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AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING ARCHAEOLOGISTS INCORPORATED  
NEWSLETTER No. 15

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P.O. Box 214, Holme Building, University of Sydney, NSW, 2006

FEBRUARY, 1983.

1. NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The A.A.C.A. A.G.M. for 1983

DATE: Saturday 26th March, 1983

TIME: 12.30 pm

PLACE: The Reading Room - Department of Anthropology,  
University of Sydney, Sydney, 2006.

2. CONSTITUTION

The proposed amendments to the Constitution have been circulated to Members. If you should have had a copy, and did not receive one, please contact MARGRIT KOETTIG c/o A.A.C.A.

3. OCCASIONAL MEETING

The next meeting to be held on Friday 25th March at 31 Waterview Street, Balmain.

Time: 7.30 pm

Topic: 'Historical Archaeology Consultancies' - Helen Temple  
Food and drink will be provided. Entrance fee \$2 - all are welcome.

4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Bibliography is being prepared. Updates to the Bibliography are envisaged, however new forms are being used. These will be available at the A.G.M. or through the Bibliography Convenor - Helen Brayshaw c/o A.A.C.A.

Members have received requests from the AIAS Library Bibliographer, Valerie Chapman, for copies of consultants' reports dealing with Aboriginal Relics and Sites. Ms Chapman has now clarified certain questions regarding confidentiality and site locations. Her reply is as follows:

'Regarding our policy in acquiring reports, as discussed in the second paragraph of your letter, we would prefer to make the archaeological information contained in reports as freely available as possible, under the usual constraints on revealing site location details. If clients wish economic material not relevant to the archaeological content to remain confidential, then we would prefer such material

to be deleted and so avoid placing unnecessary restrictions on the use of the reports. On the question of high costs incurred in supplying copies of profusely illustrated reports, we would like to receive an estimate of costs before deciding on the quality of copies to be made.

We appreciate all assistance from members of your association towards the development of the A.I.A.S. Library as the premier collection of published and unpublished material in Aboriginal studies.

Members wishing to assist in this matter should write to:-

Ms V. Chapman  
A.I.A.S. Library,  
P.O.Box 553  
Canberra City ACT 2601

5. REPORT ON ABORIGINAL WORKSHOP

This report on Aboriginal consultation in NSW will be submitted to representatives of the NSW NPWS for comment before being made available. The Aboriginal Relics and Historic Resources Section is preparing a statement of policy and procedures in relation to Aboriginal Consultation which will complement the A.A.C.A. report on the workshop. Details on availability will be in next Newsletter.

6. THE GORDON BELOW THE FRANKLIN DAM

The Executive on behalf of the Association is sending a letter to Premier Gray of Tasmania, with copies to relevant persons, expressing concern about the proposed Dam. The Executive Committee remains unconvinced that the economic benefits of construction of the Dam outweigh the cultural and natural heritage importance of the areas to be flooded. Nor does it accept that it is inevitable that construction will proceed. Accordingly the Executive Committee believes A.A.C.A. members should not participate in any salvage programme while these issues are still being debated and would urge A.A.C.A. members to take this stance. A copy of this letter is appended to the Newsletter.

7. CHANGES TO THE REGISTER OF CONSULTANTS AND ASSOCIATES

If you have address changes, changes to your C.V.'s that you wish included in the new Registers, please contact The Secretary, A.A.C.A. as soon as possible.

8. REPORT WRITING BOOKLET

A final draft of the booklet on report writing will be tabled at the A.G.M.

9. NOTICE OF SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

Appended to the Newsletter is a form for renewing your subscriptions. Members must reply before the A.G.M. to ensure their voting rights.

10. NSW NPWS NEWS

Please note the Aboriginal Sites Committee Meetings for 1983 are on the following days:-

28th March, 30th May, 25th July, 26th September, 28th November.

NSW NPWS has circulated information on the following jobs:- Central-West N.S.W. Archaeological Research Project; Archaeologist/Historian Western Region; Aboriginal Resources Study, Lithgow Newnes Plateau Area; Hunter Valley Archaeological Project. For further information contact S. Sullivan Head office NPWS or K. Sullivan Central Region Office NPWS.

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P.O. Box 214, Holme Building, University of Sydney, NSW, 2006

C O P Y

23rd February 1983

Premier Robin Gray  
Parliament House  
HOBART TASMANIA 7000

Dear Premier Gray,

The Executive Committee of this Association has become increasingly alarmed at the impact that construction of the Gordon below Franklin dam would have on the cultural and natural heritage of Australia. We are particularly concerned about the threatened destruction of Aboriginal archaeological resources within the water storage area, the dam site and associated construction areas. That the South West of Tasmania, especially the valleys to be flooded, is of great heritage significance is attested to by the listing of the area by the World Heritage Commission.

Our concern is at three levels:

- (a) that procedures of environmental impact assessment followed in most other States in respect of archaeological sites were ignored by the Hydro-Electric Commission in their assessment of the Gordon below Franklin dam scheme,
- (b) that despite the lack of systematic survey and assessment, sites of world significance have been found, and the Hydro-Electric Commission failed to reconsider the desirability of the project in the light of these findings, which will result in the destruction of these archaeological sites,
- (c) that construction works, such as access roads and construction camps, are already proceeding without any assessment of the impact such work would have on archaeological sites which may occur in these areas.

To comment on the last point first, we believe that these works should cease immediately.

With regard to the first point, we concur with Professor John Mulvaney's and Dr Rhys Jones arguments to the Senate Select Committee that the archaeology component of the HEC's assessment of the environmental impact of the project was totally inadequate. Procedures appropriate to this type of development are applied in other states and have provided information which has enabled State authorities to both assess the impact of the proposed development on archaeological sites, and to make appropriate management decisions. An important part of all such assessment is consultation with, and involvement of, Aboriginal people in the decision-making processes affecting Aboriginal sites.

To: Premier Robin Gray

23 February 1983

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With regard to the second point, several sites of outstanding archaeological importance have now been found in limestone caves along the Franklin River. The importance of these sites has been stressed by a number of our colleagues, notably Professor John Mulvaney, Dr Rhys Jones, the Australian Association of Archaeologists' Standing Committee on Southwest Tasmania, and by Kevin Kiernan, Rhys Jones and Don Ranson in a recent paper in the international journal, NATURE. The assessment of these researchers has been supported by numerous distinguished international archaeologists, as evidenced by the statement of the world-wide importance of the area published in The Australian, 4-5 September 1982, and the statement from the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association Meeting in Dunedin, February 1983.

We concur with the assessments and conclusions of our Australian and international colleagues that the sites located to date are of such scientific importance that they should be preserved insitu as a record that 'symbolises the spirit and adaptability of humankind during its colonisation of the globe, in that they constitute the southernmost limits of the last Ice Age settlement' (The Australian, 4-5 September 1983).

We strongly disagree with arguments that salvage excavation of these sites before they are flooded would be in any way a satisfactory substitute for their permanent preservation.

We remain unconvinced that the economic benefits of construction of the dam outweigh the cultural and natural heritage importance of the areas to be flooded. Nor do we accept that it is inevitable that construction of the dam will proceed.

Accordingly, we are advising our members not to participate in any salvage programme while these issues are still being debated.

Yours sincerely,

Laila Haglund  
President