STRATEGY

OVERVIEW

Scope

The strategy is a nationwide approach which identifies broad strategies to assist all heritage collections, and is designed to implement the National Conservation and Preservation Policy. The scope of this strategy is the conservation and preservation of all types of heritage collections. Where the word 'museum' is used, it may be taken to mean 'heritage collections' held in museums, libraries, archives, galleries, universities, historic sites and places, and in both the private and public domain.

The strategy does not aim to cover all activities associated with heritage collections, such as curation, interpretation and exhibition development. Significance and collection management are included as specific elements in the strategy because they have an impact on the effective conservation and preservation of collections.

The HCC's Collections Management and Conservation Working Party has developed a five year plan and yearly workplans to co-ordinate and support the implementation of the strategy.

Full implementation of the strategy will depend on resources being available. The success of strategy implementation will depend on the effectiveness of developing key partnerships across the sector.

Structure

The strategy is organised into five main elements: significance, skills development; collection management; research; and awareness raising. The elements were chosen as encompassing all the major approaches suggested in the October 1996 forum discussion papers for *Developing a National Strategy*, at the forum itself and through feedback. All five elements are essential for the full implementation of the strategy.

Each element begins with an overall objective, outcomes by 2001, links and references. Links are included under each element to indicate that there will be a coordinated approach with other organisations and their strategies. Key strategies are specified for each element.

The key strategies apply to all kinds of collections, ranging from traditional museum collections through new forms of electronic media; to outdoor, in situ, maritime heritage; and the collections of indigenous and migrant groups.

However, different types of collections are not specifically addressed in turn. It is intended that when each key strategy is implemented, the needs of different types of collections will be taken into account. Digitisation as a preservation tool and the preservation of new media are two areas which will require more detailed examination in the implementation phase.

The five elements are:

1. *Significance*

   Significance refers to an assessment of an object's value in a context, whether historic, aesthetic, scientific, cultural or monetary. Assessment of significance provides the context for appropriate conservation and preservation. That is, conservators and others

will be better able to determine priorities and levels of conservation and preservation treatments if they understand the item's significance.

2. *Skills development*

   This element encompasses activities which increase the conservation and preservation expertise of those responsible for caring for collections.

3. *Collection management*

   The Strategy addresses how mechanisms for improving conservation processes in standard collection management practices can be promoted and achieved. The Strategy takes collection management to mean, 'all the processes of acquiring, looking after, accounting for, and providing access to collections' (Hallett 1996, Section 2.1).

4. *Research*

   Research may be defined as: 'A search or investigation undertaken to discover facts and reach new conclusions by the critical study of a subject or by a course of scientific inquiry' (I'Ons and Adams 1996, p. 2). Activities under this element aim to achieve a national research strategy which will encourage research projects and disseminate their results.

5. *Awareness raising*

This element proposes actions which will create a culture of caring for and treasuring Australia's heritage collections.

Description and Implementation

It is beyond the scope of this strategy document to include all the ideas and comments which have been received in the course of its development. These comments and ideas have been documented and will be available for consideration as various strategies and actions are implemented.

The strategy seeks to avoid duplication and will take into account existing programs or strategies at the national, state or local level.

Examples of strategies recently completed or under development by other organisations are: the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material Inc. (AICCM) *Strategic Plan 1996-97*; Museums Australia Standing Committee on Regional, Local and Specialist and Museums *Strategic Plan to 2001*; and the Cultural Ministers Council *Strategic Plan for the Return of Indigenous Cultural Property*.

Examples of developing or existing projects are: the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AVCC) University Museums Project; Museums Australia Standing Committee on Regional, Local and Specialist Museums, Guidelines for Regional, Local and Specialist Museums; Australian Survey of Sculpture, Monuments and Outdoor Cultural Material (AICCM & Art Gallery of NSW); the NSW Heritage Office Identification and Assessment Guidelines project; the Preserving Access to Digital Information (PADI) Working Group, a cross-sectoral group set up to provide guidance on preserving digital information; and the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) Discussion Papers, 'Options for Identifying Places of National Significance' and 'National Heritage Standards'.

The listed references are not intended to be comprehensive, however, they show what ideas and recommendations informed the Strategy. To implement the Strategy, it is envisaged that the new Heritage Collections Council will allocate resources to the Strategy's priority areas and will identify and work closely with organisations which will have prime responsibility for certain elements.

Australian Museums On-Line (AMOL) is an online services for all museum and art gallery collections. Whenever applicable AMOL will be used to promote or deliver initiatives proposed in the Strategy. Further expansion of AMOL could substantially contribute to fulfilling some of the Strategy's objectives. It will be especially useful in providing advice and support to small heritage collections; and sharing information about items of significance, research projects, standards, disaster planning, expertise and facilities.

Findings from the HCC's regional pilot projects, training workshops and internships, as well as material in the National Training Package, will be used in the development and implementation of relevant strategies.

Significance

Developing criteria and processes for determining significance in a variety of contexts, for use by all heritage collections, is fundamental to effective management of Australia's heritage collections. Use of the criteria and processes will enable collecting institutions to make decisions about conservation and preservation priorities. Key Strategies S1,2 and 4 involve the development of an agreed national set of criteria for determining significance and will aim to have those criteria adopted by managers of collections. The criteria would enable assessment of significance in any context. The importance of retaining items in their associated places, where appropriate, will be addressed through the significance criteria.

