

**ICOMOS 14th General Assembly & Scientific Symposium
Mosi Oa Tunya (Victoria Falls), Zimbabwe
27-31 October, 2003**

***Place – Memory – Meaning
Preserving Intangible Values in Monuments & Sites***

A brief overview of the 14th ICOMOS General Assembly at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe (also known as Mosi Oa Tunya – *the smoke that thunders*) is available now on the Australia ICOMOS website (www.icomos.org/australia). This report is intended as general information for Australia ICOMOS members – the formal proceedings from the meetings will be available later.

Australia had a small but active presence at the Victoria Falls meetings. We were represented by Kristal Buckley, Marilyn Truscott, Robyn Riddett and Chris Johnston. Dr Anne Clarke (University of Sydney) also attended as a co-author of a paper submitted to the Scientific Symposium.

We wish to gratefully acknowledge and sincerely thank our Zimbabwean colleagues who were generous and hospitable hosts, and whose hard work and careful planning ensured that this was a very successful and memorable meeting.

For ICOMOS, it was a significant move to hold the General Assembly and Scientific Symposium in Africa, originally planned for Zimbabwe for the 13th General Assembly in 2002. Also, the important theme of the Scientific Symposium – *Place, Memory, Meaning: Preserving Intangible Values in Monuments and Sites* – proved to be particularly topical in light of the very recent adoption of the International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO in October, 2003.

The General Assembly was well attended, and there was a vitality to all aspects of the program. Although there were no other representatives from the Pacific/Oceania Region, Australia ICOMOS members actively participated in all aspects of the meetings arranged at and around the General Assembly.

In the report, I've briefly outlined the purpose and outcomes of the pre-meeting workshop at Kimberley (South Africa) and most of the meetings held at Victoria Falls – including the ISC Strategy Discussion Meeting, Advisory Committee Meeting, Scientific Symposium and General Assembly. There is also a brief (unofficial) summary of the resolutions submitted to the General Assembly for consideration.

I hope that Australia ICOMOS members will take the time to look at the report – and will find it interesting and useful. There are several issues described in the report which will be discussed further by the incoming Australia ICOMOS Executive Committee. If there are any queries or comments, please forward them to the Australia ICOMOS Secretariat (austicomos@deakin.edu.au).

Special thanks to all the Australian members who attended the meetings in Africa for their active participation and assistance in many facets of the program (including the preparation of this report).

Best regards,

**Kristal Buckley,
President
November, 2003**

Kimberley Workshop (23-25 October, 2003)

ICOMOS South Africa organised a pre-meeting workshop – *Towards a Declaration on Intangible Heritage and Monuments and Sites*. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the implications of the International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for ICOMOS, and to prepare material for further consideration at the General Assembly at Victoria Falls.

The workshop was attended by people from a number of African countries (South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Madagascar, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Zambia, Nigeria, Uganda, Tunisia, Seychelles, Benin), and also Norway, Canada and Australia. The Government of Norway generously supported the attendance of the African participants. Australia ICOMOS was represented at the workshop by Kristal Buckley, Marilyn Truscott and Robyn Riddett.

The discussions at the workshop were an excellent pre-cursor to the Scientific Symposium at Victoria Falls. A Declaration from the workshop was drafted, and this provided the basis for a shorter resolution from the Advisory Committee to the General Assembly (reproduced at the end of this report).

While in Kimberley, we were well looked after, fed, entertained and taken to a number of local heritage places – Wildebeeskuil Rock Art Site, Sol Plaatje House, Kimberley Diamond Mine (and the 'Big Hole'), Galeshewe Township, Magersfontein Boer War Battlefield and the McGregor Museum. Following the workshop, we travelled by road, through Botswana to Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

Our warmest thanks are due to Andrew Hall and Colin Fortune (President and Vice-President of ICOMOS South Africa) and other colleagues from ICOMOS South Africa for hosting this interesting and enjoyable event.

International Scientific Committees Strategic Meeting (27 October, 2003)

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss means of improving the work and contribution of the International Scientific Committees. Both administrative effectiveness and intellectual leadership are seen as necessary for the ISCs to meet their objectives.

