Report from the Working Party on the Integration of Heritage and Museum Studies

Background
On 6 September, 2012, RSHA announced the establishment of a working party to initiate an informal consultation process that would consider the key issues (and arguments for and against relevant proposals) relating to the role of Heritage and Museum Studies within RSHA.

The Working Party would call for submissions, conduct interviews, examine relevant data and examine other models to identify strategic positioning. Its activities were guided by the RSHA, 30 August 2012, Discussion Paper entitled ‘Proposal to restructure a number of the Schools of the Research School of Humanities and the Arts’. The relevant section of the discussion paper stated:

The School of Archaeology and Anthropology has significant strengths in postgraduate coursework and doctoral training and in external research grants. Their undergraduate load could be strengthened and diversified with the addition of undergraduate programs in heritage to complement and articulate with current postgraduate coursework in this area. The RSHA has considerable strengths in cultural and environmental heritage; in rock art, oral history and material repatriation and cultural tourism, which could be given greater visibility with the addition of heritage at the undergraduate level.

There could be consideration given to the Institute for Professional Practice in Heritage and the Arts (IPPHA) transferring to the School of Archaeology and Anthropology, however IPPHA’s involvement in public policy and the national cultural institutions may be better positioned in the broader remit of IHuG. To this end the Museum Education and Heritage Interpretation program and the NCI internship program, both currently run from IPPHA are ideally placed there for their broad focus between the areas of museum, heritage and education.

The name of the School would likely remain unchanged.

The appointed Working Party consisted of Dr Kylie Message, Dr Laurajane Smith, Dr Sally May, Dr Sharon Peoples, with Dr Alastair Greig as Chair. Agreement was reached with the College Executive that the process would occur from late November through December, once teaching and marking was completed.

The Working Party held its first meeting on Wednesday 7 November to discuss the terms of its work and to prepare an invitation for all interested parties to present submissions for consideration. This would be followed by interviews with parties who submitted proposals. A call for submissions was made on 27 November (see Appendix 1).

The Chair sought clarification from the RSHA Executive that its members were also entitled to make submissions given that appointed members of the Working Party could be directly affected by any proposed changes. This was confirmed, and the Chair ensured that
submissions were only seen by members of the Working Party after the call for submissions was closed on Friday 7 December.

The Working Party received 12 submissions and subsequently the Working Party held discussions with nine people in 6 meetings. A meeting was convened with a representative from the post-graduate community, even though the Working Party did not receive submissions from either ANUSA or PARSA. At all these meetings except one, the Chair was present along with at least one other member of the Working Party. The discussions were used as an opportunity for the Working Party to clarify positions adopted in the proposals and to prompt responses to alternative proposals.

The 12 submissions are presented in Appendix 2 to this report and the remainder of the report summarises the different views expressed in the consultation process.

**Results of informal consultation**

*Proposal to consolidate heritage and museum studies*

The submissions were in broad agreement that there are opportunities to enhance the national and international profile of the University in this area. Most pointed out that scholars in the field were dispersed across a range of AOUs as a result of the restructuring of CASS (see Submissions 8 and 9). This has led to problems in coordinating and promoting the opportunities latent within museum and heritage studies, at the level of undergraduate teaching, graduate coursework, graduate research training and scholarly collaboration. Most submissions recommended that some form of ‘centre’ be given responsibility for consolidating these activities (see Submissions 6 and 9). This would be consistent with other organisational structures in recognised heritage programs across the world (see Submission 1).

Most submissions were in agreement that a lack of coordination and consolidation has led to a number of existing problems. These include:

- the lack of any clear progression from undergraduate to graduate studies,
- the absence of a clear identity among graduate students in the field,
- administrative inefficiencies in managing student load and student needs,
- and lack of ownership for the future direction of heritage and museum studies at ANU. (see Submission 6)

Consolidation would allow ANU to optimise its resources in heritage studies, to promote student enrolments, and potentially establish a graduate training centre, prepare a submission for the next ERA, and bid for a Centre for Excellence in Heritage and Museum Studies (see Submission 9). It was pointed out that a consolidated heritage program would increase the research opportunities in public policy both nationally and internationally (see Submission 12).
The organisational possibilities proposed included enhanced coordination through IHuG (see Submission 4), the School of Anthropology and Archaeology (see Submission 12) and the Centre for Environmental History (see Submission 3). In itself, this diversity is testimony to the wide variety of scholarly activities associated with museum and heritage studies at ANU. In addition, each of these proposals suggests different organisational models.