The regional pilot projects developed by the HCC found that some museum staff were unable to determine the significance of items and subsequently determine storage, conservation, preservation and exhibition needs. The searchable collections database on AMOL is a potential avenue museum workers can use to assess and identify their items in the wider context of Australia's heritage collections. Where possible, it is also important that qualified curators, who have a wider contextual and historical knowledge of items and other collections, assess items for their significance. Under Key Strategy S 3 consideration will be given to establishing a database of collections and items of significance on AMOL so that information about, and identification of, significant items will be available. The database would include items of significance which have been identified using the criteria developed by Key Strategies 1(4 (in any context and at any level. Any information contained on the database will be voluntarily contributed by institutions and issues of security and confidentiality will be addressed before contributions are made.

The infrastructure for conservation and preservation funding will be investigated under Key Strategy S 5. Existing funds will be identified and an investigation will be made of the feasibility of a national fund. Depending on the resources available, such a fund will contribute towards the conservation and preservation of some items or collections included on the significance database. Contributions from private industry could be sought. Funded projects could include conservation and preservation needs assessment, specific treatments or improved storage for an item or collection.

The findings of the HCC's regional pilot projects showed that attention should be directed in the first instance towards managing the environmental conditions in which collections are housed, and that items of significance should be identified and housed in the most favourable parts of buildings. Environmental conditions are addressed under Key Strategy CM 3 in the Collections Management element.

Objective

To develop criteria for determining significance and identifying items and collections of significance; and to strengthen the infrastructure for their conservation and preservation.

Outcome by 2001

1. Managers of heritage collections are committed to managing their collections in accordance with agreed criteria and processes.

2. Greater knowledge in Australia and overseas of the significance of Australian heritage collections.

3. An infrastructure for continued conservation and preservation of significant items and collections.

Links

1. Collection Management Key Strategies in this document.

2. AICCM Strategic Plan 1996-97.

3. NSW Heritage Office Identification and Assessment Guidelines project.

4. PADI Working Group.

References

1. Foster, S. 1996, 'Significance', Developing a National Strategy, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

2. Marshall, D., Pearson, M & Young, L. 1995, Policies to Update the National Cultural Heritage Control List: Stages 1 and 2 Reports, Consultants' report prepared for the Department of Communications and the Arts and the National Cultural Heritage Committee, Canberra, unpub.

3. National Centre for Australia Studies, Monash University, Heritage Collections in Australia, (Anderson Report) including Report I 1991; Report Stage II 1992, Report Stage III 1993, Report for the Heritage Collections Working Group, Canberra.

4. NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 1996, NSW Heritage Manual, Sydney.

Key Strategy S 1

Review existing criteria and processes for assessing significance.

Output

Report on best format and content for criteria with recommendations.

Timeframe

By June 1998.

Actions

1. Consult with major Federal, State and Local Government heritage institutions on existing criteria.

2. Consult with major collectors including National Trust, private Collectors, regional organisations, indigenous and ethnic communities.

3. Review overseas criteria.

Key Strategy S 3

Establish a database of items and collections of significance link to related databases and catalogues.

Output

A database of items and collections of significance on AMOL with links to related sites, eg Memory of the World Register.

List of items and collections of significance in print formats.

Timeframe

Database established 1999-2000

Actions

1. Negotiate with Heritage Collections Council On Line Working Party on extension of AMOL to include significance database.

2. Include condition report, conservation, preservation, detailed provenance and access information in the data set of the database of items and collections of significance.

Key Strategy S 4

Develop a strategy for adoption of criteria by managers of collections.

Output

Evaluation report on usage.

Timeframe

June 1999

Actions

1. Market and promote criteria.

2. Place them on AMOL

3. Distribute.

4. Evaluate whether and how criteria are used.

Key Strategy S 5

Investigate existing conservation and preservation funds and the feasibility of establishing a national fund.

Output

Infrastructure for conservation and preservation funding.

Timeframe

Complete investigation by June 1998, feasibility report by end 1998.

Actions

1. Liaise with State and other funding bodies and private industry.

2. Report on existing funding and recommend further development.

Skills development

The forum papers and groups clearly stated that conservation education and training strategies are needed for different purposes and for different groups including volunteers, professionals, entry level vocational training, indigenous people and people of non-English speaking backgrounds. It was generally agreed that all training strategies for heritage collections staff should incorporate cross-cultural awareness training.

The forum and the findings from regional pilot projects and training workshops showed that there is already much expertise in small and regional heritage collections. However, the staff working with these heritage collections appreciate assistance and further skill development provided through on-site visits or training workshops. One of the regional pilot projects identified that only two museums had high standards of collection management practices and that all heritage collections needed more support to develop their expertise.

Full implementation of this component will require major commitments from key stakeholders.

