Recording traditional Kaurna Cultural Values in Adelaide – the continuity of Aboriginal cultural traditions within an Australian capital city

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Abstract

The practice of cultural heritage management tends to emphasise tangible rather than intangible values. In Australian urban contexts, Aboriginal heritage management faces a particular problem of recognition for largely intangible cultural values and traditions amidst the overwhelming physical presence of a cityscape superimposed upon the prior Aboriginal cultural landscape. In addition, public and official perceptions often relegate authentic Aboriginal culture to a stereotypical ‘outback’ and exclude it from their vision of the city. Two examples from the city of Adelaide illustrate this problem. These case studies also refer to the ongoing process of seeking recognition for the continuing existence of the cultural identity and heritage of the Kaurna Aboriginal people by Government, planners and developers. It is argued that authentic Aboriginal heritage and culture has survived and continues to be an essential component of the cultural landscape and identity of Australian cities.

Introduction: Aboriginal cultural heritage management in Australian cities often is inadequate.

The practice of cultural heritage management often emphasises tangible rather than intangible cultural heritage. In urban contexts, archaeology and architecture emphasise physical attributes of heritage in the identification, management, preservation and interpretation of the past.

The professional practice of Aboriginal cultural heritage management is largely tied up with development impact assessment – related to infrastructure, energy and mining projects in particular. The potential impacts upon Aboriginal culture and heritage from major development projects tend to be associated in the imagination with rural and remote areas of Australia, such as the mining and natural gas industries in the Pilbara of north-west Western Australia. Aboriginal cultural heritage management issues also have a public image of association with physical or tangible heritage such as rock art and other archaeological sites. Even intangible cultural heritage values are usually imagined to relate to ‘sacred sites’ that constitute prominent topographic features in the outback such as Uluru and Kata Tjuta in Central Australia.

As a consequence of these trends, Aboriginal heritage management in urban contexts tends to be heavily biased towards tangible (mostly archaeological) heritage. Moreover, there is a general reticence for Government Agencies, planners and developers to recognise the authenticity of intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage values in relation to Australian cities.

Aboriginal heritage legislation around Australia is intended to recognise and protect both tangible and intangible cultural heritage – not just archaeological sites but also sacred sites and cultural traditions – mythology, ceremony, and connections to Aboriginal Creation Ancestors and the Dreaming tracks which represent their journeys and actions. However, the
anthropological research and consultation with Aboriginal traditional owners which identifies and protects such sacred sites is still imagined by most people, governments and corporations not to relate to urban contexts but to belong to the outback – where ‘real’ Aboriginal culture survives. An obvious exception is the northern capital city of Darwin, where the living cultural heritage of the local Larrakia people is highlighted in assessment and approval processes for major development projects through the operation of the Northern Territory's Sacred Sites Act (1989). However, for most Australians, the relatively small city of Darwin (population approximately 136,000 in 2014) is itself considered remote, and part of ‘the outback’.

In other Australian urban contexts, Aboriginal culture and attachments to place are often thought of as being less valued by being removed from the perceived ‘outback’ locales of the ‘traditional’ or the ‘authentic’. Archaeology and tangible cultural heritage that may somehow have survived the urbanisation of the landscape is usually imagined to be the only Aboriginal heritage that remains in Australian cities. In Victoria, for example, nearly all Aboriginal heritage surveys for development around Melbourne are purely archaeological and anthropologists seldom are engaged to research and record the intangible cultural heritage of Koori Traditional Owners. This trend persists despite frequent protestations from both Aboriginal representative bodies and some heritage consultants involved in heritage assessment processes.

When Aboriginal Traditional Owners are recognised in an urban context to any degree beyond acknowledging the archaeological record of their ancestors, it is usually in diplomatic terms such as providing a ‘Welcome to Country’ at the opening of meetings and public events, or restoring or assigning Aboriginal place names to public urban locations. In the capital city of South Australia, for example, the Adelaide City Park Lands provides a good example (Figure 1) – all of the parks now have Kaurna Aboriginal names (http://adelaideparklands.com.au/history-heritage/category/kaurna-sites). This outcome is based on an extended research process of involving anthropologists, archaeologists and historians working with Kaurna Elders, who recorded both tangible and intangible heritage places, values, and oral histories for Adelaide city and the parklands in some detail (e.g., ACHM 2005; Amery 1998; Foster 1998, 1990, 1991; Gara 1990, 1998; Hassell Pty Ltd 1998; Hemming 1990, 2001; Hemming and Harris 1998).

