

CHAPTER REPS MEETING 2012 SUMMARY

ATTENDANCE

Chapter representatives and other regional guests: Julie Baird (Hunter), Erica Barwell (NENW), Marea Buist (FNC), Jane Gardiner (FNC President), Liz Gillroy (MNC), Lyn Hall (SHI), Tamara Hynd (SHI), Kristie Kearney (Central Tablelands), Desmond Kennard (SHI), Ina Le Bas (FNC ice President of Alstonville Plateau HS), Doreen & Ben Lyon (SHI), Karen McGrane-O'Donnell (Sydney), Sam Sinnayaha (Sydney), Leanne Wicks (Kandos, CT), Cathy Farry (Broken Hill Geocentre). *MA, MANSW and Powerhouse Museum representatives & staff:* Geoff Barker, Paul Bentley, Einar Docker, Vicki Northey, Rebecca Pinchin, Lee Scott (MANO), Andrew Simpson, Bill Storer (MANO), Melissa Tito. *Other guests:* Maria Walsh (RAHS). Apology: Betti Punnett (Lachlan chapter).

WELCOME

Andrew Simpson welcomed delegates to the meeting. The Branch committee regards the annual chapter reps meeting as an important event on the branch calendar and values chapter contributions to branch strategies. He thanked the chapters for providing written reports to assist this process.

He paid a tribute to Paul Bentley, who will be stepping down as executive officer as soon as a replacement is appointed, and he thanked other members of the committee, particularly Vicki Northey, Rebecca Pinchin and Maree Clutterbuck, for their support during the past year.

WORKING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Tamara Hynd gave a presentation on working with local government, based on recent experience with Shellharbour City Council and the development of a new city hub with new library and museum facilities. She covered positive relationships with council management, the architectural design process, and the value of library/museum convergence at Shellharbour.

Issues explored in a discussion following her talk covered NSW local government integrated planning requirements, Heritage Office resources, Museums Australia resources, a survey of museums by SHI chapter, its relationship to M&GNSW research and surveys and a possible link with any survey work being undertaken by MA in relation to Safe Work Australia legislation.

Further action: *Tamara's presentation and issues raised in discussion will be featured in the June Museum Matters and followed up by the branch.*

CHAPTER PLANS, OPERATIONS & ISSUES

MA national plans

Andrew Simpson outlined national strategic and business plans, which are based on the following goals:

- Goal 1: Relevance and effectiveness of MA as a national body
- Goal 2: Effective advocacy and influence on public policy
- Goal 3: Advance professional development and build partnerships that benefit the sector
- Goal 4: Ensure MA good governance and organisational sustainability

National priorities include improved governance, financial management and membership strategies.

Further action: If chapters would like a copy of *Museums Australia Business Plan 2011-2012* and the latest *Museums Australia Membership Review Committee Recommendations (23 March 2012)*, please contact Paul Bentley.

MA NSW achievements 2011

In outlining branch achievements over the past 12 months, Paul Bentley said the branch recognises the need to provide services and resources to members in regional NSW.

At the same time, he said, it is important to reflect on the nature of the organisation. Museum Australia is a national professional association, one of a family tree of associations that grew out of the Pennsylvania Historical Society in 1876. It is a membership-based participatory organisation. It doesn't receive government funds in NSW, except for occasional assistance from Arts NSW (such as the grant for symposium bursaries last year).

The NSW branch is a \$20,000 operation that relies largely on its share of membership funds. To complement the voluntary effort made by the chapters, the branch itself relies on a significant voluntary effort and its relationship with major museums. We get out of the association what we put into it.

Its mere existence is a service because it enables interested groups (such as people in regional NSW) to conduct legal businesses and tap into association resources, thus avoiding ATO and other legal obligations from running independent businesses.

Branch achievements during the past 12 months are outlined in the annual report, which is available on the website. Services to the regions included:

- a number of submissions to the state and federal governments, including *Supporting Regional and Community Museums & Galleries in NSW* (to Arts NSW),
- advice to regional members on a range of issues,
- the provision of modest administrative subsidies to chapters to assist their operations,
- contributions, through the national publications committee, on development of standards and information resources, including *Museum Methods*, originally published by the branch to assist small museums.
- contributions to the development of the MA website, membership and event management databases to be used by chapters,
- organising the 2011 state symposium with strong representation from regional delegates,
- organising the series of museum tours and talks in Sydney, along with other events.
- provision of regional bursaries to both the state conference and the national conference in Perth,
- publication of *Museum Matters*, which is distributed free to members in NSW, politicians, government personnel and other organisations,
- organising with our partners the IMAGinE Awards to promote outstanding work in the sector, including regional and community museums.

