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Scaffolding opportunities for conservation collaborations in regional Australia

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ABSTRACT

Ensuring sustainability in conservation programs requires having in place functional relationships, and viable methods for resourcing conservation programs. Cultural materials held in regional Australia have very different structures that support their management and resourcing to those held in Australia's capital cities. This is not unique to conservation and is evident in transport, health, education and community services. There is, however, rich expertise and a deep interest in the preservation of cultural material in regional, remote and rural Australia that connects strongly with the aims and responsibilities of conservation professionals.

Focusing on the city of Bathurst, and investigating the planning and economic modelling undertaken by Bathurst Regional Council, this paper explores the resources that can be usefully employed to support collaborative conservation programs. It examines the links between the vision of Bathurst Regional Council, the needs of small not-for-profit cultural organisations in Bathurst and programs in conservation that have been enabled since May 2016.

The programs developed with Bathurst Regional Council demonstrate that the interest in regional and rural areas is conservation is strong; that this interest can be effectively harnessed to develop conservation programs that support the needs of the community; and that there are significant learning opportunities for conservators who want to work with regional, rural and remote communities. This paper also discusses how conservation programs can contribute to community wellbeing, and in turn, how community engagement with conservation can help build a stronger profession.

BIOGRAPHIES

Janelle Middleton is Manager Museums with Bathurst Regional Council, where she has responsibility for Chifley Home and Education Centre, the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum (a satellite of Australian Museum) and the National Motor Racing Museum. She is currently managing the

development of the Bathurst Rail Museum. Her professional interests include museum sustainability, resourcing, museum storytelling, and attracting repeat visitation.

Robyn Sloggett is a Director of the Grimwade Centre, which delivers industry-focused conservation teaching, research and consultancy programs. Her research incorporates scientific and cultural analysis of Australian art, attribution, conservation in Southeast Asia, and the preservation of cultural material and archives held in remote and regional communities.