

FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETIES INC

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Hon Editor, Dr Ruth S. Kerr

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1) New heritage specialists join the Australian Heritage Council

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Peter Garrett MP, has appointed three new members of the Australian Heritage Council in December 2008. They are Adjunct Professor Sharon Sullivan AO, Associate Professor Peter Valentine and Dr Jackie Huggins AM FAHA. Sharon Sullivan worked in the Australian Heritage Commission in the past and has chaired the National Heritage Forum meetings with the Minister over several years.

(Source: Heritage Tasmania enclosed with Australian ICOMOS Email News No.368, 19 December 2008)

2) Federal Government reviews heritage export laws

On 15 January the Minister for The Arts and Heritage, Hon Peter Garrett MP announced a review of the *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986*. He made the announcement when declaring a protection zone around the wreck of the colonial schooner *Mermaid* in north Queensland.

It is to be a full review of the operation of the Act. This follows increasing use of the internet for buying and selling artefacts.

The Minister stated in his press release:

"The Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986 and attendant regulations are being reviewed for the first time in 13 years," the Minister said. "In consultation with the public, we'll be finding out how effectively the Act has been operating."

"An important aspect of the review is that it will consider the operation of the National Cultural Heritage Account, which assists public institutions to buy nationally significant items they could not otherwise afford.

"The Act and Regulations mean significant items - deemed to be of cultural and artistic significance - cannot be exported without a permit.

"And the valuable work of the National Cultural Heritage Account means the Australian public's exposure to these artefacts and artworks here at home can be ensured.

"The review invites public submissions until 6 March 2009, to ensure consideration of a wide range of views."

Details on how to participate in the review of the *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986*: http://www.arts.gov.au/public_consultation

(Source: ABC News 15 January 2009 and Minister Garrett's Press Release website)

3) United Kingdom email law

“From March all internet service providers (ISPs) will by law have to keep information about every e-mail sent or received in the UK for a year. ”

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7819230.stm>

The EU Directive does not apply to the records of government departments and other bodies. It relates to traffic data maintained by 'the providers of publicly available electronic communications services or of public communications networks' (Article 1). Here is a link to the Directive

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32006L0024:EN:html>

(Source: aus-archivists@archivists.org.au 10 January, 2009 and 21 January 2009)

4) Selection and preservation of digital information

Archivists, increasingly, have a less impact on what is selected, kept and destroyed? Gantz, John F, Christopher Chute, Alex Manfrediz, and others. The Diverse and Exploding Digital Universe: An Updated Forecast of Worldwide Information Growth through 2011 <http://www.scribd.com/doc/2537926/The-Diverse-and-Exploding-Digital-Universe> the digital realm is already bigger than the number of stars. There are about 45 gigabytes of digital information for every person on the planet. By 2011, the digital universe will consist of 1800 exabytes and it will continue to grow by a factor of 10 every five years.

Selection (whether because of significance or some other factor): a question of roles and responsibilities? Francine Berman in *Got Data?: a Guide to Data Preservation in the Information Age* (Communications of the ACM v51,n12, December 2008: 50-56). Abstract from Current Cites. The world is "awash in digital data".

In fact, we produce way more than we could ever possibly preserve.

Determining what gets saved and how is comparable to strategies for dealing with infrastructure in the physical world. The approach must be "useful, usable, cost-effective, and unremarkable". Conceptually, the author discusses the 'Branscomb Pyramid' model where data is tiered off according to its value, whether personal (eg. photos, tax records) or more widespread (eg. government data or irreplaceable cultural artefacts). Each level requires a different solution and different body in charge. The author concludes with a helpful 'Top 10 Guidelines for Data Stewardship' which boil down to planning ahead, being organized, and being ready for change.

[LRK]

(A Mailing List for Australian Archivists – 12 January 2009)

5) New head of Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

Ms Robyn Kruk, former head of the Premier's Department in New South Wales, has been appointed as Secretary of the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and The Arts in Canberra. Ms Kruk resigned as head of the Premier's Department in New South Wales within days of the Premier, Morris Iemma being removed as Premier. Ms Kruk was in charge of New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service from 1994 to 1998.

(Source: 'Canberra collects escapees from NSW', *Australian Financial Review* 16 January 2009 p.49 including photo)

6) Local history – Wyndham Historical Society

The Wyndham Historical Society (WHS) is seeking the services of an Historian or Archivist to produce a Significance Assessment Report, for the Wyndham Museum (Kimberley region, WA) - as per NLA guidelines. The Archivists List-Serv has publicised WHS's advertisement.

Wyndham is the most northerly town and port in Western Australia, with a population of approximately 700 people. It was significant in the opening up of the Kimberley region in the late 1800s. The town had a Government Residency immediately after opening as the port for the Halls Creek Goldfield and the early pastoral stations in its hinterland.

The Wyndham Museum houses artefacts relating to the main historical aspects of this region - Pioneers and Pastoral Stations, Wyndham Meatworks (1919 - 1985), Transportation & Communication (Aviation, Shipping, Telegraph, Flying Doctor), WW2 bombings, Chinese and (recent) Indigenous history.

The WHS is inviting all interested Historians/ Archivists with previous experience in Significance Assessment writing to contact Chris McLachlan (Treasurer) <<mailto:csow4@thelastfrontier.com.au>> csow4@thelastfrontier.com.au or Jane Dennis (Museum Coordinator) <<mailto:bushdogs33@hotmail.com>> bushdogs33@hotmail.com for further details.

The Historical Society of the Northern Territory has visited the WHS on one of its field trips and members of the Kununurra Historical Society and the some members of the Royal Western Australia Historical Society take an ongoing interest in the Society.

(Source: aus-archivists-bounces@archivists.org.au – 20 January 2009)

7) HM Colonial Schooner *Mermaid* located on Flora Reef near Cairns

HM Colonial Schooner *Mermaid* has been located on Flora Reef near Cairns - The wreckage of HM Colonial Schooner *Mermaid* has been located by archaeologists from Australian national maritime Museum after it sank on a voyage on 13 June 1829. The anchor, metal fittings and heavy copper sheathing from the hull have been found. The 21 metre wooden vessel had circumnavigated Australia under the command of Lieutenant Philip Parker King RN. The *Mermaid* was purchased by Governor Macquarie in 1817 for £2,000. The New South Wales governor took over the *Mermaid* after King completed his surveys the vessel was directly involved in the establishment of new settlements at Port Macquarie, Moreton Bay and Norfolk Island. When the *Mermaid* sank she was on a trip with stores bound for Fort Wellington settlement on Raffles Bay in the Northern Territory. After the sinking the crew was rescued by the *Admiral Gifford* on 24 June 1829. A protection zone has been declared by the Minister for Environment and Heritage and The Arts, Hon Peter Garrett MP, under the *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986* (Cth) around the site of the *Mermaid* wreck.

(Source: *Gympie Times* 10 January 2009 pp.17-18 including two photos, and Press Release by Hon Peter Garrett MP on 15 January 2009)

8) Goulburn's historic cattle yards

Mr Michael Katz, formerly of the Commonwealth Bank and now a property developer, is considering developing a \$10 million tourist complex around Goulburn's historic cattle yards. He is working with the Goulburn Livestock Exchange to revitalize a wool store building there.

(Source: *Australian Financial Review* 16 January 2009 p.52)