

## HOW VOLUNTEERS CAN LEARN FROM PROFESSIONAL MUSEUMS

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How can volunteers learn from professionals? Perhaps the answer is that we both learn from each other.

Most help for non government museums is from the State Governments, principally W.A. and N.S.W., except for art galleries in Victoria.

Under the W.A. Museums Act, assistance is via the W.A. Museum in Perth. For example, Municipal Museums can be set up as "branches" of the W.A. Museum proper, provided they meet various conditions; qualified curator and adequate buildings.

There are a number of services available to these Municipal museums in that they can receive help in conservation and restoration and loan of relevant exhibits. The W.A. Museum is the "guardian angel" for all local museums outside the W.A. Museum proper. This scheme could be useful in prodding your own State government into similar action.

In N.S.W. the museums are currently under the direction of the Minister of Culture, Sport and Recreation. Mr. J. Willis, of MAAS, is currently chairman of the investigation committee. Seminars on management of small museums are held. These usually last for two days and generally have 40 to 50 participants. In 1975 the State made \$100,000 available in grants to non government museums. It would be a good idea to bring non government people into government museums for experience in all areas (for nominated periods). The government museums are not concerned with the lack of formal qualifications, only with the quality of results.

### DISCUSSION

MR. KINGSLEY

Any hurdle to overcome because of "FAN", "BUFF" associations etc. before recognition of status of museums? Are we getting to top levels of professional museums?

REPLY

Assessment is not related to size. There is an accreditation process e.g., standards of records, research, storage etc. A small museum with high quality could get a very high rating.

MR. GIBBS

Trams were objects of ridicule. How can we overcome any obstacle in this area? Evaluation tends to start.

REPLY

No need to convince me. Decisions on aid etc, are made by museum people who recommend to the Minister. Crackpots will be weeded out.

DR. RADCLIFFE

The money that has been allocated so far for tourism, R.E.D. etc.

REPLY

Different museums get money from different sources.

MR. JESSUP

What about the upsurge in the interest in Folk Museums?

REPLY

This is an expression of Australians' long awareness of environment and history.

MR. JESSUP

What about single theme museums assistance by Victorian Government?

REPLY

Not competent to judge.

MR. BREYDON

Transport in the report was more of a State responsibility, to preserve the typical before the unique.

REPLY

The Whitlam era of preservation probably on an ad hoc basis.

MR. MCAULEY

Is it better to limit funds and spread in smaller quantities for rescue operations until more money for proper preservation is available?

REPLY

Yes I agree. A museum is a preserver and conservor. The last N.S.W. handout had to be done quickly so as money would be spent before the end of June 1976. It was not for capital works, although rules were bent, e.g. lifting machinery onto concrete slabs. Suggest first things first.

MR. DENHAM

In reference to the N.S.W. seminar scheme and the W.A. scheme. The Melbourne seminar August 1973, Unesco, tended to be for post graduate students. There appears to be no scope for formal training for amateurs.

REPLY

The outcome of the siminar is:- Training must be at different levels for different purposes.  
1. Post graduate course updated.  
2. A committee for training of other levels has proposed a course at Prahran College of Advanced Education. It is to be open to anyone capable of satisfactorily using the course. This level generally a state matter. The W.A. Museum has a course for local government museums. Seminar course for N.S.W.

DR. RADCLIFFE

Regional grouping of museums could provide uncomfortable bed fellows. Any possibility of technical grouping instead of regional?

REPLY

This is a common problem. It could work both ways.