Chair, ICOM Australia) and Toni Janke, accepting the Individual Award on behalf of Hetti Perkins  
Image (detail): Benny Jewell

### Institutional Award: Campbelltown Arts Centre

Presented to the Campbelltown Arts Centre for the project **With secrecy and despatch**. This project marked the 200th anniversary of the Appin Massacre in NSW in 2016. **With secrecy and despatch** was a unique cross-cultural collaboration between the Campbelltown Arts Centre and the Canada Council for the Arts. It involved the local Dharawal community and First Nations curators Tess Allas (Australia) and David Garneau (Canada).



Left to right: Vernon Ah Kee (artist), Tess Allas (curator), Dale Harding (artist) and Michael Dagostino (Director, Campbelltown Arts Centre), after receiving the Institution Award from Alec Coles (Chair, ICOM Australia)  
Image (detail): Benny Jewell.

## **2.5 2017 bursary recipients**

Three ICOM Australia Individual Members attended ICOM Committee Conferences in Denmark, Finland and the UK with Bursary support from ICOM Australia in 2017.

Roger Leong, Senior Curator, Museum of Applied Arts of Sciences, attended the ICOM Costume Annual Meeting & Symposium in London. The theme was The Narrative Power of Clothes and Roger gave a paper that told the story of Sheila Scotter, one of Australia's pioneering fashion identities, to attendees from Africa, Asia, Australia, the Middle East, North and South America. For Roger the conference 'exceeded my expectations in all aspects'.

Dr Ian MacLeod attended the ICOM Committee for Conservation, Triennial Conference in Denmark. Ian is a Member of the Conservation Committee and gave a presentation that included the development of new in-situ degradation methods for studying rock art in the Burrup. He also reported that the plenary lectures from the conference will be available on the ICOM-CC website.

Ian MacLeod was awarded the ICOM-CC Triennial medal for his lifelong contribution to the work of the committee and ICOM Australia offers our congratulations.

Dr Andrew Simpson attended the 17th Annual ICOM Committee for University Museums and Collections in Finland. Andrew is a member of UMAC Board and participating in the research project on 'Professionalising museum work in higher education: a global approach' and chairs the working group to transform the UMAC Journal into a recognised academic journal. A significant outcome of the conference was the success of Australia's bid to host the 2020 UMAC Annual Meeting at the new Chau Chak Wing Museum University of Sydney currently being built.

## **2.6 ICOM Australia Strategic Plan**

As part of its commitment to continuous improvement and following the release of the ICOM 2016 - 2022 Strategic Plan the ICOM Australia Executive is in the process of reviewing its Strategic Plan to ensure that it continues to be a vibrant and active organisation that meets the needs of its members and the sector.

## **2.7 Web and Social Media**

The ICOM Australia web and social media presence continues to strengthen. Preparation is underway for transferring the ICOM Australia database to IRIS. The ICOM Facebook page has attracted a particularly strong international following.

## **2.8 Museums and Galleries Australia 2017**

ICOM Australia and Museums and Galleries Australia partnership continues to flourish. Once again ICOM Australia supported the Museums and Galleries Australia

annual conference, held in Brisbane. The theme was *Museums & Galleries in their Cultural Landscapes*. ICOM Australia sponsored the opening key note address delivered by John Ryan of New York's acclaimed Local Projects design group.

## 2.9 Blue Shield Australia

In 2016 ICOM Australia continued to take an active role in the work of Blue Shield Australia (BSA), principally through ICOM Australia Executive members Dr Jonathan Sweet, who is also the Chairperson of BSA, and Ms Nancy Ladas.

ICOM Australia is dedicated to working with the BSA partners to protect the world's cultural heritage threatened by armed conflict and natural disasters, actively working to enhance disaster preparedness and recovery throughout the museum sector. The BSA committee comprises representatives from the following organisations:

- ICA: the International Council on Archives, represented in Australia by the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities
- ICOM: the International Council of Museums, represented in Australia by ICOM Australia
- ICOMOS: International Council on Monuments and Sites, represented in Australia by Australia ICOMOS
- IFLA: the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, represented in Australia by the Australian Library and Information Association

The BSA is convening an international symposium scheduled for the 29 & 30 January 2018, which will be held at the National Library of Australia, Canberra.

The aim of the symposium is to bring together representatives from Australia, Asia and the Pacific to share perspectives on the conservation of cultural heritage and natural disasters.

## 2.10 International Museum Day

As part of its International Museum Day program, ICOM Australia launched a new student essay competition.

Students from Deakin University's Masters of Cultural Heritage undertaking the subject Museums, Heritage and Society were invited to write essays on the International Museum Day topic "Museums and contested histories: saying the unspeakable in museums."

A panel of judges from the Executive Board of ICOM Australia selected the best essay, which was written by Justin William Croft. It was posted on the ICOM Australia website.

([http://icom.org.au/userfiles/file/Activities/International%20Museums%20Day/ICOM%20Australia%20IMD%202017-Essay-J%20W%20Croft-1\\_0.pdf](http://icom.org.au/userfiles/file/Activities/International%20Museums%20Day/ICOM%20Australia%20IMD%202017-Essay-J%20W%20Croft-1_0.pdf))

## **2.11 International Involvement**

Robin Hirst has joined the ICOM Strategic Planning Committee.

Margaret Anderson is a member of the ICOM Committee for Museum Definition, Prospects and Potentials.

Deborah Tout-Smith (Vice-Chair of ICOM Australia) is now a member of the ICOM International Training Centre's Program Committee (2016-18), and attended their annual meeting in Paris, 6 June 2017. She also represented ICOM Australia at the ICOM 32<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly.

Alec Coles has been liaising with the Chair of ICOM Singapore with a view to building closer relationships between the two ICOM organisations and investigating the possibility of a joined regional meeting.

## **2.12 Promotion**

ICOM Australia facilitated the design, printing and distribution of its first full-colour multi-page brochure. An insert was produced for the 2017 Museums Galleries Australia conference to promote ICOM Australia activities. The brochure has been shared on request amongst delegates at the ICOM General Assembly and with ICOM's Paris office.