Proposal to transfer Heritage and Museum activities to the School of Archaeology and Anthropology

The Working Party was asked to consider the proposal that an undergraduate program in Heritage Studies be developed within the School of Archaeology and Anthropology, alongside programs in Archaeology, Anthropology, Bioanthropology and Development Studies. It was also asked to consider whether IPPHA be transferred to The School of Archaeology and Anthropology (SoAA). Many submissions therefore commented on the suitability of consolidating heritage and museum studies within SoAA.

SoAA already formally includes Heritage and Museum Studies as one of its four core fields, and three of the five academic staff whose primary field of research and teaching to be heritage and/or museum studies are already located in the School of Archaeology and Anthropology (currently, one has been seconded for 3 years in a role in another part of the College and one has been on a research-only fellowship – a situation which has reduced the School’s ability to develop the stream to date).

In mid 2011 the Head of the School of Archaeology and Anthropology requested its heritage members of staff prepare a minor in Heritage and Museum Studies. Elementary planning for this undergraduate minor has been underway through 2012, and the intention has been to fully develop it through 2013 for proposed start date of 2014 (to coincide with the transfer of a core staff member from a research-only fellowship to ongoing academic position). The Heritage minor will provide further choice for undergraduate students in SoAA and other parts of the College, and will provide a more visible pathway for students interested in enrolling in graduate programs in Heritage and Museum Studies (there are currently no ‘feeder’ program into Masters or HDR programs in Heritage and Museum Studies). There was strong support from many proposals to enhance undergraduate courses in heritage studies (see Submission 10).

There was strong support for consolidating Heritage and Museum Studies more broadly within the School of Archaeology and Anthropology from archaeologists and the heritage and museum members of the School (see Submission 12). The Archaeology proposal listed many of the disadvantages of the dispersed activities associated with current arrangements and pointed to the synergies between Archaeology, Anthropology and Heritage Studies. It was pointed out that Archaeology already collaborates in both teaching and research with heritage studies and numerous Heritage academics are already members of the School. Furthermore, many undergraduate archaeology students are employed in heritage areas and consultancy roles.
Others working in the field of Heritage and Museum Studies expressed the view any interdisciplinary endeavour should be based on a solid disciplinary foundation, and that while a range of disciplinary areas could be reasonably considered as appropriate bases for the field of study, Archaeology and Anthropology provided an excellent basis on the grounds that it has a critical mass of museum and heritage people already based there, and its strong performance in research and teaching in related areas. Benefits of consolidating heritage and museum studies into the SoAA would include strengthening links between the interdisciplinary field and the core areas of Archaeology and Anthropology to expand teaching opportunities. It would also encourage greater intellectual alignments and contributions to future ERA submissions in already strong areas.

In this model, the current Heritage and Museum Studies stream would be consolidated in order to raise its undergraduate profile and strengthen its graduate intake. Supporters of this approach also stated that the Master of Liberal Arts has not been able to fulfil its graduate role effectively because of the dispersed nature of the program, and some suggested a restructure of the Liberal Arts program away from the umbrella organisation it currently employs, so that each stream would become independent and stand-alone programs run independently by the Schools delivering the courses (see Submissions 8 and 12).

Co-location was also considered appropriate for heritage staff and graduate students (see Submissions 6 and 12) although others questioned the feasibility of locating everyone in the A.D. Hope Building. In this model, it would be appropriate to transfer IPPHA into SoAA so that all heritage and museum studies work aligned within a single location.

Three principal concerns were expressed (one scholarly, one marketing, and the other practical) against the consolidation of heritage and museum studies within the School of Archaeology and Anthropology. On the scholarly front, some submissions argued that heritage and museum studies is quintessentially an inter-disciplinary activity drawing its strength from a wide variety of areas within CASS. These submissions felt that an organisational structure for the Heritage field was best positioned outside any particular existing disciplinary-based school (see Submission 1). In response, archaeologists pointed to the inter-disciplinary activities within SoAA (see Submission 11).

