

Submission to Legislative Council Select Committee  
on Tourism and Heritage 2015.

This is a personal submission based on work undertaken for the Arts Industry training Board of Tasmania ( I was a Member of the Board) to define and integrate the training across a number of professional areas and to recognise the multi- disciplinary nature of the field related to Heritage Tourism Education and Conservation Practice.

Apologies are made for my hand-written comments to the original appended document.

From my point of view this document provides a broad industry overview to the field relating Tourism/Heritage/Education/Heritage Practises and Construction. These fields are often complicated by the normal sectional interests.

In Tasmania I maintain we have a magnificent opportunity to rise above the normal constraints and paradigms from elsewhere. We just need some vision and some coordinated resources.

It is not for want of trying but it maybe because of the way we looking to narrowly at the interactions exchanges and interests in the field. It could also be because of the order and type of questions we are addressing.

It is my opinion we need a new program that is appropriately resourced and some of our existing organisations have too much baggage though they have valuable networks and resources. So we need to rethink the field and the relationships.

Robert Vincent

0478050843

robertvincnt96@gmail.com

## 1.0 Definition of the Concept of Heritage

The term "heritage" has become so redolent of meaning - eg. its popular use in advertising for everything from recipes to product brands - as to render it almost useless for the point of this exercise. It has become almost synonymous with "nostalgia" (see, for example, Hewison, 1987 and Lowenthal, 1985).<sup>86</sup>

The National Culture-Leisure Industry Statistical Framework, developed by the Cultural Ministers Council Statistical Advisory Group (hereafter SAG), steers away from the term employing instead that of the "National Estate", consisting of two sub-sectors, "Aboriginal Environment" and "Historic Environment". What constitutes the "National Estate" is limited to places listed on the Registers of the National Estate, National Trust or similar Registers. Museums constitute a separate sector, as do Natural Environment, and Art Museums.

It is argued hereafter that the activities pursued by museums and those involved with the management of the "historic environment" can be considered to be so closely allied in terms of purposes, focus and practice as to logically constitute a "Cultural Resources Management Sector".

Key questions towards defining the sector are:

PURPOSE - What is the purpose of the activity?

FOCUS - With what is the activity concerned?

PRACTICE - What practices are characteristic?

### 1.1 Purpose

Implicit in its evolving practice, a variety of goals have been, and are being, pursued. They are not necessarily mutually exclusive and include:

\* Antiquarianism - the means are the ends; history of objects in contrast to history from objects. This approach often applies to "art histories" and history written about buildings by architects.

\* Environmental improvement as an end in itself. This approach is often adopted by town planners and others concerned with urban design.

\* Provision of recreational facilities and leisure activities. This approach is sometimes adopted by local authorities.

\* Provision of an opportunity to escape from the present. This approach often characterises recreated history parks and the like.

\* Creation/perpetuation of a national identity or mythology. This can be a conscious or unconscious process involving selective collections or distorted interpretation.

\* Interpretation of the past as an aid to understanding present culture through the study of cultural resources. (History through objects).

The last mentioned view is gaining ground, particularly in museums and through public history, although curiously neglected by academic historians and unevenly appreciated by town planners and architects. It is essential to clarify goals to determine training priorities because different aims require quite different skill packages.

Lesson from the past  
Usefulness of cultural objects  
Touch stone  
Political purpose  
Public, Applied History

From a normative viewpoint the following definitions are instructive:

The International Council of Museums (hereafter ICOM) defines the purpose of museums as "the study, education and enjoyment of material evidence of man (sic) and his environment".

The International Council of Monuments and Sites in Australia (hereafter ICOMOS) emphasises the purpose of conservation as having to do with retaining or recovering the cultural significance of a place. (Article 2 Burra Charter). Cultural significance is elsewhere defined as involving an assessment of the value of a place for past, present and future generations. (For definitions of "conservation" and "place" see Appendix B.)

The purpose therefore, has to do with understanding culture.

## 1.2 Focus

Understanding of the past derives from three sources:

- \* oral history and traditions
- \* documentary records (written, pictorial, archival)
- \* material manifestations of Humanity's interaction with the Environment (artefacts, places, landscapes, buildings, machines etc.)

(Oral and documentary resources have been previously included in the Library, Writing and Publishing Sector although pictorial and oral collections are held by the major museums as are art collections. To further complicate matters, at least two important cultural material collections are housed in the State Library. *of Tasmania*).

