

The Australian Association of Consulting Archaeologists Inc: The Genesis of The Association

Laila Haglund and Helen Brayshaw

Abstract

This paper is the first in an invited series of papers which focuses on aspects of the history and development of the Australian Association of Consulting Archaeologists Incorporated; and on the development of the archaeological consulting field in Australia.

The authors were active agents in the formation of the Association and recall here the Inaugural meeting of the Association 30 years ago.

KEY WORDS: AACAI, Consulting archaeologists,

Introduction

The first meeting to discuss the creation of an association for professional archaeologists was held on 16th June, 1979. The meeting was held in the Anthropology Department at Sydney University and attended by between 30 and 40 people, including consultants, academics and archaeologists employed by the National Parks & Wildlife Service. The Association now has members in all states except the Northern Territory and has local chapters in five states.

After 30 years of existence, the Association merits the writing of a history of the processes and individuals contributing to its inception and development to its present form, as well as its contribution to heritage management practice in Australia. This history should document the efforts of consulting archaeologists to establish the Association and develop professional standards and values. It will provide an opportunity to portray the perspective of consultant archaeologists and their perceptions of developments within the industry and the field of heritage management. The history will be of interest to present and future members of the Association, students of heritage management and those members of the general public who are interested in archaeology.

Individually we are all likely to remember and perhaps mis-remember, efforts and arguments that went into the growth of the Association. We recognise that there was an enormous amount of joint effort and varying opinions involved, we are therefore of the view that other members should have a chance to contribute to this history. To begin, Laila recalls below something about the genesis of the Association. This was published previously in the electronic Newsletter of the Association. However it is appropriate on the 30th anniversary of the Association to publish this paper in this journal as a catalyst to a more detailed reflection of the history of the AACAI Inc. Members are invited to submit papers to this journal detailing aspects of the history of the association.

Genesis

When need has grown and time is ripe, ideas tend to take shape and find an outlet. This certainly seemed to be so in the late 1970s, judging from the response I got from colleagues in Australia when first suggesting a professional organization for archaeologists who were asked to act as consultants in relation to heritage issues arising from proposed development.

There seemed to be a general unease about the situation. Protective legislation was in place, for example Queensland's Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1967, Victoria's Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972, in NSW the National Parks and Wildlife Acts of 1967 and 1974 and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Relics Act 1975. But it was not immediately clear who should and could carry out the investigations needed according to legal requirements? Who had the time and the necessary skills that included not only being a good and experienced archaeologist but also having some understanding of physical and other impacts of a proposed development and an ability to find the right questions to ask of the developer? What about the costs and hazards involved?

My background brought together experiences that influenced the thinking behind that first meeting which was held with the intent of forming a professional association.

In the 1960s I took on some contracts with the Swedish Government to work on Hydro-Electric projects in northern Sweden. Contracts were for two summer months (and even so we at times were stopped by snowstorms); the team normally comprised two to three experienced archaeologists (of whom one contracted to write the report), maybe archaeological assistant(s) and, notably, local workmen (farmers, hunters and fishermen) who knew the area well and had, over many seasons, acquired impressive knowledge of archaeological techniques and aims. Equipment required was selected by head office staff at Statens Historiska Museum and delivered to the field in sturdy wooden cases. Standard

sheets listed symbols to be used on maps and plans and instructions were given for reporting. The expressed aim was to ensure that plans and reports could be correctly interpreted and produced for publication and that it should be possible for colleagues to use the field reports and complete the work if needed. A dominant memory of these contracts was how much we learnt from discussing, in the field, with colleagues and local people, what we were seeing and how to interpret this.

My sister Christina had also worked on the Hydro-Electric projects and when she settled in Minnesota she started working as an archaeological consultant. This had in the USA become a profession with its own organisation with standards and rules, The Society of Professional Archaeologists (SOPA). SOPA was reorganised in 1988 and named the Register of Professional Archaeologists (RPA). From numerous web sites and discussions with US colleagues it is clear that development of consulting practices and ideas applied to this have to some extent run parallel in the US and Australia.

As I worked with Christina on a number of projects in the US, I learnt about SOPA and could discuss aspects of beneficial as well as doubtful value to the Australian context, I brought back to Australia a store of ideas that could be applied here.

Arriving in Queensland in 1965 I almost immediately became involved in salvage archaeology (the Broadbeach Aboriginal Burial Ground) and was asked to help draft the first Queensland legislation to protect Aboriginal heritage. Doing this involved assembling, studying and considering the practicalities involved in the application of a large number of heritage legislations from other countries. Our draft was turned into legal format by government legal staff and assented to in 1967. As no government organization was in place to supervise or apply the legislation I became involved in creating the pressure to get relevant regulations in place as well as staff and finance to administer these. And then there was a matter of finding archaeologists who could do the work. All in all this was a useful experience that heavily influenced my perception of a need for a formal and national organization for archaeological consultants.