Figure 1: Map Showing Adelaide’s city centre and parklands; the Karrawirrapari, Ngangkiparri and Seaford Cemetery Aboriginal Heritage sites. (Map: Russell Pibeam ACHM)
The Case of the Karrawirraparrri

Adelaide City is centred on the River Torrens – the Karrawirraparri (Karra-wirra-parri – ‘redgum-forest-river’; Teichelman and Schürmann 1840). This locality was a very important residential and ceremonial focus for Kaurna people before the 1837 colonisation of their traditional lands by the South Australian Company (a commercial consortium based in London; e.g., see Sunderland 1898). The open red gum (Eucalypt) forest and parklands which bordered the river were dotted with traditional camps of Kaurna people (Figure 2) and frequent visitors from neighbouring regions (including the Adelaide hills, Murray River and lower lakes and Coorong, and the mid north and Flinders Ranges). These gatherings included many ceremonies and traditional dances, and continued for approximately twenty years into the colonial period. In fact, Aboriginal corroborees were still a part of the Royal Adelaide Show in the 1880s, although by this time most Kaurna people had been effectively excluded from the city and the performers were transported in from an Aboriginal Mission on the lower Murray River (where many families shared both local Ngarrindjeri and Kaurna descent). Nonetheless, some Kaurna descendants maintained connection with and even residence within Adelaide’s city and suburbs during the mission era. The level of Kaurna residence in Adelaide increased again as the missions declined and laws and policies discriminating against Aboriginal people gradually decreased during the twentieth century.

In 2009 the State Government chose a site for the new Royal Adelaide Hospital – the old rail yards on the south bank of the River Torrens, formerly a stockyard in early colonial days, and before that, a traditional Aboriginal camping place next to the deepest, permanent summer waterhole along the river. The new hospital is one of several major projects planned along the Torrens River in the central city. These developments also include the redevelopment of Adelaide Oval from an iconic cricket ground into a large-scale stadium for sporting (football, cricket) and entertainment events and a range of modifications to the riverbanks, including a major footbridge development to link the stadium to the city centre across the river.

The River Torrens – the Karrawirraparri – is a sacred river. In Kaurna cultural beliefs, it is mirrored in the night sky – which represents what we might refer to as the afterlife – by the Milky Way, known as Wodliparri (‘the river of huts’, Teichelmann & Schürmann 1840: 57). Wodliparri is the alter ego of the Karrawirraparri. The glittering stars represent the campfires in front of huts of

Figure 2: Alexander SCHRAMM Australia, 1813-1864. An Aboriginal encampment, near the Adelaide foothills. 1854, Adelaide (oil on canvas, 89.0 x 132.0 cm). South Australian Government Grant 1976. Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.
the spirits of the departed. The dark patches in the Milky Way represent the large, permanent pools which characterise particularly the Adelaide City section of the River, from the inner-city suburbs of Hackney/St Peters to Hindmarsh. The river is the creation of, and in one aspect the embodiment of Yura the rainbow serpent (Teichelmann & Schürmann 1840: 62). The rainbow serpent is the Creator and Lawgiver, the most powerful and archetypal of all the Aboriginal (not just Kaurna) Creation Ancestors (e.g., Elkin 1977, Buchler and Maddock 1978). This is the oral history provided by contemporary Kaurna people, and missionaries in early colonial days recorded aspects of the same cultural tradition: ‘Yurakauve, s. The dark spots in the Milky Way, thought to be large ponds in the Wodliparri, and the residence of the aquatic monster Yura’ (Teichelmann & Schürmann 1840: 62).

Colonel Light, the planner and surveyor for the City of Adelaide in 1837, had located the fledgling city to take advantage of reliable water supply from these deep, permanent summer pools. The new urban centre of the colonisers thus usurped the more fluid, but nonetheless well-established gathering place and demographic and spiritual focus of its hunter-gatherer antecedents.

