

Annual General Meeting

Agenda Item 7

16 May 2019

Annual Report on the Work of the Committee For the period March 2018 to April 2019

1. Introduction

The 2018 calendar year has seen some outstanding highlights for the ICOM Australia executive, including:
 ICOM Australia Awards 2018 presented at the 2018 Australian Museums and Galleries Association annual conference
 Sponsorship of a plenary speaker at the Museums Galleries Australia annual conference
 The second International Museums Day student essay competition

2. Year in Summary

2.1 Executive Board

The ICOM Australia Executive Board for 2018 was comprised of:

Chair	Dr Alec Coles OBE	Western Australian Museum
Vice-Chair	Ms Deborah Tout-Smith	Museums Victoria
National Secretary	Mr Ian Thilthorpe	Western Australian Museum
Treasurer	Dr Scott Mitchell	Western Australian Museum
Membership Secretary	Vacant	
Public Officer	Mr Roger Garland	Unaffiliated
Ordinary Members	Ms Nancy Ladas Ms Judith Coombes Ms Cherie Mc Nair Dr Mathew Trinca Dr Regan Forrest	Museums Victoria Powerhouse Museum Australian Centre for Photography National Museum of Australia Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory
	Mr Roger Garland	Unaffiliated
Ex-Officio	Dr Robin Hirst PSM	Australian Museums and Galleries Association
Ex-Officio	Ms Tarisi Vunidilo	Pacific Islands Museums Association

2.2 Chair and Board of ICOM Australia

2018 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 Melbourne, where both the sponsored keynote plenary session and the ICOM Australia Awards attracted significant attention.

It was a great pleasure to introduce Angelita Teo, Director, National Museum of Singapore, at ICOM Australia's sponsored session – the opening plenary session of the third day of the Conference, a session she shared with Gerard Vaughn. Angelita's subject, *Our Singapore Heritage Plan*, gave an overview of the way in which Singapore's key culture and Heritage organisations were working together to deliver and integrated experience for Singaporeans and visitors. It was an impressive example of collaboration.

At the 2019 Museums and Galleries Australia conference to be held in Alice Springs (13- 17 May) ICOM is once again sponsoring a keynote address. The address will be delivered by Neil MacGregor, former Director of the British Museum and, recently, Founding Director of the Humboldt Forum.

The ICOM Australia Awards provided two exceptionally popular winners with the individual award going to Dr Ted Gott and the institutional award going to Museums of Applied Arts and Science.

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 ICOM Australia at the ICOM International Training Centre's Program Committee and ICOM 33rd General Assembly in Paris. I was pleased to do likewise, recently, at 8th International Exposition of Museums and Relevant Products and Technologies and ICOM -ITC invitation, Fuzhou.

This year, I have had the opportunity to represent ICOM Australia, overseas, on a number of occasions, notably, as a speaker at a forum hosted jointly by the Singapore Heritage Board and ICOM, to contribute to the work of the ICOM Standing Committee for Museum Definition, Prospects and Potentials. Our ICOM Australia colleague, Margaret Anderson is a member of this committee and also, attended.

In addition, as a delegate at the Inaugural Global Summit on Research Museums, I was able to deputise for ICOM President, Suay Aksoy, as a keynote speaker when she was unable to attend due to illness.

The ICOM Australia student essay competition, for International Museums Day gains momentum every year. In the competition's second year the winning essay was entered by Perri Sparnon, a student at The University of Melbourne, studying for a Master of Cultural Materials Conservation. The essay took the International

Museums Day theme, *Hyperconnected museums: new approaches, new publics*, and is available on the ICOM Australia web site. As before, I would pay tribute to our vice-chair, Deb Tout-Smith, who first conceived this idea and has driven it every year since.

2.3 Membership

ICOM Australia continues to grow as membership increased yet again, raising the total number of individual and institutional memberships for 2018 to 599, compared to 522 for 2017. This included a total of 33 institutional/organisational members. The annual renewal rate remains strong at 95 per cent.

2.4 ICOM Australia Strategic Plan

As part of its commitment to continuous improvement the ICOM Australia Executive completed its annual review of the Strategic Plan to ensure that it continues to be a vibrant and active organisation that meets the needs of its members and the sector

2.5 Partnerships Program

The ICOM Australia Partnerships Program provided financial support for the delivery of the Commonwealth Association of Museums training and development program in Fiji, Museum Education in the Pacific – Building Resilience in February 2018.

Although an application for funding of the Partnerships Program from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade was unsuccessful, it has led to an offer of regional sponsorship and the ratification of an agreement with the University of Canberra to facilitate regional training and partnerships

2.6 2018 bursary recipients

In 2018 ICOM Australia member Dr Janice Lally was awarded a bursary to attend 11th International Conference on the Inclusive Museum held in Granada, Spain, on 6-8 September. As well as attending as a delegate Dr Lally presented a paper on 'Education and Children's Rights in an Art Museum' as part of the 'Visitors' themed section.

2.7 Australian Museums and Galleries Association 2018

ICOM Australia and Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMaGA) partnership continues to flourish.

In 2018 ICOM Australia again partnered with AMaGA to present sessions and events at the annual conference, held in Melbourne. The ICOM Australia Annual General Meeting was held on 5 June. On 6 June, during the conference dinner, the ICOM Australia presented the ICOM Australia Awards and the International Museum Day essay competition award. ICOM Australia also sponsored plenary speaker Angelita Teo, Director, National Museum of Singapore, on 7 June.