There was also a view expressed in some submissions that, while they supported the establishment of an undergraduate stream within the School of Archaeology and Anthropology, there was a danger that the broad market of graduate students interested in heritage and museum studies might perceive graduate degrees within SoAA as limited to archaeological and anthropological concerns (see Submission 9). In other words, the fear is that only heritage and museum work related to archaeology and anthropology (rather than history, or art, for example) would be taught or supported.

A third set of concerns were raised by a number of submissions and consultations with anthropologists within SoAA. Many were unfamiliar with the range of heritage and museum activities within RSHA and requested more information about the establishment of a minor in Heritage Studies within their School. In a time of straightened finances, they pointed to the
limited resources available to teach existing courses and suggested that normal College
governance procedures should be followed before any decisions are made affecting the broad
constituency of the School. This information would involve organisational arrangements,
budgeting, marketing plans, resource implications, staffing issues and opportunity costs (see
Submissions 2, 6 and 7).

Proposal to consolidate Heritage and Museum activities within IHuG

Another cluster of submissions considered focusing ownership of heritage and museum
activities within IHuG. These submissions expressed some regret over the historical dispersal
of heritage and museum scholars as a result of the CASS restructuring process in 2010 (see
Submission 5). Submissions supporting the consolidation of the Heritage Studies within
IHuG argued that this move would be preferable to consolidating it within the School of
Archaeology and Anthropology because IHuG provided a more interdisciplinary environment
(see Submission 9), and there are strong existing affiliations between heritage and museum
studies research and the ICCR program (there are currently large numbers of HDR students
working on heritage and museum studies research and they are currently almost all enrolled
in the ICCR program). The argument here is that the graduate level, the Liberal Arts program
within IHuG can cater for a more interdisciplinary student market and needs in teaching and
professional development.

The argument from this perspective is that the integrity of heritage and museum studies is
best placed outside any particular School. IHuG would be an appropriate place to convene,
coordinate and administer a strengthened Liberal Arts program with its suite of activities
associated with heritage and museum studies (see Submissions 1 and 5), and to continue to
support and develop a HDR cohort in this area.

The proposals supporting this position also argued that this arrangement would provide
greater identification for the group of scholars in the field. It would also be an effective
means to assess the future possibilities of taking advantages of the strengths of ANU in
Heritage and Museum Studies, such as an ERA submission in the field, a focus for
competitive grant applications, a graduate training program and a possible Centre for
Excellence with other targeted universities. However, it was acknowledged that these
possibilities would require greater support, resources and infrastructure than what is currently
available, and that a simple relocation of skeleton staff back into IHuG would not provide the
critical mass required to develop the field in these areas (particularly in relation to an
independent ERA submission for example). It would also not address the need to develop the
undergraduate feeder programs and pathways that are required to create demand for
interdisciplinary Masters and HDR programs.

Underpinning the intellectual rationale for coordinating a centralised heritage and museum
studies ‘centre’ (or similar) within IHuG would be a set of administrative arrangements that
supported a modified version of the *status quo* (see Submissions 5 and 9):
• most graduate programs in heritage and museum studies would remain located within the Liberal Arts Masters program,
• the Master of Liberal Arts program would require a convener and administrator to coordinate activities within IHuG,
• academics associated with heritage and museum studies would remain in their current AOUs and build courses there that would contribute to the strategic areas of schools and also create and strengthen links with other disciplinary areas to build the suite of interdisciplinary options available across the RSHA (this may or may not lead to a review of the Liberal Arts program),
• income from student fees and research monies would remain with these AOUs, and a small ‘administrative tax’ levied to IHuG for managing the coordinating centre,
• IPPHA would remain within IHuG.

There were divergent views expressed in the proposals over whether the title ‘Liberal Arts’ adequately captures the specific activities taking place within the program. While some supported retaining the name (see Submission 9), others suggested that a clearer descriptive title be chosen (see Submissions 1 and 11 along with PARSA consultation).