Key Strategy SD 1 proposes a national conservation and preservation outreach program for workers in small heritage collections. A national approach to outreach services for regional and small heritage collections involving local and State and Territory governments and Museums Australia is essential to provide regular on-going access to conservation, preservation and curatorial expertise. A national approach will also develop and sustain the skills of people working

in regional and small heritage collections. A range of avenues building on existing on existing State, Territory and Museums Australia programs may be used to provide access to expertise and skills development, such as on-site visits, telephone advice, on-line help through AMOL and training workshops using material from the National Training Package which is being developed by the HCC. Outreach services could also provide practical support such as collective purchasing arrangements for materials, identifying lending or hiring schemes for environmental monitoring equipment and facilitating special interest networks.

Further work needs to be undertaken to develop appropriate training strategies for indigenous people and other communities so that they may conserve their collections and increase their participation in the museum field. Development of special training programs is proposed by Key Strategy SD 2. This involves working on ways to train and support indigenous people working in keeping places and cultural centres. This will be done in consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), the Department of Employment Education Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) and Museums Australia's Standing Committee on Museums and Indigenous People. Appropriate training programs for other groups will be developed in consultation with existing conservation services dealing with collections held by non-English speaking background communities.

Key Strategy SD 3 addresses formal conservation and preservation education and training for volunteers, para-professionals and professionals. There needs to be a mechanism for working with education institutions so that they respond to the needs of industry by producing specialist conservators, for example in textiles, furniture or photography. This strategy involves holding a forum, auditing courses, identifying gaps in specialisation and liaison with educational institutions and professional associations. Support could also be given to the development or use of existing professional codes of practice, codes of ethics, accreditation and standards for conservators. A register of accredited conservators and facilities could be placed on AMOL.

Objectives

To develop a range of cultural heritage management training and education programs for personnel at all levels.

Outcome by 2001

1. People trained to an appropriate level of skill in conservation and preservation for all types of collections and specific conservation requirements.

2. Better conserved collections.

Links

1. Awareness raising Key Strategies in this document.

2. AICCM professional development subcommittee.

3. AICCM Strategic Plan 1996-97

4. Museums Australia Standing Committee on Regional, Local and Specialist Museums, Strategic Plan.

5. Museums Australia professional development subcommittee.

6. Museums Australia Conservation Special Interest Group.

7. Conservation training providers.

8. National Museum Competency Standards.

References

Cowie, K. 1996. 'Map of conservation and preservation services in Australia', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

Factor, B. 1996, 'The contribution of community and professional organisations to the conservation and preservation of Australia's heritage collections', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

Galla, A. 1993, *Heritage Training as Access: Guidelines for the development of Heritage Curricula and Cultural Diversity,* Report for the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australian Government Publishing Services (AGPS), Canberra.

Parkinson, C. 1996, 'Conservation and preservation education and training', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

Sculthorpe, G. 1996. 'Protecting indigenous cultural heritage', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

Sloggett, R. 1996, 'Accreditation and standards', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

Thompson, J. 1996, 'Cultural diversity in Australia', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

Key Strategy SD 1

Establish a national conservation and preservation outreach program for workers in small heritage collections which includes training opportunities and curatorial assistance to access items and collections for significance (depending on available resources).

Output

1. Outreach programs.

2. On-going conservation and preservation training programs.

3. Staff trained in basic conservation and preservation for use in heritage collections.

Timeframe

July 1998-on going.

Actions

1. Assess existing outreach programs for effectiveness and coverage

~ develop criteria for assessing training providers.

1. Develop a nationally coordinated training program which includes the means found to be most effective to assist small heritage collections. This may include the Heritage Collections Council's National Conservation and Preservation Training Package and may also encompass:

` on-site assistance by qualified conservators.

` assessment of items and collections for significance by registered users of criteria for determining significance.

` telephone advice.

` computer online support.

` collective purchasing arrangements for materials.

` identify lending or hiring schemes for environmental monitoring equipment.

` encouraging networks of special interest heritage collections or individuals.

` training workshops.

Key Strategy SD 2

Develop special training programs for indigenous communities and community groups (depending on available resources).

Output

Targeted training and support programs.

Timeframe

Training program begins in 1999.

Actions

1. Undertake training needs analysis for indigenous communities and migrant groups.
2. Develop training programs for targeted groups with existing services and communities at national, state and local level, including ATSIC, DEETYA and Museums Australia Standing Committee on museums and Indigenous People.

Key Strategy SD 3

Facilitate the development of a range of conservation and preservation education opportunities and support the development of professional codes of practice, codes of ethics, accreditation and standards for conservation and collections managers.

Output

1. Paraprofessionals and professionals who have appropriate conservation and preservation skills to meet specific needs of different types of collections.
2. A register of accredited conservators and facilities.
3. Trained indigenous conservators and conservators specialising in other cultures.
4. Conservators Code of Practice and support for accreditation systems.
5. Use of National Museum Competency Standards for training conservators and collection managers.

Timeframe

By end of 1999.