Australian participants were: Robyn Riddett (representing ICORP – the ISC for Risk Preparedness) and Marilyn Truscott (representing ICAHM – the ISC for Archaeological Heritage Management).

The session considered three major topics:

1. Membership Policy
2. Administrative Policy and Procedures
3. Programs (including research, conference, publications, etc)

Working groups have been established for each of the three major areas. The working groups are to liaise with ISCs and national committees on the issues, and to report to a further session, planned for 2004.

Advisory Committee Meeting (28 October, 2003)

The ICOMOS Advisory Committee is comprised of the Presidents of National Committees and Chairs of the International Scientific Committees (or their delegates). The President of the Advisory Committee is an *ex officio* member of the International Executive Committee. The Advisory Committee therefore represents the broad diversity of our organisation, and is an important component of the international decision making structure of ICOMOS.

Australian participants were: Kristal Buckley (for Australia ICOMOS), Robyn Riddett (representing ICORP) and Marilyn Truscott (representing ICAHM).

An overview of aspects of the triennial work program was presented by ICOMOS President (Michael Petzet) and Secretary-General (Dinu Bumbaru). Briefly, some of the issues discussed were:

- International Secretariat – efforts are being made to improve the services provided, and to find better premises in Paris (possibly in cooperation with ICOM).
- Newsletter – improvements are planned, along with an electronic newsletter service.
- ISC's – efforts to improve operation and coordination; there is possibly a need for some new committees to be formed (eg. on inventory processes, intangible heritage).
- Membership Structure – the 'Young Professional' category has been introduced; the payment categories for national committees are being reviewed.
- Conferences/Themes – in 2004, conference in Hungary next year to celebrate 40 years of the Venice Charter; conference in Montreal re: religious heritage.
- Revision of Statutes – working party has worked very hard on this process.
- World Heritage Analysis – looking at the World Heritage List in terms of its typological, chronological, regional and thematic representativeness; will report to WHC.
- Intangible Heritage Convention – many issues arising from the convention for ICOMOS (eg. issues of overlap with vernacular architecture).
- Iraq – Prince Claus fund has given some money to Blue Shield (for a library project). President Petzet is active in this area.
- Afghanistan – President Petzet and a small international team has been working on the Bamiyan site.
- Heritage @ Risk – the 3rd (2002-2003) edited by Australia ICOMOS member Jane Harrington, has been printed, and each national committee and ISC will receive a small number of copies. President Petzet has asked Marilyn Truscott to be Editor for the next issue.
- Beijing General Assembly, 2005 – work is underway for this meeting.

Part of the day was spent in smaller regional discussions. I attended the Asia-Pacific group which was chaired by Vice-President Yukio Nishimura (ICOMOS Japan) and attended by representatives from China, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Korea (and Australia).

Later in the day, there were presentations from the 'RecoDIM' initiative (by Robin Letellier of the Getty Conservation Institute), and the ISC for Underwater Heritage (regarding the need for more countries to ratify the UNESCO Underwater Heritage Convention).

There was discussion about the proposed amendments to the Statutes, and it became clear that consensus would not be achieved, particularly on the matter of postal voting. Some of the issues raised were: legal deficiencies in the French version of the text; need for more time for consideration by national committees; need for an explanatory note to accompany the proposed changes.

The election for the President of the Advisory Committee was held toward the end of the day. In a very close ballot, Dosso Sindou (Ivory Coast) was elected President. Dr S.S. Biswas (India) was elected Vice-President of the Advisory Committee.

There were a number of resolutions of the Advisory Committee which were forwarded to the Resolutions Committee for the General Assembly. These included issues concerning ICOMOS publications, Iraq's cultural heritage, revision of the Statutes, Machu Pichu (Peru), and the Intangible Heritage Convention.

Norway will host the next meeting of the Advisory Committee, to be held in Bergen in September 2004.

Scientific Symposium:

Place – Memory – Meaning: Preserving Intangible Values in Monuments & Sites **(29-30 October, 2003)**

The Scientific Symposium was a substantial 2-day program organised to explore the conceptual and practical challenges of intangible heritage.

The symposium was arranged into three major themes, each with three questions. The Scientific Symposium concluded with a plenary session and an excellent summary of the program from rapporteurs Janette Deacon (South Africa) and Aimé Gonçalves (Benin).

