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## ***Heritage & Community Conference - 27-28 February 2001***

### **Debate 2: Involving the community - more trouble than its worth?**

Chair: Dr. Barry Jones AO



**Dr Barry Jones AO**, Melbourne (recent past Vice President Australia ICOMOS, current member of Executive Committee; Chair of Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority), and former Australian member of Executive Board of UNESCO, former Vice-President of World Heritage Committee, Chair of the National Heritage Convention, and former member of federal Parliament and Minister. Dr Jones managed Australia ICOMOS' response to the potential uranium mining impacts on Kakadu National Park and was a delegate to the federal Ministers Cultural Heritage Forum.

#### **Guest Speakers**

**Dr Thom Blake**, Brisbane (historian, heritage consultant; member of Queensland Heritage Council; President of Queensland Historians Institute; member of Australia ICOMOS Executive Committee) has long experience working and publishing on community heritage studies and heritage conservation plans, including indigenous heritage, in rural and regional Queensland. He was a member of the Cultural Heritage Committee overseeing the community heritage identification for the South East Queensland Regional Forest Agreement.

**Mr Mark Caruana**, Sydney (member Maltese community; Community Information Officer - Multi-cultural, NSW Department of Education; former President Lavalette Community Centre, Blacktown; 25 year member of Maltese Welfare Group) participated Migrant Heritage Places in Australia conducted by the Australian Heritage Commission and Professor Helen Armstrong.

**Ms Iris Iwanicki**, Adelaide (historian/planner; member of South Australian Heritage Committee; heritage representative on the South Australian Pastoral Board; member Australia ICOMOS) has worked with the South Australian Heritage & Conservation Branch as register historian, and within city and rural local government as a planning manager responsible for development assessment, building, Development Plan amendments, strategic planning, heritage planning, community consultation, and environmental health matters.

## **Discussion: Involving the community – more trouble than its worth?**

### **Barry Jones**

Moderator

Posts: 16

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 11:32 AM

Welcome to the panel and I hope I won't have to use the red-faced icon too often.

### **Barry Jones**

Moderator

Posts: 16

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 11:43 AM

As a former practising politician but with a consuming interest in Heritage issues, I am preoccupied with a paradox - the paradox of Archimedes' lever. Often it is easier to get a response from Government, MPs, bureaucrats about a narrow but very specific issue than for broader subjects where there OUGHT to be a greater level of community support. The future of the South Sydney club created enormous emotion and public demonstrations - but a campaign to urge more spending on, say, community health, would generate very little.

The passions of the 10% of the community who own guns has generally (1996 was an exception) had far more political clout than the broad support of the 90% who don't own guns. The 10% are disciplined and may change their vote on the gun issue - the 90% won't.

Because of specific community of interest it might be far easier to get the Maltese or Aboriginal community on side - but the broader WASP community? That's FAR harder.

### **Barry Jones**

Moderator

Posts: 16

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 11:57 AM

BJ again - I suggest that as soon as we reach 12 noon that the other panel members out in their contributions - in the order set out on my running sheet: Tho, Mark, Iris and then we will respond to each other until 1225 or 1230 - before inviting others to join the forum.

### **Barry Jones**

Moderator

Posts: 16

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:03 PM

There's a deathly silence at my end? Is anybody there?

### **Barry Jones**

Moderator

Posts: 16

Registered: Feb 2001

[posted 28 February 2001 12:10 PM](#)

If Thom is having a technical problem sending, then perhaps Mark and Iris could hop in now.

**Mark Caruana**

Member

Posts: 9

Registered: Feb 2001

[posted 28 February 2001 12:11 PM](#)

What surprised a focus group of Maltese community members was that mainstream institutions were also considered places of significance. e.g. Croewn Street Hospital in Dalro Sydney was the place of employment of many migrant hospital staff and the birthplace of many children born to Maltese, Greek and Iaian mothers

**Mark Caruana**

Member

Posts: 9

Registered: Feb 2001

[posted 28 February 2001 12:15 PM](#)

It is additional work for heritage staff to consult, but time is not on our side, as established migrant communities are aging and the early pioneers are passing on.

**Thom Blake**

New Member

Posts: 3

Registered: Feb 2001

[posted 28 February 2001 12:16 PM](#)

Thom Blake

Hello just reporting and ready

**Barry Jones**

Moderator

Posts: 16

Registered: Feb 2001

[posted 28 February 2001 12:16 PM](#)

Well, it looks as if we are all agreed. Anybody for lunch?

**Barry Jones**

Moderator

Posts: 16

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:19 PM

Thom - if you have a position statement or a comment on the material submitted by the others (including me) please fire ahead.

**Nicholas Hall**

Administrator

Posts: 25

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:21 PM

For Iris, who's having technical problems.....

Hello,

Here are some ideas for the lunchtime debate on "involving the community- more trouble than it is worth?" from a local government, planner's perspective - a resounding no! The community include: building owners, developers, historical groups, individuals.

\* If these people are not consulted then there will be no awareness, debate or support for local, state and national heritage.

\* Firstly, because they are also voters, and their support./ rejection of protection of heritage is the wellspring of effective programs and resourcing.

\* Secondly, the community is a resource of local knowledge and awareness. Consultants and heritage specialists like every other player in the heritage game, are never in full possession of the facts and can learn from the community-

\* Thirdly, owners need to be fully consulted prior to, during and after heritage surveys, incentives programs and recorded history exercises. There are some amazing misconceptions about what heritage is, what listing means and what controls and incentives are in place.

