

Australia ICOMOS E-Mail News No. 13

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An information service provided by the Australia ICOMOS Secretariat

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Islands of Vanishment

This week a poster on the Port Arthur Conference' **Islands of banishment'** will reach you. A full description of the Conference is now also on the ICOMOS Web Page. Soon you will receive the brochure and enrolment details. But in the meantime visit the conference website at www.arts.utas.edu.au/islands

The poster and brochure will tell you about the programme, the wide range of overseas speakers attracted to the theme already, and the conjunction of the meeting with the ICOMOS International Bureau Meeting which means that a wide range of ICOMOS representatives and experts from throughout the world will be in attendance. Australia ICOMOS is delighted that we have persuaded so many ICOMOS experts to travel so far and we hope that there will be many Australia ICOMOS members there to meet them.

The conference theme is exciting and challenging as the poster illustrates. Apart from this, another very good reason for coming is to have another look at Port Arthur. Since the major and very significant work done by Brian Egloff and his team came to an end Port Arthur has suffered some tough times in terms of resources, conservation and government policy. Many ICOMites who remember these times have been concerned about the future of Port Arthur. Now is your opportunity to see some of the new developments especially in conservation. There is a new comprehensive conservation plan and a 2 million-dollar per year grant for five years specifically for conservation catch-up works from the Tasmanian government. There is also a new board with Barry Jones as the Chair. You will get an insider's tour of the site and discussion with key conservation experts involved in the work now ongoing. You'll get to see and assess the controversial Visitors Centre, the visitor friendly Archaeology programme, the restored government gardens, the major works on the museum and separate prison, the proposed development of Point Puer, the historic plays and costumed characters from the past, the new interpretation policy, the direct daily ferry service from Hobart and a lot more.

The Tasmanian government sees Port Arthur as a flagship in its efforts at

conservation and promotion of the heritage of Tasmania and is actively lobbying for World Heritage nomination for it. A great deal is happening at Port Arthur. A key question which the Conference will give you the opportunity to assess for yourself is the potential tension between significance based management and the tourism imperative and how this is being managed on the site.

So watch out for your poster and brochure and put the dates **7 to 11 of June** in your diary.

Enquiries should go to Peter Romey or Leslie Kirby, Port Arthur 03 6251 2300

N.B The **submission of papers** for the Australia ICOMOS *Islands of Vanishment* Conference, 8-10 June 2002 **closes 8 March 2002**

Zimbabwe General Assembly Postponed

As readers may be aware, the International ICOMOS General Assembly planned for Zimbabwe in October 2002 has been under a cloud for some time. The following is an excerpt from a letter from the President of ICOMOS International, Michael Petzet. Australia ICOMOS does not recommend anyone booking travel to Zimbabwe until further notice.

The International ICOMOS Bureau met in Paris from 25-26 February 2002 to assess preparations for the 13th General Assembly. Colleagues from Zimbabwe reported on the good progress for the meeting and the high level of interest in the Symposium. However, considering the importance of the meeting and the need to meet certain conditions for a successful General Assembly, it was still felt that there were concerns about the situation in Zimbabwe. These factors are beyond the control of the organisation, but members and committees of ICOMOS expressed their concerns. Notwithstanding the above, the Bureau felt that it was imperative to maintain our commitment to Zimbabwe and Africa in general. Furthermore, it is also necessary to comply with the Statutes of ICOMOS.

The Bureau therefore resolved:

- That the **meetings in Victoria Falls be postponed by one year**, retaining the same programme, i.e. a scientific symposium on the theme 'Place-Memory-Meaning, Preserving Intangible Values in Monuments and Sites' and a General Assembly dealing with all the usual business (doctrinal texts, scientific programmes, world heritage involvement of ICOMOS, etc.)
- That a **General Assembly with the statutory requirements concerning election procedures be held in October 2002** in a "neutral" place in conjunction with the annual Advisory Committee meeting. Voting will be conducted in the usual way.

At the Bureau meeting we were, however, not able to come to a unanimous decision whether the seat of the International Secretariat in Paris or the island of Malta should be chosen as this "neutral" place.

OPEN LETTER TO VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE AND STATUTORY PLANNING

The following open letter was originally published in the Royal Australian Planning Institute's journal and has been reprinted with permission.

Many Victorian local government authorities are currently reviewing their Municipal Strategic Statements (MSSs), which form an important element of the statutory planning process.

Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV), as a division of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, has recently commented on several of these proposed MSS documents. This involvement has resulted in identification of:

- recurrent themes in approaches that individual Councils are taking to address management of cultural and natural heritage assets within the statutory planning process; and
- areas in which the MSS process might serve to provide a consistent, statewide basis for defining the role of local government authorities in relation to Aboriginal cultural heritage management.

For example, most MSS documents appear to contain commitments towards strategic management of historical and natural heritage assets, and such strategies could readily be extended to include Aboriginal heritage. Enhanced policies and procedures in this area will help to promote appreciation of Aboriginal cultural heritage at the local level, while minimising the need for Councils to refer individual planning matters to AAV or Aboriginal communities for heritage advice. Such initiatives will also contribute to the ongoing management and protection of Victoria's Aboriginal cultural heritage, with consequent benefits for the whole Victorian community.

Based on AAV's observations so far, it is recommended that local authorities consider incorporating at least the range of commitments set out below in their MSS documents:

1. Undertaking an appropriate Aboriginal cultural heritage study, contributing to Council's overall heritage management strategy. Authorities should be aware that no such study can be expected to identify all Aboriginal cultural heritage features present within the municipality, but areas of relatively high sensitivity can normally be flagged.
2. Providing widely accessible publications (pamphlets, signs, etc) promoting community appreciation of the municipality's Aboriginal cultural heritage. These materials should be developed using information gathered during the Aboriginal heritage study (item 1 above), and through consultation with local Aboriginal community members.

3. Exploring the use of covenants and agreements for the protection of Aboriginal heritage places on private land. These should mirror similar arrangements protecting historically significant places on private land.
4. Involving local and regional Aboriginal organisations in the heritage planning process. These organisations can provide advice in relation to a wide range of cultural heritage and broader issues affecting Aboriginal communities within the municipality.
5. Encouraging consideration of Aboriginal cultural heritage in the context of any proposed change of land use that has potential to damage Aboriginal cultural heritage places.
6. Undertaking assessments to identify Aboriginal cultural heritage values relating to Council-owned land, and developing appropriate management strategies to protect such values.

Aboriginal Affairs Victoria recognises that local government authorities may wish to explore ways in which the above commitments can be addressed in an effective manner, in partnership with Aboriginal communities and relevant government agencies. For this purpose, once the current round of MSS reviews is nearing completion, AAV would be happy to facilitate a series of regional workshops. Such workshops would focus on the development of appropriate regional networks and explore ways in which the various commitments might best be implemented.

Further information on Aboriginal cultural heritage issues in Victoria can be obtained at AAV's web site (www.nre.vic.gov.au/aav) or from offices of the Regional Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Program, contact details for which are also available on the AAV web site.

Any enquiries about this matter should be addressed to Mr Jamin Moon, Heritage Policy Officer on (telephone) 03 9616 2930.

Employment Openings

Details of the following jobs are currently listed on the Australia ICOMOS website:

- Principal Heritage Officer, Heritage Office, NSW
- Book Conservator/Senior Book Conservator, National Library of New Zealand
- Planning Lawyer

Diary Reminder

8 March: The **submission of papers** for the Australia ICOMOS *Islands of Vanishment* Conference, 8-10 June 2002 **closes**

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2002 is the United Nations Year for Cultural Heritage