A: The Intangible Dimension – Concepts, Identification & Assessment

- A1: Concepts, Definitions and Theoretical Considerations
- A2: Places and their Intangible Heritage
- A3: Heritage Places and Living Traditions

B: Impact of Change and Diverse Perceptions

- B1: Changing Use and Spirit of Places
- B2: Diversity of Perceptions
- B3: Conservation & Traditional Knowledge

C: Conserving and Managing Intangible Heritage – Methods

- C1: Conservation, Documentation, Management Methods
- C2: Transmission, Interpretation & Tourism
- C3: Legal and Other Forum of Protection

Marilyn Truscott chaired session A2, and Kristal Buckley chaired session C2. There were two papers discussing Australian issues and case studies. Both papers were very well received.

- *Tradition or Invention: Remembering and Reviving Meanings of Place*, by Marilyn Truscott (Canberra-based consultant, and past President of Australia ICOMOS) – session B2
- *Time, Memory, Place and Land: Social Meaning and Heritage Conservation in Australia*, by Chris Johnston (Principal of the Melbourne consulting practice Context Pty Ltd) and Dr Annie Clarke (University of Sydney) – session B3

14th General Assembly **(31 October, 2003)**

The General Assembly was opened by the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe on 29 October 2003. Also, at the formal opening, a number of presentations were made by participating organisations, the 'Gazzola Prize' was awarded to Dr Cevat Erder of Turkey, and new Honorary Members were announced, including experts from Bulgaria, Cuba, France, UK, Canada, Holland and Poland (these people are given Life Membership in recognition of their heritage achievements and contributions to ICOMOS).

The General Assembly meeting was held on 31 October 2003, and was chaired by Dr Godfrey Mahachi (Chair of the Organising Committee, ICOMOS Zimbabwe).

Some of the general presentations were similar to those made at the Advisory Committee (above). In addition, brief invitations were made by the hosts of the next two General Assemblies: Zhang Bai (President, ICOMOS China) spoke of the arrangements being made for the 15th General Assembly, to be held in Beijing in September or October of 2005 (with the theme of 'cultural landscapes'); and Guy Masson (President, ICOMOS Canada) spoke briefly about the 16th General Assembly, to be held in Canada in 2008.

Adoption of Doctrinal Text

Two new charters were adopted. Each of these has been the subject of lengthy development – *ICOMOS Principles for the Preservation & Conservation-Restoration of Wall Paintings* and *ICOMOS Charter – Principles for the Analysis, Conservation and Structural Restoration of Architectural Heritage*.

These should be available on the ICOMOS Documentation Centre website (www.international.icomos.org/centre_documentation/index.html).

Amendment to Statutes

Despite a great deal of discussion, the matter of the proposed amendment to the Statutes (and in particular, the issue of postal voting) was the subject of considerable differences of opinion, and consensus could not be reached. There is now an opportunity for the International Executive to plan and oversee a more certain and transparent course for the resolution of these questions in the time leading to the next General Assembly in 2005.

Caught up in the disputes concerning the Statutes was an excellent, and seemingly well supported resolution (2b) to establish a single, transparently administered fund to support attendance at ICOMOS meetings (see Attachment 3). It is hoped that the International Executive Committee will take up the apparent support of the General Assembly for this initiative, and establish the 'Victoria Falls Fund'.

Resolutions

There were more than 20 resolutions brought forward for consideration by the General Assembly. These are briefly summarised in Attachment 1. In addition to the resolutions concerning the ICOMOS Statutes (described above), the resolutions dealt with a broad range of issues, including: intangible heritage, religious heritage and cultural diversity; underwater heritage in Africa; Iraq's cultural heritage; issues in Romania, Peru and Bangladesh; review of ICOMOS charters; and the ICOMOS publications budget.

However, due to the prolonged and unresolved discussion of the amendments to the Statutes, many of the resolutions were not able to be discussed.

For the information of Australia ICOMOS members, I've included the full text of resolution 3(j) regarding intangible heritage. In my view, it captured the feeling of the participants in relation to this matter.