The Karrawirraparri, and further to the south, the Onkaparinga River or Ngangkiparri (‘Women’s river’ – Figure 1) were also major travelling routes for Kaurna people moving between summer and winter foraging areas and residences (Tindale 1974) and also for the large number of visitors who came annually from the Adelaide Hills and Murray River and Lakes regions to trade, socialise, and conduct joint ceremonies. As a result of the intensive and semi-permanent nature of Aboriginal residence along the banks of the river and the use Wodliparri pools of the city centre area in particular for thousands of years, this riverbank zone has a rich (though very under-researched) buried archaeological record of semi-permanent camping places and traditional cemeteries. The area of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens (Adelaide City Park Lands on the banks of the river) is known both as an important traditional camping place at least into the mid-1850s (possibly the location shown in Figure 2, or certainly nearby) and also as a traditional cemetery.

Kaurna oral history records that their apical ancestor Ityamaitpinna (‘King Rodney’), father of Ivaritji, had his main camp at the waterhole at the Botanic Gardens (ACHM 2005: 64). The main lake at the gardens has the Kaurna name ‘Kainka Wirra’, meaning Eucalypt forest. This name was recorded from Kaurna Elder Ivaritji around the 1920s by renowned amateur anthropologist Daisy Bates (Amery 1997a: 1; Tindale Archives, Adelaide Notebook 1935, SA Museum). Kaurna Elder Lewis O’Brien (Amery 1997a: 1) said that there was a waterhole, where the lake now is which was Parnatatja’s (another name of King Rodney) principal waterhole. Further, there is a large hollowed-out red gum which still remains in the Botanical Gardens, and this was used as a camping place by Aboriginal people for 15 years after the official opening of the Botanical Gardens. In 2005, a prehistoric Kaurna cemetery area was disturbed by excavations in a car park from Frome Road, at the edge of the Botanic Gardens (Mott 2008).

The central city section of the Karrawirraparri continues to be a cultural, spiritual and historical focus for Kaurna traditional country and identity but is also a constant focus of development modification. Consequently, the Kaurna people requested in 2009 that the heritage consultants working on the new hospital site survey should record the Karrawirraparri as an Aboriginal heritage site for both its tangible and intangible heritage values, and submit it for registration on the State’s Aboriginal Heritage Register (Damhuis et al 2009). Although a summary of historical and archaeological evidence was included in the heritage survey report and accompanying Aboriginal heritage site record and associated spatial data, the primary record was the assertion of the traditional and continuing cultural significance of the river and its immediate environs to Kaurna people. The site record was submitted on behalf of the Kaurna Native Title and Heritage Committee elected by the community. It was expected that the registration of this important Aboriginal heritage site would be straightforward, particularly considering that according to the relevant legislation, the South Australian Aboriginal Heritage Act of 1988, Section 13(2):

When determining whether an area of land is an Aboriginal site or an object is an Aboriginal object, the Minister must accept the views of the traditional owners of the land or object on the question of whether the land or object is of significance according to Aboriginal tradition.
However, the State Government did not act upon the site record and refused to register the site. In frustration, the Kaurna people subsequently took legal action in the South Australian Supreme Court in an unsuccessful bid to have this heritage place recognised through judicial review. Finally in 2012 the Government formally rejected the submission, stating that there was insufficient documentary evidence on record to support the claim of traditional cultural significance. However the request for heritage site registration was not primarily based on historical documentation in the first place. The request was based upon the anthropologically recorded statement from Kaurna Elders regarding the significance of the place according to their cultural traditions, and their expectation that the requirement for the Minister responsible for the Aboriginal Heritage Act to accept that view, as stated in the legislation, would be honoured.

This rejection by the South Australian government of Aboriginal cultural authenticity in relation to Karrawirraparri is unfortunately reminiscent of the Hindmarsh Island (Kumarangk) Bridge affair in the 1990s. In that case, a Royal Commission held by the State Government rejected confidential Ngarrindjeri (lower Murray region) Aboriginal cultural traditions as modern ‘fabrications’ because they had not been written down in detail and published by non-Aboriginal scholars during the nineteenth century colonial period (when local Aboriginal culture was still considered to be authentic). Finally, the negative findings of the Hindmarsh Island Bridge Royal Commission were effectively overturned by the Australian Federal Court several years and many millions of dollars later (e.g., Bell 1999; Draper 2000; Symons 2003; and the special issues of the Journal of Australian Studies 1996).