\* Also not all members of the community are aware of the importance of a place (especially with the demise of decent history study in Australia) and may need to know before they can understand what heritage means. Unless people know what happened before, they may repeat mistakes or unconsciously destroy culturally important places. Cultural identity -(Mark will probably want to take this up)

\* There is genuine interest within the community in the past, especially if the information is provided in an interactive manner.

\* Local councils are best placed (but not necessarily resourced)\_ to encourage local heritage protection. Heritage surveys, conservation plans, Development control measures and protected places/areas benefit from community consultation in the following ways-]

\* meeting people on their own ground (time consuming but worth while)

\* establishing heritage panels and forums with membership including elected council members, historical group reps, heritage specialists, members of the community with special expertise

\* providing technical advisory services

\* seeking local business sponsorships

\* chasing state and federal monies

\* establishing an incentives program through rate concessions, deferred loans etc to maintain heritage properties

\* responding to community perceptions of heritage, and being able to distinguish between character and heritage issues.

- thanks , Iris

**Mark Caruana**

Member

Posts: 9

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:22 PM

Within the Italian community FILEF, or Federation of Italian Workers and their Families, an active movement in Australia advocating the rights of migrant workers, was suggested as of heritage significance. It did not fit into any Canberra-style beaurocratic box !!

**Barry Jones**

Moderator

Posts: 16

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:25 PM

We are now at 1225 DST (East Coast) and I feel that I should invite any participants from outside the panel to contribute to Forum 5 - the Open Line (that is, assuming that I can work this myself).

**Thom Blake**

New Member

Posts: 3

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:26 PM

Yes I rather think we are all going to agree that involving the community is good thing. Rather like debating whether Bradman was the greatest cricketer ever.

I would like to raise an issue - are their limits about community involvement? Or how far should the community be involved. My reason for raising this issue concerns some major heritage projects currently underway in Queensland.

The Queensland Heritage Trails Network is series of large projects throughout Queensland funded by the Com and State governments. One of the problems is that a number of projects have not been progressing well despite community involvement. One of the principal reasons is that local groups have to deal with projects and funds on a scale and complexity that they have no experience with. For example should one expect a local community group running a small local museum to be able to manage a multi-million dollar cultural heritage tourism project. To me it is akin to suggesting a local school of arts library committee should run the National Library. So what are the limits?.

**Mark Caruana**

Member

Posts: 9

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:26 PM

As a facilitator for the focus group of Maltese community participants, I was surprised when the recommendation was a precinct or neighborhood called Little Malta in Pendle Hill and Woolloomoolloo. This precinct consisted of a boarding house, a barber shop run by Maltese settlers, a church close by, and a Maltese Club, which was more of a gambling joint than a licenced registered club. Never did I guess that.

**Mark Caruana**

Member

Posts: 9

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:29 PM

Involving the community, mainstream and ethno-specific is RISKY. Yet, we now live in a world where there is greater accountability, where consumers demand value for money, and where the community insists on consultation, representation and participation.

**iris**

New Member

Posts: 2

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:29 PM

Hello!

Am I in this debate?

**Barry Jones**

Moderator

Posts: 16

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:32 PM

I think I would have been more comfortable shrieking through a megaphone. Let's all go over to Forum 5 - if we can make it - otherwise, we'll just have to pull the pin.

**Barry Jones**

Moderator

Posts: 16

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:34 PM

Yes, Iris you on now. But I still think we should shift to Forum 5.

**Thom Blake**

New Member

Posts: 3

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:36 PM

I think we all agree about the value of involving the community/ies. But can I ask the question -- are their limits? When not to involve the community?

**Barry Jones**

Moderator

Posts: 16

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:40 PM

Are we getting through to non-panel members? I am (I think) in Forum 5 - but I don't get any feedback.

**Mark Caruana**

Member

Posts: 9

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:43 PM

No feedback ? I'm starving. Limits to community involvement should be agreed-upon parameters between heritage staff and the community, on a partnership basis, as equals, first among equals

**iris**

New Member

Posts: 2

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:52 PM

Mark's point about agreeing on the parameters is spot on, for example, what is the community really interested in as far as heritage goes? It should be clear what the agenda is in terms of involvement, whether the community will have a chance to establish its role in a real sense. It is a problem that many people in the community feel consultation is not serious. What do people think?

**Barry Jones**

Moderator

Posts: 16

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:58 PM

This my second attempt at getting this through and it is mercifully close to 1300. I am concerned that sometimes the concept of heritage is so vague that it fails to evoke much response. The Centenary of Federation for example, has much less emotional appeal than Bradman's death. It is the specific appeal (Maltese, Aborigines, South Sydney) that has the most clout. Brad appeal has very little.

**Nicholas Hall**

Administrator

Posts: 25

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:58 PM

THANKS EVERYONE! The debate issues are now continuing in Forum 5 - Open Line Ask any Question. Thanks for everyone's patience. The debates were a trial of a new concept. Still there is lots of useful comments here. Please enjoy the rest of the forums and the other resources on this site: 'The Taking Action Guide' and the Project Database

ALSO A HOUSEKEEPING REMINDER: Use your 'refresh' or 'reload' buttons regularly. And now that the debate has built up on most forums you have to get used to switching between pages.

**Barry Jones**

Moderator

Posts: 16

Registered: Feb 2001

posted 28 February 2001 12:59 PM

Goodbye and thank you. Who ever dreamt that it could be so much fun?