**Resolution (3j) - 14th ICOMOS General Assembly, Victoria Falls
Regarding the integration of consideration for intangible aspects**

Taking note of the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, the General Assembly of ICOMOS adopts, in addition to the report of the International Scientific Symposium of Victoria Falls, the following statement as a reference:

ICOMOS recognises the indivisible nature of tangible and intangible heritage. Intangible heritage gives meaning, values and context to objects and places. The individual elements cannot be separated, they are inextricably linked. If not considered together they are both at risk.

It is also important to understand that there is a multiplicity of values that exist within any one place that these relate to emotive, intellectual, physical and sensory experiences of the place, that are linked in space and time, and include 'places of memory'. These values include those of symbolism, identity, culture, living traditions, remembrance and memories, the environment and nature and reflect the dynamism of intangible heritage.

In terms of the World Heritage Convention and the work of ICOMOS, intangible heritage provides the confirmation of the values of the place, and its significance. ICOMOS therefore welcomes the adoption of the UNESCO International Convention for the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage by the 32nd Session of the General Conference in Paris in October 2003, and resolves to work to integrate the purposes of the Convention to improve the Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention by expanding them to include intangible heritage values.

It is also resolved to integrate the principles of intangible heritage into general heritage conservation practice, for the identification, assessment, conservation, interpretation and management of places. ICOMOS recognises that it is important to understand the intangible values and social memories, their traditions and transmission to future generations. Without these cultural heritage places lose their authenticity.

ICOMOS therefore notes that it is not sufficient to preserve the skills and the materials for good conservation of built heritage. The original concepts, the context and the intangible must be taken into account to ensure the conservation of the authenticity of a place. This approach must be taken up by all ICOMOS' fields of expertise.

Resolution from the Advisory Committee, based on the longer and more detailed Declaration from the Kimberley Workshop

Attachment 1:

Summary of Resolutions - 14th ICOMOS General Assembly, Victoria Falls

[Note: these summaries have been prepared to provide an overview of the issues covered by the Resolutions only. Many details have therefore been omitted.]

1a: Regarding actions relative to Iraq's cultural heritage [passed]

Seeks the establishment of an ICOMOS taskforce (including participation from the International Scientific Committees) to coordinate action in relation to Iraq's cultural heritage, identification of present and future needs for the protection of cultural heritage, and leadership in the development of specific proposals.

Submitted by: ICOMOS Advisory Committee

1b: Regarding the site of Alburnus Maior in Rosia Montana, Romania [passed]

Calls for national and international intervention in response to concerns about threats to this archaeological site caused by mining operations. [also passed in Madrid]

1c: Regarding the site of Machu Pichu, Peru [passed]

Calls for urgent progress on the revision of the Masterplan for this World Heritage property in order to improve management and to adopt UNESCO recommendations relating to the planned construction of a 'sky train' and conservation of a recently damaged structure.

Submitted by: Peru, Paraguay, Ivory Coast

1d: Regarding the development of ICOMOS National Committee in Africa [passed]

Recognises the importance and threats to Africa's underwater heritage, and urges African countries to work towards ratification of the 2001 UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage.

Submitted by: ICUCH (ISC for Underwater Heritage)

1e: Regarding a pilot project for the cultural heritage of Bangladesh [passed]

Comments on issues for archaeological heritage in Bangladesh. Supports proposal by Bangladesh ICOMOS for training of local secondary school teachers to take on custodianship responsibilities for local monuments and sites, and to seek assistance from UNESCO, the World Bank or other international funding organisations to implement the proposal.

Submitted by: Bangladesh

2a: Regarding the revision of the statutes [discussed at length/no resolution]

Notes the issues arising from the proposed changes to the statutes. Proposes that work on the revision of the statutes continue, and suggests a process with time frames for bringing the matter to resolution at the 15th General Assembly in Beijing (September/October 2005).

Submitted by: Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Macedonia, Norway, Slovakia, South Africa, Sweden, USA, Tunisia

2b: Regarding the establishment of a Victoria Falls Fund [discussed at length/no resolution]

Seeks to establish a fund ('Victoria Falls Fund'), to be managed by the ICOMOS International Secretariat, with the purpose of providing financial assistance for attendance at statutory and scientific meetings of ICOMOS.