The AACAI constitution with its codes and underlying policies was developed from first drafts heavily based on the US example, but trying to avoid what seemed to be clear mistakes. As can be seen from the early newsletters, we were much concerned with creating appropriate standards of competence (academic as well as field experience) and of performance in consulting work, means of training for this (including much exchange of ideas and cooperation rather than secrecy and competition), better and safer working conditions and remuneration (including consideration of contracted obligations) and consideration of our own obligations and responsibilities to the heritage, to our clients but also to the communities whose heritage we were studying.

Websites that may be of interest, and major documents used in our initial work formulating the structure and constitution of the Association, are listed below.

- Indiana University offers a course entitled Archaeological Ethics and Law: Professional Ethics, and has other useful links - see <http://www.indiana.edu/>.

- The Register of Professional Archaeologists (formerly SOPA) can be found at www.rpanet.org.
- C.R.McGimsey III & H.A.Davis, eds., 1977: *The Management of Archaeological Resources: The Airlie House Report*. Special Publication of the Society for American Archaeology. (Note: Chapter 6, 'Certification and Accreditation', provides information about SOPA.)
- *Archaeological and Historical Investigations for Energy Facilities. A State of the Art Report*. February 1977. Prepared by the Iroquois Research Institute for the Federal Power Commission, Washington D.C. Not copyrighted in order to permit the widest free dissemination to the public.
- Thomas F. King, 1978 *The Archaeological Survey: Methods and Uses*. For the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington.
- Valerie Talmage, Olga Chester and Staff of the Interagency Archaeological Services, 1977. *The Importance of Small, Surface, and Disturbed Sites as Sources of Significant Archaeological Data*. For the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington.
- The Comptroller General, Report to the Chairman, Committee On Interior and Insular Affairs, House of Representatives of the United States, April 22, 1981: *Are Agencies Doing Enough or Too Much for Archaeological Preservation? Guidance needed*.

The First Meeting

An invitation [see below] was sent out to any archaeologist interested in consulting work to attend the initial meeting to discuss the formation of a professional association. The invitation was sent to the following 43 individuals, who were encouraged to inform the organisers of any other interested people not on the list but who should be sent an invitation.

Ken Alpin	Laila Haglund	Jenny Slatyer
Val Attenbrow	Gwenda Happ	Nicola Stern
Damaris Bairstow	Peter Hiscock	Marjorie Sullivan
David Bell	Phil Hughes	Hilary Sullivan
Helen Brayshaw	Mark Kelly	Wendy Thorpe
John Clegg	Margrit Koettig	Ann Urquhart
Eleanor Crosby	Pip Kroll	Jenny Van Proctor
Len Cubis	Tony Mandl	Robert Varman
Mary Dallas	Tim Murray	Pat Vinnicombe
Martin Davies	Tia Negerevitch	Elizabeth Williams
Alex Djeckic	John Phillips	Grahame Wilson
Brian Egloff	Carol Powell	Rosemary Young
Sherrie-Lee Evans	Anne Ross	Andrew Young
Kay Francis	Betty Ross	
Ben Gunn	Rex Silcox	

A full list of attendees of this meeting has not been preserved in the AACAI Inc archives although the authors would welcome any additional information members might have in relation to the attendance list.

The meeting was held, and the following letter reports on the progress made with the establishment of the Interim Association of Consulting Archaeologists. It also refers to drafts for a Code of Ethics, Guidelines for Consultants and a Standard Contract. All of these items can be seen with Newsletter No 1 on the AACAI website <http://www.aacai.com.au/>.

Concluding Remarks

Reading through these documents from the early days of the Association, you will probably be surprised to find that so much that we now take for granted was achieved

through the efforts of Association members at that time, and that so much of what was hotly debated then is still being argued, perhaps with even more heat and urgency. We have seen recent examples in internet discussions about the use of volunteers, required levels of insurance for sub-consultants, appropriate deployment of and remuneration to archaeology undergraduates on consultancy projects, and an associated suggestion for revision of the categories of membership.

In future journal editions we hope that other members take the opportunity to reflect on the history of the the Association and its relevance to present and future generations of consulting archaeologists.

Just to let you know what we are doing!

