Australian Archaeology

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EDITORIAL

Much of this newsletter is devoted to opinions either expressed at or stimulated by the AAA forum, *The State, People and Archaeologists*, held in conjunction with the recent ANZAAS Congress at Canberra. At the forum, both Aboriginal speakers and archaeologists expressed their views on archaeological and anthropological research, including the excavation, display and study of Aboriginal remains. It became evident during the forum that areas of potential conflict between the two groups could be avoided by adequate discussion and explanation before research work was begun. Generally there was a great deal of misunderstanding, particularly about the kind of work archaeologists do and what they hope to achieve by doing it. To enlighten both archaeologists and Aborigines, communication is thus essential. The forum should be seen as merely the first step in a continuing dialogue, in which this newsletter can play a vital role by publishing opinions and comments both from archaeologists and Aborigines. We look forward to receiving more articles of this kind for future issues.

Relevant to this problem, Dr J.F. O'Connell has kindly made available a section from the *Code of Scientific Ethics* of the Society for California Archaeology, as an example of the methods used in America to avoid conflict between archaeologists and indigenous groups. It reads as follows:

"Section 4. Whereas archaeologists and Native Americans alike are deeply committed to the preservation of archaeological remains, and whereas Native American sentiments often proscribe the disturbance of recent cemetery sites:

a) Members of the Society for California Archaeology shall make every reasonable effort to contact pertinent representatives of the Native American community during the planning phase preceding archaeological programs of excavation or intensive reconnaissance, and it will be the essential purpose of such communications to develop a design for fieldwork in full coordination with the interests and sensitivities of the Native Americans.

b) No member of the Society shall excavate, or otherwise disturb, any location of a previous Native American settlement, ceremonial locality, cemetery, or other mortuary context which was used until recently or is still being used, and for which the Native peoples have a sense of spiritual affinity, without the full concordance of the pertinent Native American community."
c) Whenever requested by Native Americans, all human skeletal remains exhumed from mortuary contexts of recent date (or where specific historical or ethnological data are lacking, contexts known to have been used after 1800 A.D.) by members of the society shall be done in accordance with the requests of pertinent Indian groups and in compliance with relevant state and local statutes."

Departing already from a policy stated in Newsletter No. 1, this newsletter (rather than the October issue) includes a substantial contribution by R. Jones and H.A. Polach to the 'Research Reports' section. This was necessary because of the timing of the departmental annual report from which the information was taken. Left until October it would lose its immediacy. Other correspondents too might prefer a more flexible policy, sending in their yearly summary of research news for whichever of the two annual newsletters they find convenient. A further point here is that the annual reports of other institutions may contain summaries of archaeological research which with very little modification are suitable for the newsletter, thus saving a good deal of extra writing.

R.J. Lampert - Editor