Actions

1. Audit gaps in skills and match of trained conservators in certain fields eg conservation and preservation of textiles, natural history collections, photography and furniture.
2. Meet with education providers and AICCM, MA, ALIA and ASA professional development subcommittees to discuss results of audit.
3. Investigate National Museum Competency Standards for use in developing training programs.
4. Explore with the On-line Working Party and AICCM how AMOL could be extended to include a register of expertise and facilities.
5. Develop options for education and training strategies for indigenous people with ATSIC, Museum Australia Standing Committee on Museums and Indigenous People and DEETYA, using the recommendations of the Sculthorpe Working Paper, Previous Possessions and Galla's 1996 Report, Access to the hidden profession.
6. Develop training and education options with Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils Australia Inc. (FECCA) and existing State or local services for people of non-English speaking background.
7. Investigate ways that cross-cultural awareness training may be integrated into education and training programs.
8. With AICCM, investigate ways to develop a Code of Practice and to support accreditation for conservators.

Collection management

A necessary trend in heritage collections and galleries over the last two decades has been towards exhibition activities which educate the public as well as obtain income for the museum or gallery. This trend was mentioned by the Netherlands Government in its rationale for the *Delta Plan for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage in the Netherlands* (Ministry of Welfare, Health and Cultural Affairs 1990). There can be competing priorities for conservators between preparing items for exhibition and on-going conservation and preservation. There is an important interrelationship between conservation and preservation, assessment of significance and collection management and they should not be treated as unrelated activities. A high standard of collection management will include long-term conservation and preservation planning.

Key Strategies CM 1 and CM 2 of this element address the need to incorporate accepted conservation and preservation procedures into collection management and access programs. In his discussion paper, Hallett proposed a national collection management framework which would incorporate a checklist of key collection management issues and benchmarks (Hallett 1996, p. 3). Key Strategy CM 1 and CM 2 propose work be undertaken with AICCM, Museums Australia and related bodies such as the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) to encourage the use of accepted conservation and preservation practices by collecting institutions. In 'Future directions in access and preservation technologies and new electronic formats' (Webb 1996), Colin Webb discusses the role of digital technology as a means of preserving items. These processes will need to be considered as part of any collection management framework which may be promoted as a result of this Strategy.

Key Strategy CM 3 will concentrate on preventive practices such as standards or guidelines for environmental conditions, storage, display and building maintenance. Key Strategy CM 4 will promote best practice examples of conservation and preservation assessment plans, risk analysis and asset management. Preventive conservation will be a guiding principle in implementation of all the Key Strategies.

Key Strategy CM 5 will use the relevant sections in the National Training Package to train museums in disaster planning; encourage museums to document disaster plans; encourage regional networks for disaster response; and publish examples of disaster plans through AMOL.

Objective

To ensure that collection management and access programs incorporate conservation and preservation procedures and practices.

Outcome by 2001

Australia's heritage collections are managed and housed in accordance with nationally agreed standards.

Links

1. AICCM Strategic Plan 1996-97.

2. Museums Australia Standing Committee on Regional, Local and Specialist Museums

` Guidelines for Regional, Local and Specialist Museums.

` Strategic Plan.

1. Museums Australia Standing Committee on Museums and Indigenous People, Strategic Plan.

2. Significance Key Strategies.

3. AVCC University Museums Project.

` Strategic Plan and Conservation Assessments.

References

1. Cultural Ministers Council 1993, *Heritage Collections in Australia: a plan for a new partnership*, Heritage Collections Working Group, Canberra.

2. Consultative Committee on Cultural Heritage in a Multicultural Australia 1991, *A Plan for Cultural Heritage Institutions to Reflect Australia's Cultural Diversity*, Department of the Arts, Sport, and Environment, Tourism and Territories, AGPS, Canberra.

3. Foster, S. 1996, 'Significance', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

4. Hallett, M. 1996, 'Collection management, conservation and access', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

5. Midwinter, D. 1996, 'Conserving outdoor objects and collections', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

6. Ministry of welfare, Health and Cultural Affairs 1990, *Delta Plan for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage in the Netherlands*, Den Haag, The Netherlands.

7. National Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University, *Heritage Collections in Australia,(Anderson Report) including Report I 1991; Report Stage II 1992, Report Stage III 1993*, Report for the Heritage Collections Working Group, Canberra.

8. University Museums Review Committee 1996, *Cinderella Collections: University Museums and Collections in Australia*, Canberra.

9. Young, L. 1996, 'Conserving in situ collections', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

Key Strategy CM 1

Develop nationally agreed benchmarks for collection management resources and practices focusing on conservation and preservation issues.

Output

A set of benchmarks for collection management resources and practices focusing on conservation and preservation issues.

Timeframe

By June 1998.

Actions

1. Contribute towards benchmarks for local government museums and galleries being developed by Museums Australia (Vic) for Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) project.

2. Research national and international benchmarks.

3. Recommend existing benchmarks and if any others need to be developed.

Key Strategy CM 2

Encourage acceptance and adoption of benchmarks

Output

Agreement with AICCM, MA and related organisations on examples of accepted collection management practices which incorporate conservation and preservation practices and benchmarks.

Timeframe

Feb 1998-on-going.

Actions

1. Meetings and workshops with AICCM, MA Special Interest Group and Australian Registrars Committee to agree on accepted collection management practices which incorporate conservation and preservation practices and benchmarks.

2. Promote accepted conservation and preservation practices.

Key Strategy CM 3

Develop guidelines and standards on appropriate environmental conditions in buildings that house collections.

