Submission from Head of Discipline, Heritage and Museum Studies, School of Archaeology and Anthropology

re: Change Management Proposal, RSHA Restructure, 22 July 2013

4. Make more visible the emerging strength in Heritage and Museum Studies and locate it within the School of Archaeology and Anthropology which would be renamed the School of Archaeology, Anthropology, Heritage and Museum Studies.

I am writing in support of the above proposed outcome of the restructure.

At a School Meeting on Friday 26 July a unanimous decision was made to support the idea of situating a Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies in the School of Archaeology and Anthropology, and thus to co-locate other RSHA academics working in this area within the school. It was agreed that the school would then go through a period of review during 2013 to reconsider the name of the school.

I support this overall decision, and believe that it is vital that all those working within the area of heritage and museums be co-located under one AOU.

Heritage and museum studies is a growing interdisciplinary area of research and teaching which is gaining increasing international and domestic attention. For ANU to keep abreast of these developments it is vital that the university has a clearly defined unit that provides staff in this area with a clear identity and structure within which to develop their research and teaching.

I envisage the Centre as having high visibility, with a semi-independent image from the School. Thus, although I agreed with the School’s decision of 26 July to postpone the issue of the name change, my strong preference is either that:

a) the name of the school is eventually changed to recognise the existence of the Centre;

or

b) failing a name change, or until a change of name is brought into effect, that the School’s web site and other advertisements be changed to read ‘School of Archaeology and Anthropology (incorporating the Centre for Heritage and Museum Studies)’.

Having a clearly defined and visible Centre with a critical mass of academic staff is important for a number of reasons, these include:

1. Showcasing staff research both internationally and domestically. Centres for heritage and museum studies are being established around the world – indeed Canberra University even has one. A Centre that has international and national visibility will be important for maintaining and bolstering the international and national reputation of staff in this area.

2. It provides a recognizable home for the International Journal of Heritage Studies, which is the leading journal in the field, and is currently edited by myself.

3. Research implications. In bringing together a critical mass of academics with internationally recognised and esteemed research, the Centre will provide:
   a. A platform from which to lobby the ARC on the development of FoR codes that adequately reflect the developments in this field.
b. Integrated research projects and grant applications that can feed more effectively into teaching.

4. Student recruitment. A visible centre is important for attracting undergraduate, graduate and HDR students.
   a. Undergraduate students are often unaware of heritage issues and the possibilities this area may hold for employment. Conversely, while undergraduates will be aware of museums as a potential area of employment most will have little idea of how they might gain employment in this area. Having a visible Centre is integral to undergraduate enrolment.
   b. Postgraduate enrolment, either in the form of masters or HDR students, is often dominated in this field by mid-career professionals from the heritage and/or museum sectors, or professionals in related areas wanting to make a career change. Having a Centre whose title finds synergy with the workplace experiences of these students is again highly important for maintaining and developing student recruitment. Professionals in this field routinely work with a variety of experts such as historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, planners, art historians, and tourist managers and so on. Potential students may well be put off enrolling in a School that emphasises or defines itself entirely by traditional disciplines. The visibility of a Centre, which stresses its interdisciplinary nature, is necessary for developing postgraduate enrolment.
   c. A centre, featuring prominent scholars in the field of heritage and museum studies promotes international visibility. Reworking the postgraduate coursework offerings to reflect the interests of new staff, emerging trends in the field and synergies with existing areas in the School (notably applied anthropology and the anthropology of development) will not only attract HDR students, but also offer significant possibilities for the recruitment of overseas masters students.

5. Student retention within the School of Archaeology and Anthropology. My experience in working within a Department of Archaeology (University of York) and working and teaching with anthropologists (UNSW and CSU), is that many students while having a keen interest in either of the two disciplines fear that they will not find employment within them. Thus, students often take electives in these disciplines to pursue their interests, but major in areas with clear employment prospects. It is safe to say that significant numbers of archaeology and anthropology graduates will work in the heritage and/or museum sectors on graduation. The existence of a highly visible Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies within the School has the potential to provide both archaeology and anthropology students not only with training relevant to such employment, but will exist as an example of the career paths available to such students.

I warmly support the above proposed outcome and enthusiastically look forward to the development of a Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies.

Professor Laurajane Smith
On behalf of the Heritage and Museum Studies discipline and staff within the School of Archaeology and Anthropology.
Dr Sally May and Associate Professor Kylie Message.