2.8 ICOM Australia Awards

The once again proved to be a highlight of the year and the AMaGA 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: Dr Ted Gott

The 2018 ICOM Award for outstanding individual achievement recognises Dr Ted Gott and his commitment to the visual arts, scholarship and international museum relations.

The Award acknowledges Ted's significant contribution to Australia's cultural life nationally and internationally including highly acclaimed exhibitions, research, publications, mentoring of developing curators and ongoing commitment to the profession.

Ted would have to be considered Australia's pre-eminent curator in international art.

His experience, attention to detail, knowledge of art and history, scholarly approach and easy communication style has seen many significant exhibitions developed and presented to Australian audiences that have enchanted and enlightened academic and general audiences alike.

Institutional Award: Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences

Presented to the Museums of Applied Arts and Science, Sydney for a groundbreaking exhibition *Faith fashion fusion* which explored the emerging modest fashion industry in Australia and the work of a new generation of local designer's creating and retailing stylish clothing for Muslim women; meeting their desire to dress fashionably and creatively while observing the requirements of their faith.



Ted Gott receiving the 2018 ICOM Individual Award from Alec Coles Chair ICOM Australia



Glynis Jones with the 2018 ICOM Institutional Award presented to the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences

2.9 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.

2.10 Blue Shield Australia

ICOM Australia was represented on the Blue Shield Australia Committee by Nancy Ladas.

2018 was another successful year for BSA. Members within the pillar bodies continued work to further enhance and strengthen BSA initiatives and contributions.

The centralised knowledge and specialisations of the four strong pillar bodies make BSA successful and plans for 2019 are shaping up with renewed enthusiasm for MayDay campaigns and events and the launch of a new Australian MayDay logo.

One of main activities for 2018 was the Cultural Heritage, Climate Change and Natural Disasters symposium held at the National Library of Australia, 29-30 January. Delegates from all pillar bodies and sectors attended the event. The BSA sponsored Dr Peter Stone OBE, UNESCO Chair for Cultural Property Protection and Peace, University of Newcastle, United Kingdom, as the conference keynote speaker.

Dr Stone also attended the first Cultural Property Protection Expert Group Roundtable held in January 2018. A second roundtable took place recently in July 2018 to further advance discourse pertaining to cultural property protection, the Hague Convention and possible ratification of Protocols I and II by the Australian government.

The development of a practical and realistic plan in support of the adoption would align Australia's legal framework for cultural property protection with international best practice. Current Australian protection legislation is under the Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986 which does not consider armed conflict. There are extensive inventories in place, alongside disaster plans and tangible property is generally protected at a state level rather than Federal level. Addressing risk preparedness assists with the management of cultural property and addresses risks associated with protection, such as armed conflict or environmental disaster.

2.11 International Museum Day

International Museum Day 2018 saw a significant uptake in participation in the Australian sector. Through the ICOM Executive Committee and a dedicated communications drive, museums were far more active in 2018 than previous years. With a particular focus on organisations based within the Greater Sydney area, supported by the Sydney Culture Network, museums and galleries planned activities and events responding to the theme of 2018 International Museum Day; Hyperconnected museums: New approaches, new publics. Australian museums joined more than 40,000 museums world-wide hosting talks, events, online takeovers and Instagram hashtags. Many museums joined their international colleagues in removing any admission fees and using the day to showcase the exceptional work museums undertake within and for their communities.

As part of its International Museum Day program, ICOM Australia also ran the student essay competition for a second year.

Students from Australian Universities were invited to submit an essay on the theme 'What is a 'hyper-connected museum'? A panel of judges from the Executive Board of ICOM Australia selected the best essay, which was written by Perri Sparnon. Perri's essay effectively defined hyper-connectivity and explained its broader implications, noting the importance of engagement with and between culturally diverse communities. Her focus on material culture and the specific practice of conservation was unique amongst the essay submissions, and her choice of case study, 'Making the invisible visible: conservation and Islamic art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, allowed her to focus on more subtle issues such as 'invisible' legacies that reside within cultural materials. She recognised the relevance of international issues, both historic and contemporary, and also the contribution made by ICOM in defining the cultural importance of museums and supporting the roles and perspectives of the conservation profession.

Perri is a student at The University of Melbourne, studying a Master of Cultural Materials Conservation. (a link to Peri's paper can be found on the ICOM Australia Website - <http://icom.org.au/site/activitiesimd.php>)

2.12 International Involvement

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.

Robin Hirst has joined the ICOM Strategic Planning Committee.

ICOM International Training Centre (ITC) Program Committee

Deborah Tout-Smith (Vice-Chair of ICOM Australia) attended the annual meeting of the ICOM International Training Centre's Program Committee in Paris on 5 June 2018. She also continued her work selecting students for the twice-yearly training programs.

ICOM 33rd General Assembly

ICOM Australia was represented at the ICOM 33rd General Assembly in Paris by Deborah Tout-Smith (Vice-Chair of ICOM Australia).

2.13 Promotion

ICOM Australia's full-colour multi-page brochure was reprinted. An insert was produced for the 2018 Museums Galleries Australia conference to promote ICOM Australia activities to conference attendees. The brochure has been shared on request amongst delegates at the ICOM General Assembly and with ICOM's Paris office.