Output

Guidelines and standards on appropriate environmental conditions in buildings that house collections.

Timeframe

1998 on-going.

Actions

1. Review existing national and international standards and guidelines on environmental conditions including: relative humidity, light and temperature levels, exhibition and storage conditions.

2. Review current work within Australia on developing building standards for collections. This may include a sample audit of buildings.

3. Document local and regional issues in relation to environmental conditions.

4. Promote guidelines and standards on storage and display conditions to assist regional and local communities to preserve collections and items, eg using relevant section in National Training Package in training courses.

5. Develop guidelines on building maintenance to assist regional and local communities to preserve collections and/or items.

Key Strategy CM 4

Review existing Australian and international models for conservation and preservation assessment plans, including risk analysis models and asset management, and promote the use of best practice examples.

Output

Report with recommendations on best format and content for conservation and preservation assessment plans.

Timeframe

By June 1998.

Actions

1. Consult with Museums Australia NSW, National Library of Australia Community Heritage grant guidelines and major heritage organisations on existing plans.

2. Review overseas models including those developed and used by the American Institute of Conservation (AIC), the Getty Institute and the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property (NIC).

3. Consult with conservators and heritage consultants undertaking conservation assessments in Australia.

Key Strategy CM 5

Raise level of disaster prevention for collections through encouraging organisations to document disaster plans.

Output

Published examples of disaster plans on AMOL.

Training in disaster planning through use of the relevant section in the National Training Package.

Timeframe

1998.

Actions

1. Assess existing Australian and international disaster plans for best practice examples of disaster plans.

2. Provide training in disaster planning through Skills Development programs, using the relevant section in the National Training Package.

3. Assess existence of regional networks for disaster response.

4. Encourage development of regional networks for disaster response when not in existence.

Publish examples of disaster plans.

Research

Key Strategies 1(3 cover the development of a national research strategy. There needs to be a coordinated national research program to address critical conservation and preservation issues. Getting a picture of the current situation is a first step in identifying areas of greatest need, targeting resources and coordinating action. The strategy will take into account overseas research and support existing programs in institutions, it will not attempt to set their research priorities. A research needs-assessment will assist in understanding how research is currently undertaken and identify where there needs to be coordination and targeting of resources.

Objective

To develop coordinated national research programs that address critical conservation and preservation issues.

Outcome by 2001

1. Agreed responsibilities and mechanisms for implementing national research programs.

2. National coordination and funding of conservation and preservation research programs.

Links

1. Historic shipwrecks national research strategy (DCA).

2. Australian Research Council (ARC), (information at http://www.deet.gov.au/nbeet/arc/arc.htm).

3. PADI Working Group.

4. Tertiary, State and Federal research institutions.

References

1. Godfrey, I. 1996, 'Conserving maritime heritage', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

2. Hallett, M. 1996, 'Collection management, conservation and access', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

3. I'ons, A. & Adams, C. 1996, 'Research into materials conservation', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

4. Nizette, M. 1996, 'Conserving Australia's film and sound archive', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

5. Webb, C. 1996, 'Future directions in access and preservation technologies and new electronic formats', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

Key Strategy R 1

Conduct a research audit and needs assessment.

Output

A report on current research arrangements which includes an audit of the existing situation and an analysis of its appropriateness for the conservation and preservation sector.

Timeframe

By December 1998.

Actions

1. Assess needs.

2. Document relevant research organisations.

3. Recommend action to HCC.

Key Strategy R 2

Prioritise research needs for the conservation and preservation sector.

Output

A report on research priorities with recommendations for action.

Timeframe

December 1998.

Actions

1. Prioritise research projects highlighting projects that address environmental control, paying particular attention to projects in the areas of building costs and maintenance.

2. Assess benefits of each option to the conservation and preservation sector.

3. Distribute reports on needs and priorities to stakeholders for consultation.

Key Strategy R 3

Implement recommendations from report on research priorities.

Output

1. A nationally coordinated, funded research strategy.

2. Research projects conducted by identified organisations.

Timeframe

1998-on-going.

Actions

1. Encourage appropriate organisations to pursue specific research projects based on priorities.

2. Develop a national register of conservation research projects.

3. Develop a mechanism to publish and disseminate the results of research projects promptly.

4. Make information and results available on AMOL.

Awareness raising

The Key Strategy AR 1 suggests public and targeted awareness campaigns. Australia's heritage collections are held in many places and are in both public and private hands. Cultural heritage is dynamic. Documents and objects currently owned by one individual, family or organisation may be of great significance to Australia in the future. This means there needs to a general climate of valuing and treasuring heritage collections wherever they are located. Raising awareness of the value of our heritage will lead to a greater priority being placed on its conservation and preservation by the community, government and funding sources.

Public and targeted awareness campaigns with their focus in 2000(2001 could be developed. For example, there could be consultation with the Australian Local Government Association on ways to raise Local Government's awareness of its role in caring for local heritage; teaching resources could be introduced into schools as part of civics education or society and environment studies; and appropriate support could be given to initiatives aimed at raising awareness of heritage issues among indigenous and multicultural groups.

Objective

To raise awareness, educate and inform the community and government of the value of Australia's heritage collections and the need to conserve it.

