

Annual General Meeting

6 May 2010

Agenda item no. 12

Prepared by: Jonathan Sweet (ICOM representative on the BSA committee)
Date: 3 May 2010

Topic: Blue Shield Australia activities 2009-10

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 That the members of ICOM ANC note the activities of Blue Shield Australia for 2009-10 and endorse the continuing membership of ICOM ANC as a pillar representative.
- 1.2 Noting in particular that ICOM ANC will take on the Chair of BSA 1 July 2010 for a period of one year and that this may bring added responsibilities.
- 1.3 And, that there may be a need to increase the yearly grant from ICOM ANC to BSA by a reasonable percentage.

2. Background

The following is a brief report of activities that has been supplied by the current BSA Secretariat (thank you to Sue MacKerracher and Donna McDowell).

Blue Shield Australia activities 2009–2010

Formation and organisational development

Reporting protocols and operating guidelines were agreed in 2009.

The chair of BSA circulates between the pillars on an annual basis. ICA holds the chair from July 2009-June 2010. ICOM will provide the next chair for 2010-2011.

Funding has been a concern especially with the closure of the Collections Council of Australia at the end of April 2010. An interim secretariat has been provided by the Australian Library and Information Association (representing the IFLA pillar group) but this is very much a temporary measure. A funding application has been made to DEWHA and other sources of support will be explored.

Role and purpose – safeguarding cultural property

With limited resources, BSA's purpose is best achieved by acting as a communications conduit between cultural organisations, institutions and government agencies around the subject of emergency management in the cultural heritage field, and by promoting disaster preparedness to the cultural heritage sector.

BSA was one of the key partners in the Rebuilding with Books campaign which followed the 2009 Victorian bushfires. This was both a community-based response and a call for museums, libraries, archives and galleries in vulnerable areas to create a collaborative

union, which could be activated in prevention, preparation, response and recovery to a disaster.

Sensitising government to the need to safeguard cultural property

BSA has made submissions to:

- Senate Inquiry into Bushfires – August 2009
DEWHA's National Cultural Policy
- Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission – April 2010

Building a network of organisations involved in safeguarding cultural property

In 2009 BSA was represented at the launch and signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Ballarat Victoria. This network is a collaboration between local Ballarat cultural institutions in preparation and response to emergencies and is Australia's first regional country town network.

BSA sees the development of local cultural heritage disaster networks as a positive way in which it can affiliate with disaster preparedness cooperatives and this continues to be one of the organisation's long-term goals. There are also plans to establish links with Pacific/Oceania organisations with an interest in disaster planning for the cultural heritage sector.

It was always intended that membership of Blue Shield Australia would be extended beyond the four pillar groups and early in 2010 a number of associates were invited to join the committee. They were:

- Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials
- Australian Society of Archivists
- Museums Australia
- Federation of Australian Historical Societies
- Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives
- Australian Registrars Committee and the Records Management Association of Australasia.

Communication to promote awareness and best practice

Information exchange

BSA has played a unique role as an information exchange for pillar groups, enabling museums, libraries, archives, galleries, monuments and heritage sites to exchange information, guidelines and advice about disaster-related topics. Without BSA, this cross-sector exchange would not take place.

Online presence

Since 2005, BSA has had a presence on the Collections Council website, with its own In February 2010, BSA established a Facebook page, providing a method of instantly updating followers to cultural heritage disaster-related news. In March 2010, BSA's own website went live at www.blueshieldaustralia.org.au.

MayDay campaign

In 2010, the MayDay campaign has already attracted widespread attention across the heritage sector, with information disseminated via e-lists and publications to more than 5,000 individuals working in the cultural heritage sector. On 6 May 2010, there will be a BSA/DISACT co-hosted symposium at the National Library of Australia in Canberra. The event is entitled Disaster Proofing Heritage Collections. It will be opened by Senator Kate Lundy and the Director General of the National Library Jan Fullerton. The symposium will also see DISACT member network signing of their MoU, formal launch of BSA and DISACT's new website and the launch of the ALIA disaster preparation guidelines.

As part of MayDay 2010, commercial sponsorship has been secured, and there will be a competition for cultural heritage organisations and institutions participating in the campaign in some way, to win one of eight disaster bins.

Conference papers

Committee members in 2009 presented papers at conferences in Christchurch, New Zealand; Kathmandu, Nepal, and New Orleans.