2c: Regarding the introduction of postal voting [discussed at length/no resolution]

Proposes adoption of the system of postal voting as outlined in the proposed amendments to the Statutes.

Submitted by: Mexico, Venezuela, Spain, Cuba, Colombia, Brazil

2d: Regarding the adoption of doctrinal texts [not discussed/no resolution]

Proposes review of existing ICOMOS Charters and doctrinal text, according to various criteria, including their consistency, with recommendations to be prepared for the General Assembly in Beijing.

3a: Regarding the World Heritage missions of ICOMOS [not discussed/no resolution]
Proposes that National Committees and International Scientific Committees be asked each year to submit lists of experts in heritage conservation. The combined list should then be forwarded by the ICOMOS Executive Committee to the World Heritage Centre for use in appointing missions.

3b: Regarding the organisation of International Scientific Committees
[not discussed/no resolution]
Recommends that the ICOMOS Statutes Committee consider some changes to the International Scientific Committees, including: creation of a smaller number of groups ('Commissions') to which the current committees would become working groups; extend the triennium to a four year period; introduce an international congress every fourth year (including the General Assembly), with symposia held between the congresses; establish a series of proceedings of all congresses, symposia and workshops.

3c: Regarding ICOMOS Charter on recording and documentation [not discussed/no resolution]
Proposes that the existing ICOMOS Charter on the Recording and Documentation of Monuments and Sites be reviewed to ensure the appropriate consideration of recording and documentation of intangible heritage.

3d: Regarding certain publications [not discussed/no resolution]
Stresses the need for an ongoing commitment to fund a minimum of one scientific publication per year, according to the program proposed by the Publications Committee (and adopted by the Executive Committee).
Submitted by: ICOMOS Advisory Committee

3e: Regarding cultural diversity [not discussed/no resolution]
Welcomes the UNESCO initiative on the subject of cultural diversity, and expresses the willingness of ICOMOS to contribute. In the context of that initiative, the many forms of cultural heritage should be seen as prime expressions of cultural diversity.

3f: Regarding religious heritage [not discussed/no resolution]
Recognises the universal importance of religious heritage, and the need for protection from threatening conflicts and/or neglect (as detailed in the Heritage at Risk reports of ICOMOS). Notes the planned international conference on this topic in Montreal, Canada in 2004. Supports the development of a specific strategy to address the issues relating to the conservation of religious heritage.

3g: Regarding cultural heritage under diplomatic or international administration [not discussed/no resolution]
Notes that areas managed through treaties, international conventions, or other international mandates (eg. by the United Nations or NATO) often contain places of heritage significance. Proposes that ICOMOS establish an international scientific program to deal with these situations, including the preparation of conservation guidelines, and collaboration with UNESCO to implement relevant guidelines and other conservation recommendations.

3h: Regarding vernacular heritage [not discussed/no resolution]
Proposes that the International Scientific Committees for vernacular architecture and training jointly consider the characteristics of vernacular architecture, and the appropriate skills, training and assistance needed to support the conservation of vernacular architecture.

3i: Regarding the creation of an international committee on intangible heritage
[not discussed/no resolution]
Welcomes the adoption by UNESCO of the International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and proposes the establishment of an international scientific committee on intangible heritage.

3j: Regarding the integration of consideration for intangible aspects

[not discussed/no resolution] – see Attachment 2

Welcomes the adoption by UNESCO International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Describes the relationships between the tangible and intangible elements of heritage, the need to better incorporate intangible heritage into heritage practice (including World Heritage), and outlines some of the important implications arising from the Convention.

Submitted by: ICOMOS Advisory Committee

4a: Regarding the development of ICOMOS National Committees in Africa

[discussed/sent away for re-drafting/no resolution]

Declaration regarding the issues covered in Resolution 1 (d) above.

Submitted by: ICUCH

4b: Regarding the conclusions of the Kimberley Workshop [noted]

Welcomes the adoption by UNESCO International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Describes the relationships between the tangible and intangible elements of heritage, the need to better incorporate intangible heritage into heritage practice (including World Heritage), and outlines some of the important implications arising from the Convention.

Submitted by: Kimberley Workshop