One related proposal was the possibility that if a Centre for Heritage and Museum Studies was established outside the SoAA then archaeologists within RSHA could be relocated to such a Centre (Archaeology consultation). This proposal would overcome the concerns expressed in other proposals that situating heritage activities in the School of Archaeology and Anthropology would privilege archaeology rather than broader interdisciplinary scholarship. (In this proposal the Centre would be called the Centre for Archaeology, Heritage and Museum Studies and combine the strengths of these three related disciplines).

The proposal for a ‘Centre’ dedicated to heritage and museum studies received support from many submissions that appear also to agree that the basis for any decision making needs to be driven by intellectual need rather than bureaucratic convenience.

The proposal to establish a Centre was seen as allowing the College to take advantage of its excellence within heritage and museum studies. However, working party members are conscious that achieving this aim – in order to highlight it and make its activities at ANU more than the sum of its parts – it would require careful consideration and a substantial commitment of time and resources. The question of where any such centre should be located was much more heavily debated than whether its establishment was a good idea.

Recommendations

The task of the working party was to canvas views on various options for consolidating heritage and museum studies in CASS.
The working party has identified sufficient interest and value in holding a formal conversation about the intellectual need and basis for the establishment of a dedicated centre in Heritage and Museum Studies. The Working Party therefore recommends:

- That an advisory board be established to consider the establishment of a new Centre for Heritage and Museum Studies and report to the RSHA executive,
- That the advisory board comprise a) those involved in research and teaching in relevant disciplinary areas, b) staff from a wide range of academic levels, and c) the range of views expressed in the submissions to this working party,
- That the advisory board consider the most suitable location for such a Centre,
- That the advisory board consider whether there is a justification on intellectual grounds for a Centre that would, inter alia, provide the basis for research projects and collaborations, grant applications, an ERA submission and/or a Centre of Excellence bid,
- That the advisory board consider the appropriateness of the new Centre for the home of both MLA and the ICCR doctoral program,
- That the advisory board consider the issue of staff relocation if the new Centre be established, but NOT until then,
- That the advisory board consider the appropriateness of the label Masters of Liberal Arts,
- That if a dedicated Centre is recommended, the report supply a full business case and strategic plan – including timeline, staffing profiles, explanation of operational links and relationships with disciplinary areas, argument about how it fits a national niche, builds on national excellence and international links,
- That the advisory board report to the RSHA executive in 6-8 months.
Dear Colleagues,

On 24 August, a meeting of Heads of School in RSHA agreed to convene a sub-committee to organise an informal consultation process associated with the integration of staff into a Heritage group in the School of Archaeology and Anthropology.

The brief of the sub-committee is linked to the following statement from the 30 August RSHA Discussion Paper on the proposal to restructure a number of the schools within RSHA. The relevant paragraph pertaining to the sub-committee is:

The School of Archaeology and Anthropology has significant strengths in postgraduate coursework and doctoral training and in external research grants. Their undergraduate load could be strengthened and diversified with the addition of undergraduate programs in heritage to complement and articulate with current postgraduate coursework in this area. The RSHA has considerable strengths in cultural and environmental heritage; in rock art, oral history and material repatriation and cultural tourism, which could be given greater visibility with the addition of heritage at the undergraduate level.

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The name of the School would likely remain unchanged.

The sub-committee consists of Kylie Message, Laurajane Smith, Sharon Peoples, Sally May and Alastair Greig (chair) and has now held its initial meeting. At this meeting, we agreed to treat this statement as a broad invitation to discuss all possible options associated with the repositioning of museum and heritage studies in RSHA.

The sub-committee invites submissions from all interested parties on any issue relating to the activities and organisation of museum and heritage studies in RSHA. These can be individual submissions or group submissions.

Once submissions have been gathered, the sub-committee will arrange meetings to discuss the range of proposals with interested parties in the weeks leading to the Christmas break.

Please send all submissions to Rosemary Shepherd (rosemary.shepherd@anu.edu.au) by Friday 7 December, and please send any queries to the Chair of the sub-committee, Dr Alastair Greig (alastair.greig@anu.edu.au).

Yours truly

Dr Alastair Greig

Chair