There is a further, ironic twist to this story. The Kaurna Native Title Claim was lodged with the Federal Court in 2003, but due to a lack of funding and a large backlog of such cases, the claim has not yet been researched or heard in Court. In 2013, the Federal Court held preservation of evidence hearings for the Kaurna native title claim, to ensure that important cultural and historical evidence from key Kaurna witnesses (some of them of advanced years) was recorded in good time, rather than waiting upon formal hearings at some unknown time in the future. Preservation of evidence hearings have become commonplace in Native title, because some claims may have to wait for a decade or two to be heard, and key witnesses may pass away before they have the opportunity to give evidence otherwise. The first location ‘on Country’

Figure 3: Preparing for Federal Court Preservation of Evidence Hearing for the Kaurna Native Title Claim at the Rotunda, Elder Park, Adelaide City Centre. The River Torrens footbridge under construction, Adelaide Convention Centre, and cranes at the New Royal Adelaide Hospital site in the background. (Photo: Neale Draper, ACHM).
where Kaurna Elders nominated to give their evidence was the Rotunda in Elder Park on the south Bank of the Karrawirrapari or Torrens River, in the centre of the Adelaide city parklands – the backdrop shared by the cranes constructing the new hospital and oval redevelopments, and the footbridge (Figure 3).

Aside from the cultural significance of the adjacent Karrawirrapari and Wodlparrri which has already been referred to, Elder Park and the adjacent Festival Centre Precinct on the south bank of the Torrens are specifically important traditional and historic camping and meeting places. The original Aboriginal camp at Elder Park was removed in a general ‘clean-up’ (i.e., eradication) of Aboriginal camps in the nearer Parklands conducted in 1849 (Hemming & Harris 1998: 44-45). Until the mid-twentieth century, Aboriginal people used to gather along the Elder Park and adjacent areas before the construction of the Festival Centre complex, particularly on weekends (ACHM 2005, Hemming & Harris 1998: 44).

The Case of the Nangkiparri

At around the same time as the new hospital survey was being conducted in 2009, the South Australian government was commencing work on a new rail link to the southern Adelaide suburbs, which involved crossing another major urban river, the Onkaparinga, with a 1.5 kilometre-long bridge just upstream of its estuary. A full anthropological and archaeological survey of the route with Kaurna traditional owners was conducted (Cincunegui et al 2009).

As a result of the Aboriginal heritage survey of the Seaford rail route – and other, cumulative development impacts occurring along this river – the Kaurna people requested that the heritage consultants prepare and submit a site record for registration of the Onkaparinga River. The Kaurna know the Onkaparinga as the Nangkiparri (Ngangki-parri means female or Women’s river). This heritage site record also was submitted in 2009, within a few months of the Karrawirraparri (River Torrens) site record. To date, there has been no decision by the State Government in response to this submission, despite the detailed information provided and the requirement of Section 13(2) of the Aboriginal Heritage Act (1988) that the Minister must accept the views of the Traditional Owners on such a submission (quoted in the previous section, above).

However, this case took a different path, due to the assertion of Aboriginal heritage significance from a different source, although this was anticipated by the Ngangkiparri heritage site record. At the top of the hill at the northern approach of the rail bridge, human skeletal remains were unearthed during construction on the rail corridor. This discovery resulted in the salvage excavation of 18 burials from a traditional cemetery up to 2000 years old, directly in the path of the Seaford rail line by archaeologists and Aboriginal representatives (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Pre-colonial Kaurna Cemetery Site on Seaford rail bridge corridor – burial rescue excavations in progress 2012. Onkaparinga River in background. (Photo: Clive Taylor, ACHM).
There was no alternative available except to conduct rescue archaeological excavations to recover and record the burials in the rail corridor for relocation (ACHM 2012). The rail corridor had been reserved in the 1970s and by 2012 was built-out on both sides. The cemetery was scenically located on the consolidated dune on the crest of the hill on the northern bank of the Nangkiparri directly at the commencement of the bridge alignment, so that no bend in the rail line could be engineered to avoid it.

Traditional Kaurna smoking ceremonies were held as an expression of respect for the spirits of these ancestors and to protect the workers and descendants from potential harm for the removal of the remains from their original resting places and also for their reinterment in a hilltop reserve overlooking the river, immediately adjacent to their original location. The reburial site has been landscaped, with a low-profile monument to commemorate the burial place. The entire process was negotiated and coordinated between the State Government and the Kaurna Nations Cultural Heritage Association.