In the area of natural environment, a variety of approaches can be distinguished, most pursuing objectives and utilising a theory and practice and educational processes derived from natural science, not closely related to that which has evolved with respect to the cultural resources field, with the notable exception of that of modified natural environments and cultural landscape. This shares a similar anthropological intent, i.e. that of discovering and interpreting evidence of past land-use practices and relationships of cultures to natural environments (including agriculture, forestry, extractive industries, horticulture, hunter-gathering, gardens etc.) It is a neglected field in this State.

The focus of concern, then, is with material manifestations of cultural practices (also known as cultural material and cultural property) consisting of both:

- \* Portable or moveable artefacts, objects or material, including those associated with a site, building or other place;
- and
- \* Fixed property or resources including cultural landscapes, sites, monuments, shipwrecks, towns, precincts, buildings and groups thereof, archeological sites and other places both from history and prehistory, from Aboriginal and European culture.

Various statutes and policies more closely define the full range of these. (See appendix B Definitions of Specific Terms.) Portable or moveable resources are often, but not exclusively, located in museums.

The Australian Heritage Commission Act. 1975. only applies to moveable

no Commonwealth programme which provides financial assistance for the conservation of moveable cultural resources. The proposed State Bill reflects a similar bias.

### 1.3 Practice

The practice which has built up around the activity has become increasingly multi-disciplined. Attempts to define its boundaries, therefore, by the sorts of occupations or skill requirements which may be involved in it, from time to time, are likely to prove futile. It may involve back-hoe operators, historians, archaeologists, town planners, divers, masons, plasterers, surveyors, engineers, photographers, graphic artists, curators, conservators, archivists, tourist guides, rangers, architects, carpenters,...a list which could potentially range across every sector. Essentially the activity is an integrative and coordinating one; a MANAGEMENT process.

More useful, then is to pose the question "what is the characteristic operational core or processes shared?" Analysis of the functions of museums (see Appendix B Definitions) the DPWH Interim Policy Guide-lines, the Burra Charter and the work of J. S. Kerr, reveals a common "core activity", while different institutions may from time to time draw upon different occupational groups. The main procedures involved in this management process are:

Surveying Locating and Measuring

Researching - as a means of determining significance or acquisition policy

Recording

Analysis and Assessment of significance

Formulating Policies/Devising Strategies for conservation and presentation

Implementing Strategies

Interpreting the value of resources

Monitoring and Evaluating procedures

### 1.4 Definition of Heritage or Cultural Resource Management

From the above the Sector can be defined as follows:

Its purpose is to do with understanding culture

Its focus is through the evidence provided by cultural resources.

Its practice involves the management of the resources

(For more on this see Appendix B "Cultural Resource Management".)

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## **2.0 Development of cultural resources management in the state**

As noted in Section 1.1 a wide variety of goals have been, and are being pursued in the cultural resource management field.

To a large extent, this variety in approach is a reflection of the way in which the field has developed overtime, with growth in some sectors being slower to mature than in others. A growing professionalisation of what was often initiated by voluntary effort has resulted in a great unevenness in terms of aims, methods and standards of practice.

The following themes can be identified through an analysis of the industry's growth. Appendix A contains the fully documented overview and can be read subsequent to the following or used as supporting material.

### **2.1 Policy Framework**

The development of a cohesive policy framework for cultural resource management is in an early stage of development in this State. Responsibilities are divided between an array of portfolios, statutory powers and duties distributed between a vast range of government departments, activities lack coordination and articulated aims are notable by their absence.

In such a situation, means are easily translated into ends (eg. restoration or collecting as ends in themselves), or the conservation of historic places becomes subordinate to other activities.

The framework for management which has evolved has been the result of incremental growth and adaptation.

See A 2.1

### **2.2 From voluntary initiatives to state responsibility**

The field largely has developed in an uneven fashion from voluntary initiatives. Growing State intervention has created pressures for greater accountability which create a tension between the search for improved practices and the resources and methodologies inherited from the past, which often have created a highly selective view of history.

See A 2.2

### **2.3 Whose History?**

As practice in the field develops, there is a growing questioning of the representatives of collections and listings and the extent to which they reflect an even and balanced view of history.