The branch places a high value on the work of the chapters as part of a knowledge network that aims to build professional practice and persuade others about the value of the work we do. Our perennial challenge is finding ways to support each other.

MA NSW plans 2012-2014

Vicki Northey gave an outline of the draft Strategic Plan 2012-2014 and invited further comment by 29 May. Elements of the plan revolve around governance, professional development, chapter support, advocacy and leadership, communication, events and relationships with other organisations. Recommendations of the Arts NSW report on museums and galleries will need to be taken into account, when published. A major effort during the next four years will be planning and organising the national conference in Sydney in 2015. **Further action:** Vicki emphasised that the strategic plan is a living document, not something set in concrete. However to finalise the draft, chapter representatives are invited to provide comments and suggestions by 29 May.

BUSINESS AGENDA

1.01	Chapter support A number of documents have been distributed or are available to assist the branch to finalise its strategic plan 2012-2014, These include the MA national business plan 2011-2012, MANSW Chapter Support 2012-2014, and MANSW Chapter Reports 2012. Further action: Further comments suggestions were invited by 29 May, although the branch will continue to welcome suggestions after that date.
1.02	Chapter communication & representation In the past few years, the branch has communicated with chapters mainly through annual chapter reps' meetings, distribution of branch committee meeting minutes, branch e-bulletins and <i>Museum Matters</i> . Chapters, in turn, have sent newsletters and meeting documentation to the executive officer who has summarised activity in his report to the branch committee. Social media, such as maNexus and Twitter, have broadened the scope for communication. Marea Buist, as a member of the branch committee 2009-2011, represented the regional voice at branch committee meetings. Discussion 18 May: Chapters expressed a preference for communication mainly by email and an interest in nominating chapter about two to three people to participate in future branch committee meetings by teleconference. They were circumspect about dedicated chapter reps teleconferences, except where it was critical for an issue to be resolved urgently. Further action: Chapter reps interested in participating in future 6-weekly branch committee meetings to indicate their interest to Paul Bentley by 22 June.
1.03	By-laws and legal obligations The branch distributed a memo re chapter by-laws and templates in October 2010. This asked chapters to review, update or create chapter by-laws to clarify their boundaries and operations within the legal framework under which the association operates. To simplify things, we also provided the following templates as guides: a chapter by-laws template, chapter membership form, a chapter membership list and a chapter coordinator job description. These are currently available at the bottom of the MANSW publications page on the website. Some of this information may be important for the development of the association's website and systems (see 1.11 below). A few chapters have provided by-laws. Further action: Could all chapters please send the latest version of their by-laws (preferably in digital form) to the branch executive officer by 31 December 2012? If you need assistance, please contact Paul Bentley or replacement executive officer.

1.04	<p>Chapter fees</p> <p>Some chapters charge an administrative fee. Some differentiate MA members and non-MA members. The national council has requested that all chapters differentiate MA members and non-MA members in their fees. Chapters are legally obliged to charge GST.</p> <p>Further action: <i>Chapters who charge membership fees are requested to implement a differentiated rate for MA members and others, including GST.</i></p>
1.05	<p>Administrative subsidies</p> <p>The branch offers chapters that meet MA governance requirements an administrative subsidy of \$10 per institutional MA member within the chapter. To be eligible for the administrative subsidy the chapter (a) must be active (b) have an authorised set of by-laws (c) have at least 2 elected office-bearers; (d) have an account at the national office; and (e) have a list of members, based on a payment of chapter fees or completed chapter membership forms. Not all eligible chapters took up the offer in 2010 and 2011. Discussion 18 May. Some chapters indicated their financial circumstances enabled them to function without the administrative subsidy.</p> <p>Further action: <i>The branch will offer the subsidy in 2012 to chapters who want to take up the offer; the policy will be considered again at the 2013 chapter reps meeting.</i></p>
1.06	<p>Histories</p> <p>As the association clocks up 75 years of working for the sector, the branch has created an evolving chronology on the branch website. A longer chronology was distributed to chapters in 2011 and they were invited to contribute chapter milestones as part of that story. Further action: <i>The branch to review its plans to extend this work as part of its strategic plan 2012-2014.</i></p>
1.07	<p>Logos</p> <p>Museums Australia division logos available on the MA website at http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/site/staff_logos.php (membership log-in is required to gain access. Further action: <i>Chapters are requested to use the new logo and contact Lee Scott if there are any questions.</i></p>
1.08	<p>Chapter visits</p> <p>Subject to other commitments of the past couple of years, the executive officer and/or some branch committee members have been available to visit chapters when invited to do so. Bill Storer has also made himself available to visit on behalf of the branch and present workshops on a range of topics, providing travel costs can be met. A number of grants are available from other funders to assist chapters and individual members to present workshops.</p> <p>Further action: <i>Chapters are invited to contact the branch if they need assistance in future workshops or would like to propose visits from branch committee personnel 2012-2014.</i></p>
1.09	<p>Financial procedures</p> <p><i>A Division Financial Workbook and a revised Division Treasurer's Roles and Responsibilities task description and instruction (TDI) have been distributed to chapters that conduct financial transactions through the national office. A Divisional Expense Reimbursement Claim Form (for personal or divisional expense</i></p>

