



AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE FOR THE CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL MATERIAL INC.

## **Abstract (Proforma)**

### **Paper or lightning talk: Tread Lightly: A collaborative conservation management approach to the floor furnishings at Chifley Home, Bathurst, NSW.**

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#### **Abstract :**

Floor furnishings in historic house museums can be unique among the collections to which they belong, testing the limits of the 'look but don't touch' rule. As utilitarian materials, by the time they are accessioned into a museum collection they are well at the end of their functional lives; however, in the case of the floors at Chifley Home in Bathurst, NSW, this is only a partial retirement as the soft floor furnishings retain their original role within the house and visitors are allowed to walk on them. This presents a unique challenge for the conservation management of this material: while visitor foot traffic puts the already deteriorating floor furnishings at risk of further damage, access is also an integral part of the management of the museum, representing the working Australian, domestic heritage and helping promote the aims of the Bathurst Regional Council's heritage plan 2014-2017.

This paper will take the process of developing a conservation management plan for the floors at Chifley Home as a case study in an approach to heritage management where decisions about the future of the material and the historic house are made collaboratively. That is, the conservation management plan comes at the end of a process where both the expectations of the visitors and the physical conservation needs of the flooring material are identified and then considered non-hierarchically. In this way the project is also a collaboration of research methods: traditional material analytical and examination techniques, and qualitative, communication-based modes of collecting data are both used to develop the management plan.

Note: it is intended that this will be a condensed presentation of currently ongoing minor thesis research. The thesis is due to be completed in October, 2017.

#### **Brief Biography of the Author(s) :**

##### **Victoria Thomas:**

Student conservator at the Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation

**I/We intend to submitting this as an article for the AICCM Bulletin:**