See A 2.3

### **2.4 Context**

There is a growth in awareness of the need for contextual or framework setting (regional, thematic history) to determine research, acquisition, listing and conservation policies and priorities to give meaning to interpretation.

See A 2.4

### **2.5 From object to meaning**

There is a development from collecting, describing and documenting objects to analysing and interpreting their meaning. This has been slower emerging in the architectural area than in museology.

See A 2.5

## 2.6 Accessible history

An increasing awareness is developing that the way cultural resources are managed can bestow or deny access of citizens to knowledge of their culture. This gives rise to a view of the manager as more a community facilitator than a producer and presenter of knowledge. The training implications of this are profound. See A 2.6

## 2.7 Cultural resources or tourist assets?

Tourist goals have long been used to justify the management of cultural resources, but there have been inherent tensions between the need to protect cultural property and its use as a commercial asset.

A growing awareness that an industry can only be sustainable when it conserves its assets, and this includes authenticity in interpretation and presentation, presents opportunities for a synthesis to this contradiction.

The developing role for cultural tourism confirms the need for the development of community-based facilitatory skills and public history techniques to assist local communities to discover, interpret and present their culture.

At the same time, developments in this area highlight the need for articulation of the underlying values of cultural resource management in the form of a cohesive State policy if a balance is to be struck between these and other values.

See A 2.7

## 2.8 Issues

The issues raised by the subsequent overview have the following implications for training priorities:

### Purposes

Managing cultural resources is a developing field which is undergoing a process of questioning and affirmation. This is an uneven process so that various actors in the field are pursuing a variety of goals (including none). There is however a growing consensus around the notion that the purpose of the management of cultural resources has to develop skills which:

- (i) Are facilitatory in nature; which can involve communities in the production of knowledge (eg. public and oral history techniques)
- (ii) Present knowledge in a way which actively involves people in the consumption of knowledge and experience.

### Practices

Increasingly the field involves integrative processes concerned with the coordination and management of inter-disciplinary activity. It is essential that the various actors come to:

- (iii) Understand the overall process involved
- (iv) Appreciate their contributions and those of others to the process
- (v) Share an overall view about goals and objectives.

## 3. GROUPS AND CONNECTIONS

Figure 1 outlines the main groups and connections in the industry. It should be read in conjunction with supporting notes.





APPENDIX 6

Julia Clark The City as a Museum: History, Heritage and Cultural Tourism.

Thurs. 3pm  
Steve Thomas

THE CITY AS A MUSEUM: HISTORY, HERITAGE AND CULTURAL TOURISM

During the recent debates over the future of Hobart the comment has several times been made that 'we must resist the museumification of Hobart'. And yet recent market research both in Australia and Great Britain has demonstrated that on any given weekend more people visit art galleries and museums than attend sporting fixtures. So clearly for those of us interested in public history and cultural tourism there is a huge potential market for some 'museumification' of Hobart. But what do I mean by 'museumification'? I think that the original comments were made by people who equated it both with fossilisation and with an anti-development philosophy. Clearly this is neither possible nor desirable, and takes the dimmest possible view of what museums actually do, or are capable of doing. For me museums are not, or should not be, about rows of things arranged with minimal labelling comprehensible only to fellow initiates. For me museums are exciting places, charged with meanings about those objects and their roles in our natural and cultural history. These meanings must be made accessible to as wide an audience as possible, in as many different media as possible.

There is a special kind of museum the ECOMUSEUM, which has particular relevance to the planning of Hobart's future as a destination for cultural tourists and as an interesting place in which to live. This different kind of museum was developed in France in the early 1970's, and while it has not revolutionised the museum world as originally hoped many of its ideas and values continue to inform our profession. Its guiding philosophy was that we should not always be seeking to bring things into a museum but that we should leave things in their original contexts and take the people out to them. This is obviously particularly relevant to buildings, streetscapes and activities requiring workshops or livestock, like blacksmithing or ploughing. It aimed to use the ideas stemming from ecology and social history to help visitors and locals alike to understand and enjoy their region or city. In Australia I know of only one example which has used this philosophy, the Living Museum of the West, in Melbourne's industrial western suburbs. Based on a disused industrial site, visitors may go to the museum there and then collect material for a walking or driving tour of the nearby region, and suggestions for activities which they may wish to pursue locally. It seems to me that within the relatively small yet extraordinarily diverse Central Area of Hobart, we have a wonderful opportunity to pursue such ideas. Indeed we have already begun with the success of the "Southern Outpost" exhibition, the signage in the Cove and along the Rivulet, and the Sullivans Cove Walking Trail.