Dear *Eleanor*

Any archaeologist interested in undertaking contract work is asked to attend a meeting tentatively planned for Saturday, June 16th at 10.00 a.m. in the Reading Room, Anthropology Department, Sydney Uni. This venue should be confirmed about a week beforehand by contacting either:

Laila Haglund 1 Cameron St., Balmain 2041 818 2842 or
 Carol Powell 1 Steward St., Leichhardt 2040 827 1834

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the formation of a professional body of consultant archaeologists. Aspects such as professional ethics and standards; qualifications and rates of pay need to be discussed in the interests of people working as consultants now or in the future.

This meeting is not intended to replace a workshop proposed by A.A.A. for June/July but to prepare the ground for this.

We enclose the following items which will be discussed further at the meeting:

- Draft of a proposed Code of Ethics
- Draft of a proposed Guide for Consultants
- Draft Form of Contract

Obviously we need as much support as possible to make this association representative and feasible. Would you therefore notify one of the above people if any interested person not included on the enclosed list.

The association will need to elect at least temporary office bearers at this meeting. If you will not be able to attend the meeting would you please nominate a candidate, subject to their agreement, for any of the following posts:

- Chairperson
- Secretary
- Assistant Secretary
- Treasurer

Please send the tear-off at the foot of the page to one of the above people.

Yours
Laila

P.S. Please bring lunch, drinks will be provided.

Candidate	Post.....
Candidate	Post.....
Candidate	Post.....
Candidate	Post.....

Confirm Attendance :

INTERIM NSW ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING ARCHAEOLOGISTS

Post Office Box 214
Holme Building
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY NSW 2006

20 July 1979

Dear Colleague,

A meeting to discuss the need for a professional association of consulting archaeologists was held in the Reading Room of the Department of Anthropology, University of Sydney on the 16th June 1979. The meeting was prompted largely by local problems and the proposed association was thought of as representing New South Wales, hopefully to be affiliated with associations in other states in the future.

The invitation to a meeting went to those who had attended some earlier, informal meetings and who were interested, either because they were already involved in contract archaeology or because they were students expecting to become involved in future years. We next wrote also to those who were on the National Parks and Wildlife Service's list of consultants interested in working in NSW, be they residents of NSW or not. With the invitation we sent drafts for a Code of Ethics, Guidelines for Consultants and a Standard Contract.

The meeting lasted five hours and was attended by between 30 and 40 persons - about half of those invited. Several archaeologists had come up/down from Canberra and others who could not come to Sydney had rung to express their interest. It was agreed that an association should be formed but that we should contact colleagues in other states to see whether we should think of a nation-wide association from the start. Such an organization would have a chapter in each state, since it seems almost impossible to keep momentum if the committee were very widely scattered. We discussed the drafts circulated and decided that certain points needed further investigation and discussion. The following is a brief summary of the more important conclusions:

We need to investigate the legal implications, the cost and the practical advantages and disadvantages of forming either an institution or an association of consulting archaeologists, particularly since laws differ from state to state.

Anyone wishing to associate themselves with this organisation will be encouraged to do so and no attempt made to suggest that members only should be allowed to undertake consultant work. The aim is to acquire a reputation for competence, reliability and a responsible attitude to the discipline, clients and colleagues, and to provide mutual support and advice.

There will be associates and members. The latter will be admitted on the basis of competence, assessed in terms of academic qualifications (though exceptions can be made) as well as practical experience and performance. Since the matter of deciding who is competent is a difficult one and no such decisions should be - or appear to be - made by a small in-group, we shall have to organise membership committees, probably on a state basis and made up of persons representing a number of interests and organisations. Members will be listed in a National Register or Directory and will be able to quote membership as a professional qualification.

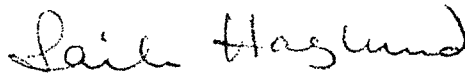
In the meantime we are calling for anybody interested, including potential members, to join as associates. We are also wondering whether students should join as a third category or as associates.

The association has an interim name - Interim Association of Consulting Archaeologists - and an interim committee, the members of which are listed in the attached Newsletter. We will organise another meeting before the end of the year to report on the response to our circulars, the results of our investigations, and the results of the workshop at Kioloa organised by the Australian Archaeological Association for August. Revised versions of the drafts circulated and any other documents that may be needed, such as By-laws, will be discussed and a committee elected. Nominations will be called for and a formal election held, probably by postal ballot. The final plans will depend on the response to our circulars.

We have appended a Newsletter which represents the results of our investigations into specific problems, and includes the revisions to the Code of Ethics and Guidelines which were made at the first meeting. A copy of the original drafts plus suggested revisions are included for those who have not received them before.

If you are interested, do join, and do comment on any point that is unclear or that bothers you.

Yours sincerely,



Leila Haglund
Chairperson