This location was the second place at which Kaurna Elders chose to hold preservation of evidence hearings on country with the Federal Court in relation to their native title claim in 2013. The evidence given by Kaurna witnesses on the ridge top adjacent to the rail line and relocated cemetery related to the history of the place, to the cultural significance of the Nangkiparri (Figure 5). Some of their evidence referred specifically to the Ancestral Dreaming tracks and cultural traditions which still link Kaurna people and country together, and which allow this culture to survive amidst increasing urbanisation.

**The outlook for Aboriginal heritage management in Australian urban environments**

These two examples from Adelaide illustrate some of the challenges which Aboriginal people face in having their culture and heritage recognised as being authentic and having genuine cultural value in urban Australian settings. In the case of the Karrawirraparri, the Kaurna community have a continuing, positive association in relation to cultural heritage issues with the local Government body, the Adelaide City Council. At the same time, the State Government has assiduously avoided recognition of this sacred site and its associated archaeological and
cultural values under South Australia’s Aboriginal Heritage Legislation. This same reticence is shown in the State’s lack of recognition for the Nangkiparri, although the State Transport Authority demonstrated significant respect for Kaurna cultural heritage in the resolution of the Seaford Rail cemetery relocation. The local Onkaparinga City Council also has a positive long-term relationship with the Kaurna community in relation to cultural heritage issues.

The deficiency that still exists lies in the lack of consistency in the way the South Australian Government deals with Kaurna cultural heritage from Agency to Agency and in terms of application of its own Aboriginal Heritage protection legislation. The reasons for this deficiency are not clear to Kaurna or the heritage management community, and perhaps not even to Government itself. To date, an opportunity for direct dialogue on this issue is lacking. This lack of consistency extends also to some of the more than 30 local Councils whose jurisdictions intersect the Kaurna Native title claim. Not all of them have done the kind of relationship building work which links Kaurna with the Cities of Adelaide and Onkaparinga, for example. A draft Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA – a Native Title agreement process) between Kaurna and all of these Local Government bodies has been stalled for several years, and due to a lack of relevant input does not adequately address cultural heritage management issues in its present form. Nonetheless, the ILUA process still presents a potential way forward in this regard. Indeed, a determination of the Kaurna Native Title claim under the terms of the Commonwealth Native Title Act (1993) would certainly clarify relationships and responsibilities between Kaurna and all levels of Government, as well as over non-freehold lands subject to native title. However, apart from the limited preservation of evidence hearings there has been no commitment of resources to research the evidence for this claim from Native Title Representative Body or Government sources, so resolution of the claim is likely to be some years into the future.

Regardless of the eventual outcome of the current native title determination process, the continuing presence of Kaurna people together with their tangible and intangible cultural heritage has had a progressive effect on the identity of the city of Adelaide and its surrounding hinterland. Kaurna culture and heritage has been a part of the local school history curriculum for several decades. All of the Adelaide City Park Lands and many suburban parks and reserves now have dual names – Kaurna and historic. The centre of the historic City, Victoria Square, is today generally known by the Kaurna name for this locality – Tarndanyangga (the place of the red kangaroo, Hemming and Harris 1998: 5) – an important traditional ceremonial and camping place for Kaurna people. Public speakers including Government Ministers, public officials and academics, now routinely commence their addresses with an acknowledgement of the Kaurna Traditional Owners and their ancestors. This form of acknowledgement is widespread in Australia with respect to the traditional owners and contemporary population of each local region – outback, rural or City. It is a community-wide adaptation of an Aboriginal tradition that shows respect and recognition of the Traditional Owners of the place where one is speaking or performing. Often public events are opened with a ‘Welcome to Country’ provided by an invited Kaurna community Elder.

At the same time, the Kaurna community still faces a range of historically imposed social and economic disadvantages and challenges common to Aboriginal people throughout Australia. These disadvantages stem from colonial processes of subjugation, dispossession and discrimination, which take generations to overcome. It takes more than signs in parks and welcomes to country and other acknowledgements to develop an adequate mutual respect and compatibility of Kaurna cultural heritage and identity within the collective life and consciousness of the city of Adelaide. This is a work in progress. It does not involve only State and Local Government, but also the awareness and cooperation of private developers of land and infrastructure and the planners, architects, engineers and builders of development projects. Ultimately, the Adelaide regional community will be the most direct and effective contributor to the preservation of Kaurna cultural heritage, through the community’s recognition of its authenticity and acceptance of its value as part of Adelaide’s overall cultural landscape and identity.