Outcome by 2001

The value of Australia's heritage collections is widely acknowledged in the community, by government and funding providers.

Links

1. AICCM Strategic Plan for 1996-97.

2. Australian Survey of Sculpture Monuments and Outdoor Cultural Material (AICCM & Art Gallery NSW).

3. Centenary of Federation Council.

4. Museums Australia Strategic Plan.

References

1. Council of Australian Museums Associations 1993, *Previous Possessions, New Obligations. Policies for Museums in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples,* Council of Australian Museum Associations Inc., Melbourne.

2. Midwinter, D. 1996, 'Conserving outdoor objects and collections', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

3. Tyzack, H. 1996, 'Raising community awareness', *Developing a National Strategy*, Conservation Working Party of the Heritage Collections Committee of the Cultural Ministers Council, Canberra.

Output

Public awareness campaign.

Targeted awareness campaigns.

Teaching resources incorporating heritage components.

Cooperative efforts between local history groups, local Councils, libraries, indigenous groups and culturally diverse groups.

Timeframe

Centenary of Federation timeframe, campaign focus 2000-2001.

Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) meetings by November 1998, take recommendations to November 98 National Local Government Conference.

Actions

1. Work with National and State Local Government Associations to develop a Local Government awareness campaign.

` Develop a national 'What's important to you?' program that gains involvement and feedback at the community/local level.

Develop cooperative efforts with Museums Australia, AICCM, and the Centenary of Federation Council.

Develop teaching resources with State education departments which encourage access to, caring for and use of heritage collections.

Liaise with ATSIC, Museums Australia Standing Committee on Museums and Indigenous People on initiatives to implement *Previous Possessions-New Obligations.*

Work with FECCA and other stakeholders to disseminate publicity and other information to migrant groups.

APPENDIX 1

Members of the Collections Management and Conservation Working Party of the HCC

Chair:

Margaret Anderson, Director, Social and Cultural History, Western Australian Museum, tel: (08) 9328 4411, email: anderm@museum.wa.gov.au

Deputy Chair:

Ian Cook, Director, Artlab Australia, tel: (08) 8207 7520, email: artlab@senet.com.au

Karen Coote, Senior Objects Conservator, Australian Museum, tel: (02) 9320 6207, email: karenc@amsg.austmus.gov.au

Tamara Lavrencic, Collections Manager, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, tel: (02) 9931 5204, email: tamaral@gh.hht.nsw.gov.au

Dr Jan Lyall, Assistant Director-General, Cultural and Educational Services, National Library of Australia, tel: (02) 6262 1249, email: jlyall@nla.gov.au

Chris Tassell, Director, Queen Victoria Art Gallery an Museum, tel: (03) 6331 6777

Dr Ian MacLeod, Manager, Museum Internal Services, Western Australian Museum, tel: (08) 9431 8430, email: macleodi@museum.wa.gov.au

Phil Gordon, Aboriginal Heritage Officer, Australian Museum, tel: (02) 9320 6000

Robyn Sloggett, President, Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material, tel: (03) 9344 7989, email: robyn_sloggett@registrar.muwayf.edu.au

John Stanton, Curator, Berndt Collection, University of Western Australia, tel: (08) 9380 2854, email: jstanton@cyllene.uwa.edu.au

Viv Szekeres, Director, Migration Museum, tel: (08) 8207 7580

Ian Stephenson, National Trust of NSW, tel: (02) 9258 0123

HCC Secretariat

Annabelle Cameron, Director, Collections Development Section, Department of Communications and the Arts, tel: (02) 6271 1687, email: acameron@dca.gov.au

Appendix 2

This appendix has been reproduced from the *National Conservation and Preservation Policy for Movable Cultural Heritage* which was published in 1995.

It contains an overview of the key issues of the time which led to the development of the policy.

Cultural Diversity

Collections reflecting Australia's diverse cultures are not well represented in institutions; however, better collections exist at community or individual levels. The publication, *A plan for cultural heritage institutions to reflect Australia's cultural diversity* (1991) examined collecting policies of institutions and issues of access, representation, collection, display and consultation with community groups. Collection institutions are still in the initial stage of responding to this plan.

Cultural diversity issues include: a critical concern about significance and diversity; the role of intangible heritage; cultural reclamation and development; the private and public interest in this heritage, including its appropriate location and care; cultural restrictions and sensitivities, especially related to access; and acknowledging the desire of many individuals and communities to retain objects and collections within their own immediate access and care.

The Commonwealth Government's Office of Multicultural Affairs deals directly with cultural diversity matters. The Office, in turn, funds the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia. Extracts from the Federation's *Arts, Culture and Heritage Policy* of particular relevance to the conservation and preservation of heritage collections are:

As the community cultural development mechanism of [the Federation], the Arts Culture and Heritage Network will:

1.1 Lead, advocate and facilitate the promotion of community cultural conservation, cultural continuity and cultural democracy in a multicultural Australia;

3.1 Identify, preserve and make accessible the oral, written and tangible documentary heritage of Australians of non-English speaking backgrounds;

3.2 Assist in the assessment of significance, identification, preservation, presentation and accessibility of heritage collections of Australians of non-English speaking backgrounds;

3.4 Recognise, preserve and disseminate folklife and other intangible aspects of heritage as an integral part of Australia's multicultural life that reflects and represents the beliefs, practices and traditions of every strata and section of Australian society;

3.5 Assist and participate in the development of appropriate criteria of significance, methodologies and a community user-guide for the nomination of places of significance to be preserved and also work towards community education and interpretation;

3.11 Promote and assist in the identification, preservation and continuation of language heritage of Australia.

The Office of Multicultural Affairs commissioned the publication *Heritage Curricula and Cultural Diversity* (Galla 1993).

