Conference Agenda & Abstracts

Day 1 (Friday 26 November 1999):
Identifying rural heritage
(* = papers included in this volume)

Planning for Aboriginal heritage
Vince Scarcella & Cameron White

Since the NSW Heritage Policy released by the then Minister Craig Knowles in 1996, a number of changes have come about in the way the Heritage Council and Heritage Office approach the management of Aboriginal heritage.

These changes have looked at ways to better merge the protection of Aboriginal heritage into the heritage and planning management systems, using existing Government resources. This approach is driven by the aim of ensuring the Aboriginal community remains the sole cultural owner with the right to negotiate management practices over their heritage.

The Brewarrina fish traps, located in the Barwon River, western New South Wales, are one example of a protected Aboriginal and natural feature site of ‘state significance’ to the Aboriginal community in NSW. We look at the term ‘state significance’ and how this will relate to the local nature of Aboriginal heritage. Protection and site management issues such as forms of protection, public access, Aboriginal significance, significance to other stakeholders and tourism have all ensured that the fish traps remain an important site worthy of protection.

The economic future of Australia’s rural heritage
Sheridan Burke *

Sustainability and survival in the WA wheat belt
Laura Gray *

Paradise Lost? Profiling the heritage of the Apple Industry in the Garden of Eden (Tasmania) and some lessons for managing rural cultural heritage
Anne McConnell *

Pastoral dilemmas: case studies of pastoral holdings
Robyn Mullens *


Shopping for time:
the heritage of rural shops and shopping

Joy McCann

This country has a rich heritage associated with the history of shopping that spans nearly 200 years, yet much of it is unrecognised, unsung and fast running out of time. This paper explores the significance of our rural shopping heritage and why it is in danger of disappearing. It also considers some of the opportunities we have for conserving this precious part of our cultural heritage and why the movable heritage of shopping is a particular area for our concern.

This work is the result of a project jointly commissioned by the NSW Heritage Office and the Ministry for the Arts. Its purpose was to prepare a publication for a general reading audience on the movable heritage of shops and shopping in New South Wales. It also resulted in a contextual history of shopping and a database of shops from which case studies for the publication were drawn.

The study had its genesis in the NSW Governments' 1996 heritage policy, which created the NSW Heritage Office and extended its function from the built environment to include movable, Aboriginal and natural heritage matters. The project was managed by the Movable Heritage Project Officer, John Petersen, working with a joint Heritage Office-Ministry for the Arts committee. Kylie Winkworth's report for the committee explored the issues about why our movable heritage is at risk and recommended a series of thematic studies that would provide the historical context for understanding the significance of objects and collections, particularly those at most risk of being lost to our communities.

The theme of shops with in situ collections was determined as one of the priority areas. It has particular relevance in light of the recent Burra Charter review. Shops are not the only buildings of great interest and diversity, but they often contain important collections of movable heritage and are setting for the life stories of whole communities. As such, we can learn much about the way people have lived their lives and the strong social and emotional ties that bind people to their local shops.
Day 2 (Saturday 27 November 1999) –

Working in the bush: adapting local practice to rural circumstances
(* = papers included in this volume)

Paving a future for the Great North Road
Lorraine Banks

Convict labour was used between 1826 and 1836 to construct the Great North Road linking Sydney with the Hunter region. The heritage significance of the road has long been recognised, with hundreds of convict-built features remaining along the entire 240 km of the road, including drains, culverts, retaining walls, buttresses, wells, convict stockades and the oldest surviving bridges in mainland Australia.

However, the multiplicity of management agencies involved and the linear nature of the item meant its management and conservation was almost totally neglected. It took the enthusiasm and initiative of a couple of small communities along the Great North Road to begin the process of seeing it properly looked after. This ‘bottom-up’ approach to heritage conservation involved bringing together all the agencies, councils, and community organisations with an interest in the road’s future to function as a collaborative alliance called the Convict Trail. Over the past four years the management of the road has changed dramatically, and we look at how this has been achieved, the ‘roadblocks’ which have been overcome, and the positive future that is now being paved for the Great North Road through the impetus inspired by the Convict Trail.

Curtilages – getting beyond the Word. Implications for the colonial landscapes of the Cumberland Plain and Camden, NSW
Colleen Morris & Geoffrey Britton *

The Golden Pipeline of WA – A dimension of opportunity
Don Newman *

Up to Sydney, down to the bush (Rail station interiors)
Donald Ellsmore *
Motes and beams: looking from contents to movable heritage

Kylie Winkworth

Movable heritage is an integral part of the heritage of rural communities. It is a focus for memories about people, work and family; it illuminates social bonds and aspirations and it is the culture we carry to places to carve out settlements and homes. It tells stories about people and places.

Movable heritage is fundamental to the significance of many rural heritage places, and it is sometimes recognised and valued for its contribution to the place. But movable heritage also exists outside recognised heritage places where its chances of survival are less certain. The conservation of movable heritage needs good partnerships and initiatives. Are we up to it?

Rich rewards: sowing the seeds for culturally diverse heritage practices

Kate Rea

From Afghan cameleers and Chinese market gardeners, to more recent arrivals of the post World War II era and beyond, migrants and migration have been vital forces in shaping Australia’s cultural, social, political and economic environment. Yet, if heritage tells the story of the past, heritage practice has not yet mapped the cultural diversity that has, and continues to characterise our national fabric.

Placing community consultation at the centre of an approach to heritage, this paper will identify some principles for culturally diverse heritage practice in the context of regional and rural New South Wales. It will also raise issues and problems facing ethnic communities and heritage organisations in creating a greater focus on cultural diversity within heritage.

Current Commonwealth initiatives in rural heritage

Barry Reville

Conserving the buried heritage of the bush: the Wellington settlement site

Anne Bickford

Deadly museums or living townships: the Heritage Adviser’s key role in accommodating change

Ian Wight
Day 3 (Sunday 28 November 1999) –
Working with rural communities
(* = papers included in this volume)

Communities: parochial, passionate, committed and ignored
Chris Johnston & Kristal Buckley

Machinery in the wheat industry –
a wheat stripper and its associations
Thomas Graham

The Museum of the Riverina is currently managing a thematic movable-heritage project about the local wheat industry. The project includes items from four separate collections and also applies newly developed significance criteria for evaluating the collections. The paper details the process followed thus far, pinpointing highlights and pitfalls.

Community consultation:
methodologies for survey and workshops with Queensland communities
Jinx Miles

The National Trust of Queensland works with rural communities in various ways: through its properties and branches, through workshops and surveys and, more recently, through education programs and exhibitions. This paper outlines some of the conservation projects, in particular surveys. We generally engage consultants, but we have also carried out a few small-scale surveys in-house. One of the more popular survey methods we use is Meredith Walker’s community driven identification survey described in her report *What’s important about our town? A workshop model for identifying local heritage and character* (1993). This method is appropriate for the National Trust as a community-based organisation and we have found that it is particularly suited to rural communities. This paper discusses some of the advantages and difficulties we have found using Meredith’s method and finishes with a case study of the Lowood workshop carried out this year.