So what is the relationship between the Central Area Heritage Study and the museumification of Hobart. Perhaps it would be useful to define 'history' and 'heritage' a couple of terms which have come, through common usage, to mean the same thing; this thing is often poorly understood, and poorly defined. From this grab-bag of casual assumptions comes many of the serious deficiencies in attempts to present cities or regions as exciting visitor or resident experiences. In her paper Jane Lennon has referred to the Heritage Commission which is essentially concerned with 'the things we want to keep', that is, the physical remains of past activities. These are currently being examined by CASP, and can be called HERITAGE. HISTORY, on the other hand, concerns itself with the meaning of those things. It takes us beyond the physical to the lives of the people who built and inhabited them. As the late Lloyd Robson so succinctly remarked, history is not the past, it is an analysis of the past. It is about activities and experiences which can animate the physical remains today as they did in the past.

The two examples I have selected to explore the relationship between history and heritage, and to demonstrate where I see many attempts at cultural tourism go badly wrong, are chosen from Sydney. This is partly to ensure that we can approach them in an atmosphere free from the kinds of preconceptions which might spring to our minds were I to use two local examples. It is also because I believe that they demonstrate that we here in Hobart are actually producing work within a philosophical framework which is more sophisticated than many of our mainland counterparts.

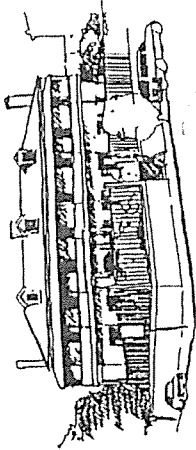
The first example is the 'Paddington Walk', produced by the Department of Environment and Planning. It is a feast of gracious terraces, charming villas, delightful vistas to distant water views and details of architectural decoration. It is obviously not comfortable with the history of Paddington as a working and lower middle class suburb, where people lived in often very crowded conditions ranging from some comfort to abject poverty and squalor: as a suburb until only very recently with a reputation for its brothels, gambling dens, street gang warfare and its pub on every corner: as a place where pigeons and greyhounds were bred in the backyard and the pawn-shop was at least as important as the church. All of this rich, rowdy, colourful past has been subverted and stolen by this picture of Paddington as Yuppie Heaven. All of those former residents, whole communities of them, have had their past obliterated. And a very dull walk, unless you are mad about architecture or hoping to increase the value of your gentrified terrace, is the result.

The second example, located on the fringes of Paddington, also speaks volumes about the limitations of the fundamentally ahistorical approach which characterises National Trust products.

It is Juniper Hall, in Oxford Street, and even its name is symptomatic of the problem which it so elegantly is. The diagram shows that it was actually only known as Juniper Hall for the first 27 years of its life; after that it was called Ormond House, from 1850-1984. But the Trust decided to focus on only the earliest period, renamed it Juniper Hall, and effectively wiped out in its first breath the major part of its history. It then went on to focus on the public and commercial life of its original owner, a man named Robert Cooper. His family and domestic servants are only shadowy presences in this hymn to early capitalist entrepreneurs and decorative and architectural arts. A glance at some of the later history of the building reveals many fascinating themes for exploration, all of which obviously work against the romantic and nostalgic picture of our gracious colonial past, but which offer much for the visitors.

It also reveals that history is more often about change than it is about stability, and I think we need to give serious consideration to the telling statement that was used as the title to David Lowenthal's important book The Past is a Foreign Country: to complete the quote '...they do things differently there' (L.P. Hartley The Go-Between). We cannot assume that because a building has been assigned a name in some architectural/functional category that we now know all about it. A pub in the 19th and early 20th centuries is not the same animal as a pub today. Pubs today are no longer centres for political and trades union activity, labour exchanges or sporting venues for cockfighting or skittles. Their lost history needs to be recovered through the kinds of local and thematic studies which we have been doing. And having been recovered, the next inescapable and essential step is to make them available to as many people as possible, which we have also begun to do, and for which we have already found an eager audience. This audience is composed not only of tourists, but of locals and this is very important. For this shows us that we are on the right track, and that museumification is not a dirty word.





1. Juniper Hall