Relevant recommendations include:

3. That the Cultural Ministers Council, through the federal, state and territory governments, [the Council of Australian Museum Directors] and [Museums Australia], and representative indigenous and multicultural organisations, establish a working group to consider the in-house approaches of various institutions and develop a national framework...for best policies and practices relating to heritage collections as an implementation mechanism for The Plan.

6. That the Museum Training Taskforce of Arts Training Australia encourage all museum studies and cultural heritage management programs to offer a current issues academic unit encapsulating the specific Australian experiences in the preservation, conservation, continuation, presentation and management of heritage collections in indigenous and multicultural Australia.

8. That state and territory Ethnic Affairs Commissions and Ethnic Community Councils, local government authorities and other appropriate agencies, in conjunction with state and territory departments for arts, establish local Arts, Culture and Heritage Development Groups with the primary objective of developing policies consistent with integrated community cultural development and heritage management.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage

Museums have particular obligations to conserve and preserve the heritage collections of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities and peoples. Collections in Australian museums are relatively small, often fragile and therefore vulnerable (Anderson 1991). It is essential the priority needs of these collections are recognised.

The relevant points raised in *Previous Possessions/New Obligations* (CAMA 1993, items 2.6, 3.1, 3.3, 3.5, 5) for the policy are: the focus on consultation and decision making with the informed consent of custodians; acknowledgment of their right to decide who carries out any conservation and preservation work; the acknowledgment that without due process of consultation, objects of a sensitive nature may not undergo a conservation or preservation process despite potential deterioration; and that training custodians in areas of museum practice will assist them in the management of heritage collections.

The Commonwealth Department of Communications and the Arts (DCA) released two draft publications (received December 1994): *Guidelines for the Protection, Management and Use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage*

Places; and *Protecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Places.* It is anticipated that the final publications will influence strategies and actions developed in relation to the policy.

Museum

'The silent, scarcely visible damage to items in Australian museums...' (Piggott 1975) remains at crisis point almost 20 years after the Inquiry on Museums and National Collections.

While it can be argued that there have been significant improvements particularly in the area of training conservators, and within many of the larger museums, recent research has shown that collections in Australian museums are still in a perilous condition (Anderson 1991). Remedial action taken to date has simply been too little. The renaissance experienced by museums since the mid 1970s, and the dramatic growth in the number, range and quality of museums and programs in Australia has compounded the problems associated with the conservation and preservation of collections.

The major portion of the nation's heritage collections is held in State museums including art museums. However, these institutions constitute less than 5% of the total number of organisations caring for heritage collections.

While museums continue to collect they have a backlog of heritage in need of treatment. None of these institutions has adequate resources to meet their in-house conservation and preservation needs (Arts Victoria 1991-92). Often those who have responsibility for collections regularly make decisions and handle significant objects although they have not always been trained in preventive conservation.

Within museums the level of expertise in all areas of museum practice varies enormously. Many rely on volunteers to sustain the enterprise and the majority are not trained in preventive conservation. Yet the majority of collections are in urgent need of conservation. Preventive conservation is not practised universally and there are insufficient resources to address conservation and preservation needs (Museums Association of Australia—NSW 1991).

Another particular issue concerns regional and local collections. It is generally acknowledged that conservation and preservation must be considered a part of overall collection management planning. However, at the regional and local levels there is a tendency for conservation and preservation to be seen in isolation from collection management planning (Piggott 1975 and Anderson 1991).

Private and Corporate Heritage

Heritage collections in private hands forms part of the Distributed National Collection. It may belong to large multi-national corporations or individuals. The private sector also includes: the creators of culture, including artists; publishers; software publishers; and the media industry

There is no process to ensure the conservation and preservation of heritage collections held within this sector. One objective of the policy is to raise the level of awareness of the private sector of conservation and preservation issues.

There are a number of models for community and industry based conservation and preservation programs for heritage collections in private hands. The following groups could provide useful models for extension programs:

Society of Archivists, friends of museums, regional historical societies, genealogical societies, Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material and Museums Australia. Funding programs which may provide useful models include Community Heritage Grants and ESSO Scholarships.

Community-wide Skills Development, Training and Education

With the proliferation of tertiary courses including those training librarians, archivists and curators, and museum studies and heritage management, there has been an associated increase in preventive conservation studies. The training of conservators at the University of Canberra has built a strong professional base and many of these conservators now teach in tertiary institutions.

The incorporation of lectures on preventive conservation in teaching practical studio arts and crafts skills is still piecemeal and inadequate. Similarly with museum studies courses, preventive conservation is not taught to a significant extent. Programs to ensure a basic level of knowledge are important for all those involved in the care of heritage collections including staff and volunteers.