	<p>claims) is also available on the MA website in the staff resources section of the MA website. Discussion 18 May. Lee Scott indicated that in future branch would be responsible for incorporating chapter income and revenue in its branch financial reporting.</p> <p>Further action: Chapters to contact Lee if there have any questions about use of the instructions and workbook. Paul Bentley to clarify reporting requirements with Lee.</p>
1.10	<p>Insurance</p> <p>The topic embraces three distinct issues:</p> <p>(1) MA existing insurance. Information on MA association insurance coverage is now available on the MA website in the staff resources section of the website. Volunteer insurance covers MA members working on behalf of the association, but it doesn't cover chapter members who are not MA members. It also covers public liability for MA events.</p> <p>(2) Insurance brokerage. The national office is also investigating an insurance broker role on behalf of small museums, including loan insurance.</p> <p>(3) Occupational health and safety requirements. MA is also developing policies in relation occupational health and safety requirements relating to Safe Work Australia legislation. There may be implications for development of the national standards and MA publications.</p> <p>Discussion 18 May. Jane Gardiner (Far North Coast Chapter), Desmond Kennard (Southern Highlands and Illawarra Chapter), Lee Scott and Bill Storer (MA national), Katrina Hogan and Lauren Dalla (Powerhouse Museum), and Maria Walsh (RAHS) amplified all points.</p> <p>Further action: Paul Bentley to (1) initiate email communication involving the above people to explore the issue further; (2) if necessary, flesh out a proposal for a survey by the branch as discussed in the session on working with local government; (3) keep chapters informed of developments.</p>
1.11	<p>Website, member and events database management</p> <p>Lee Scott gave a presentation on the MA website and content management system while will enable chapters, institutional and individual members to manage their membership details and to renew memberships online. Institutional members are able to add multiple emails for individual staff members. Designated people within each chapter will be able to update and delete chapter pages on the website, manage events and perform other functions. The following task description and instruction sheets are available: <i>Updating Content on the MA website; Sending an e-Bulletin; Managing events on the website.</i></p> <p>Further action: Chapters are invited to contact Lee to confirm person who will be responsible for site administration and to request initial assistance to set up revised web chapter pages, which could include a description of the chapter and the area it covers, the committee, chapter objectives, chapter activities, chapter members (with links to websites if applicable), and chapter newsletters.</p>
1.12	<p>Social media tools: maNexus and Twitter</p> <p>MA pays a fee to Ning to run maNexus social media site on which members and</p>

	<p>groups can to promote events, publish blogs, distribute information and engage in other forms of communication. It currently has about 800 subscribers. MANSW and the Sydney Chapter both have group pages on the site. Guidelines are available in the resources section of the Ning site at http://www.ning.com/. The Branch Twitter account, currently with more 250 followers, could be used by individual members to tap into branch e-bulletin alerts and other promotional material. The NSW Branch twitter feed is available on the NSW Group pages on maNexus.</p> <p>Further action: <i>If you are interested in using maNexus site, sign up to the site, sign up separately to any group that you are interested in and begin to explore its potential. If you need further assistance or advice, please contact Lee Scott.</i></p>
1.13	<p>New issues raised by chapters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More regional services. We would like to see Museums Australia provide more services to regional areas [New England Far North Chapter]. Further action: <i>Erica Barwell to contact Paul Bentley or replacement executive officer to canvas options.</i> • Sydney chapter future. The Sydney Chapter needs to consider its membership base. Given our focus is on emerging professionals, perhaps the geographical reference in our title is no longer relevant. The branch also need to consider that many of our members are served by the branch and are in fact on both membership lists. Perhaps there needs to be a review of both membership lists and a review of how the direction of Sydney chapter fits in to the direction and focus of MANSW. Perhaps a better approach would be for the Sydney chapter to be a special interest group of the MANSW branch and focus on developing the Peer2peer products more to support emerging professionals. [Sydney Chapter]. Further action: <i>Karen O'Donnell-McGrane to explore options with Branch committee.</i>
1.14	<p>Next chapter meetings/teleconferences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter reps meeting 2013 during national conference. Further action: <i>Paul Bentley to contact Carol Cartwright re branch interest in a chapter meeting closely aligned with the remote and regional day.</i>