

The Australian Registrars Committee presents

Perpetuation of Myths in Museum Documentation and Archives

Monday, 18th March 2002
University of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia
Lecture Room HH 309
1:30pm – 5:00pm

This seminar will be presented during the main framework of the Museums Australia National Conference *Once Upon Our Times: Exploring the role of cultural institutions in creating, perpetuating and selling social, political and national myths*, 18-22 March, Adelaide Convention Centre

1:30 ***Perpetuation of Myths in Museum Documentation and Archives***
Opening address and introduction
Jesmond Calleja, ARC President

1:40 ***Compositions of the Computer Age***
Zena Overton, Curatorial Assistant, Berndt Museum of Anthropology, Western Australia

This illustrated presentation will explore some of the relevant issues that have been raised through the Museum's programme for computerising archival records. Current projects at the Berndt Museum of Anthropology involve transferring historical records and images onto computer databases. These archives are an important source of information for Indigenous people and their communities and copies of historical material have already been successfully repatriated as part of these programmes. The dialogue created with the Indigenous community has already produced information that has enriched the Museum's existing documentation. The Museum has identified these projects as a worthwhile opportunity to communicate and share information with communities, as well as to enhance the archival records and their accessibility.

2:10 ***Click go the spears: Three approaches to placing artefacts on the web***
Dr Philip Jones, Senior Curator, Department of Anthropology, South Australian Museum

Since 1999 the South Australian Museum has developed three contrasting approaches to creating web-presentations of its ethnographic collections. In an illustrated presentation, Dr Jones will discuss the pitfalls and opportunities arising from these three approaches. He will propose that museums carry a special responsibility for ensuring that collection web sites reflect the logic and history of their collections, rather than simply passing their digital assets to software developers.

2:40 ***Ara Irititja: A community generated digital archive***
John Dallwitz, Coordinator of the Ara Irititja Archival Project for the Pitjantjatjara Council.

The Ara Irititja Archival Project (which receives support from the South Australian Museum) is a huge computer database/archive of historical information on the Anangu (Pitjantjatjara/Yunkanytjatjara people). What began, as a project to retrieve and display pieces of Pitjantjatjara history has become a multi-faceted educational tool. The database contains more than 28,000 records including hundreds of hours of movies and sound tapes reflecting life on the Pitjantjatjara lands since 1930. The archive also holds thousands of photographs, art and craft works, traditional objects, diaries, journals and manuscripts. All of this material has been digitised and entered into a custom built computer database that takes into account complicated and

important cultural requirements of the traditional Anungu. The computer database interface uses Pitjantjatjara language and copes with issues of secrecy and sensitivity that are crucial to all aspects of Anungu life. Mr Dallwitz's presentation involves a demonstration of the database showing features and contents and a discussion of issues relevant to its design.

- 3:10 **Afternoon tea**
- 3:45 **ARC Special General Meeting**
Open only to ARC members
- 5:30 **Museums Australia Welcome Reception**
South Australian Museum, North Terrace
- 7:30 **ARC Dinner***
Playford Restaurant, Radisson Hotel, North Terrace

Please note that program is subject to change without notice

For further information about this seminar contact Ms Aphrodite Vlavgelakis at the South Australian Museum on 08 8207 7383.

Registration can be done on-line at www.museumsaustralia.org.au or by contacting the Museums Australia organising group on 08 8363 4399.

ARC Dinner - \$42 for a two course meal (drinks not included).

* Cost for dinner to be paid on the night.

All interested delegates need to contact Aphrodite Vlavgelakis on 08 8207 7383 or email <vlavgelakis.aphrodite@saugov.sa.gov.au> to express their interest in attending the seminar and/or dinner. Please provide name, position title, organisation, phone and email address.



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