The use of the Arts Training Australia Competency Standards for Museums and Libraries will be fundamental to the establishment of conservation and preservation courses that reflect the needs of those organisations charged with the care of heritage collections.

The demand for lectures and short courses on conservation and preservation issues by community groups is growing. The model of open learning appears very useful in this area. The Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material and various branches of Museums Australia have provided community workshops across the country.

In recent times, the HCC of the Cultural Ministers Council has coordinated conservation workshops targeted at isolated communities. There is considerable scope for development by rationalising and focusing current efforts.

GLOSSARY

AHC Australian Heritage Commission

AIC American Institute of Conservation

AICCM Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material

ALIA Australian Library and Information Association

AMOL Australian Museums On Line is a collaborative project between Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and the museum sector on the task of increasing access to Australia's heritage collections. Contact HCC Secretariat for further details.

ARC Australian Research Council

ASA Australian Society of Archivists

ATSIC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

Australia's Heritage The sum of all heritage collections of significance to the nation,

Collections including cultural heritage collections and objects which are in the custody of a wide range of organisations and individuals, including governments and the private, community and non- government sectors. (Also known as Distributed National Collection.)

AVCC Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee

CAMA Council of Australian Museum Associations, now Museums Australia.

CCT Compulsory Competitive Tendering

CM&CWP Collections Management and Conservation Working Party

CMC Cultural Ministers Council

collection The body of acquired objects held in title by the collecting organisation; or the accumulated items held by a collector.

collection management All activities related to the care of a collection from the time an object is acquired to its eventual disposal. Collection management covers documentation (registration, accessioning, cataloguing); handling (storage, conservation, display); loan and disposal of objects.

conservation All actions aimed at the safeguarding of cultural material for the future. Its purpose is to study, record, retain and restore the culturally significant qualities of an object with the least possible intervention.

conservation plan A strategy for the long-term care of collections. Developing a conservation plan involves identifying the conservation needs of collections, sorting them into priority order, and allocating resources to deal with them.

conservation standards Degrees of care agreed upon as needed for the long-term conservation of collections.

cultural heritage A tradition, habit, skill, art form or institution that is passed from one generation to the next.

Cultural Ministers A group made up of the Federal, State and Territory Ministers and the New Zealand Minister with responsibility for the arts and culture. The relevant Minister from Papua New Guinea and a representative from Local Government are invited to attend meetings with observer status.

CWP Conservation Working Party

DCA Department of Communications and the Arts

DEETYA Department of Employment Education Training and Youth Affairs

disaster preparedness Being prepared to implement practices which will speed the reaction and recovery phases after a disaster. More generally, disaster preparedness refers to the entire process of planning and equipping for a disaster. It includes anticipating the sorts of disasters which could occur and having procedures in place to deal with them, usually in the form of a counter- disaster or disaster control plan.

Distributed National See definition for Australia's heritage collections.

Collection

FECCA Federation of Ethnic Communities Council Australia Inc.

Heritage Collections The Heritage Collections Council replaced the Heritage Council (HCC) Collections Committee in 1997 to ensure Australia's heritage collections become more accessible to all Australians.

Heritage Collections A sub-committee of the Cultural Ministers' Council, comprising Working Group (HCC) representatives of the Commonwealth Government, State Governments and museum professionals, set up in 1990 to recommend on means of improving access to the nation's material heritage. The Heritage Collections Working Group completed its work in 1993 and was replaced by the Heritage Collections Committee. The Committee was replaced by the Heritage Collections Council in mid 1997.

ICOMOS International Council on Monuments and Sites

moveable cultural Any reasonably portable item of notable historic, social, scientific, heritage technological and/or cultural relevance (see Commonwealth Protection of Moveable Cultural Heritage Act 1986, section 7). Also known as heritage collections.

Museums Australia The national association of museums, art museums, other collecting institutions and those who work in them, including those who work in a voluntary capacity. Membership is open to those who subscribe to the ethics and aims of the association. Museums Australia was formed in 1993 from the amalgamation of the Council of Australian Museum Associations (CAMA) with other art and museum related bodies. Museums Australia is administered by a national Council and by Branches in each state. It produces a quarterly journal, holds a national annual conference and, at State level, administers extensive programs for local museums.

national significance *See* Significance

NIC National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property

PADI Preserving Access to Digital Information, an Internet site for cultural institutions found at www.nla.gov.au/padi/

preservation All actions taken to retard deterioration of or prevent damage to cultural material. Preservation involves controlling the environment and conditions of use, and may include treatment in order to maintain an object, as nearly as possible, in an unchanging state. In the case of archival material, moving image and sound, this may include transfer to another medium.

preventive conservation The discipline and practice of managing the prevention of deterioration of cultural material and collections through manipulation of the environment.

significance The historical value attached to objects, sites, activities, or ideas by communities at a local, regional or national level.

strategic planning Sometimes called forward or long-range planning, this process integrates the physical, financial, philosophical and educational goals of the organisation. It is based on

systematically outlining the long term aspirations of an organisation, and determining strategies to achieve them.

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