An important factor in the rejection of recognition for these sites as authentic almost certainly relates to the planning and land-use restrictions which government and developers believe
might result from heritage registration in heavily used and iconic locations within the city. Other States face the same reticence when it comes to recognising physically extensive Aboriginal mythological heritage places – for example the Swan River in Perth and the Yarra River in Melbourne. In the last few years the Western Australian Government has been progressively deregistering previously recognised myth sites of larger size, such as rivers, lakes, or hills, on the grounds that Traditional Owners could not adequately demonstrate current "religious use". A test case in the WA Supreme Court in 2015 succeeded in overruling this procedure (Robinson v Fielding 2015), and it is likely that the deregistrations will be reversed.

The answer to such disputes ultimately lies not in rejecting the validity of the Aboriginal heritage values of such places, but in finding an effective intersection in recognising and preserving heritage values on the one hand, while providing some certainty for ongoing and future commercial, infrastructure, and recreational uses of these places. What is needed here is a suitable formula of ascertaining and recording the locales and kinds of activities that would cause negative impacts on heritage values, versus those current and proposed activities which are compatible, as well as ensuring a consultation and heritage assessment process between the parties in relation to future planning and development proposals which are highlighted by record. This should be an explicit, standard feature of Aboriginal Heritage site records and associated legislation, to provide both due diligence and greater certainty for all stakeholders.

Aboriginal cultural traditions are not solely products of an outback setting, or of people being dressed in a certain way, speaking a different language, or living entirely outside of contemporary, mainstream society and economy. The continued existence of Aboriginal cultural traditions and beliefs cannot be judged in this way, or from imagined stereotypes of what these things should look like. All cultures evolve and adapt to changing circumstances if they are to survive, and Aboriginal cultural traditions are very persistent.

The dominance of archaeology and heritage architecture as the relevant fields of heritage expertise in urban settings has contributed to an image that genuine contemporary Aboriginal culture does not continue to exist in the city. There is no doubt either that colonisation and urbanisation processes have heavily impacted those Aboriginal groups unfortunate enough to have been at the colonial ‘ground zero’ – the direct hosts and victims of the establishment of cities by European colonists in the past. The depredations of the colonisation process upon the Indigenous inhabitants of the Adelaide plains caused many deaths through dispossession, disease and sometimes direct action, as well as losses of cultural connection. Those processes also have contributed to notions of urban Aboriginal people as being without valid cultural identity or tradition.

However it is also true that urban Aboriginal cultures are less like a book with many pages torn out and missing (the model adopted by the South Australian Government in relation to the *Kumarangk* Hindmarsh Island Bridge, *Karrawirrapari* and *Ngangkiparri* cases for example) than they are like a resilient tree, which even though scarred and stripped of foliage and branches, still reshouts and regrows. Aboriginal groups and cultures have always been connected with each other and share traditions and knowledge, both within and among groups. After all, this is the basic form of information redundancy and transmission for a cultural milieu in which oral communication has long been paramount, and this mode of knowledge transmission fosters the survival and resurgence of urban cultural tradition, even if it is not written down. Oral traditions may long persist in hiding, until the larger society provides conditions more conducive to them coming out in the open – including the advent of native title and multicultural trends in recent Australian history.

Anthropology, oral history, and cultural mapping all are important aspects of Aboriginal heritage management anywhere in Australia – not just in the outback, but equally so in rural and urban areas. Increasingly, Aboriginal communities are moving into the post-Native Title era, whether through Indigenous Land Use Agreements, positive Native Title determinations, or simply through improved understanding, acceptance, and above all, respect by Australian society and governments. Whether they have achieved a Native Title determination or are still slogging through that process, Aboriginal communities are again seeking (for the first time
since colonisation) to take a leading role in the management of their cultural heritage and the preservation and transmission of their cultural identity and traditions to future generations, all the while adapting as necessary to a rapidly changing world. Increasingly it will be up to heritage management professionals who work at the interface between society, change, and preservation, to recognise the authentic presence of Aboriginal people and cultural heritage everywhere in Australia, and for the heritage practitioners themselves to adapt as needed, so that they can continue to provide relevant services in this new climate. It is not our job to tell Aboriginal people how to manage their heritage – rather it is up to us to work with them – to work out how we can continue to play a useful role in Aboriginal heritage management – for the past, the present, and the future.

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