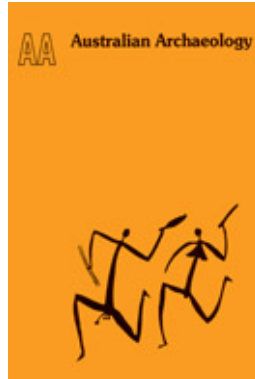


Australian Archaeology



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VICTORIAN RELICS OFFICE

The Victorian State Relics Office has now been in operation for approximately 18 months, and since its activities are not widely known it is appropriate to advise members of the Society of some relevant aspects relating to policies and activities.

Staff

Staff of the Office consists of the Protector of Relics, the State Archaeologist, two Archaeologists, a Geologist, a Field Assistant and three Administrative staff. The organisation is housed in new Office accommodation, an up-to-date laboratory is shortly to be constructed to support field activities.

Work Programme

One of the principal objectives of the Office is to compile a list of archaeological sites throughout the State. In this respect Victoria has been divided into 140 areas based on the 1 to 100,000 metric maps. Intensive field work is being conducted in three related areas in the Western District of Victoria. Field work comprises an intensive site survey supported by a limited amount of excavation to establish the basic archaeological parameters of each area. Work in one of the areas (the Willaura Map Sheet) is now nearing completion. The intention is to publish a report similar in many cases to those published by the Victorian Geological Survey.

All information about sites, including known literary references are kept on site record cards. This information is shortly to be stored on magnetic tape so that it can be easily extracted. To date approximately 1500 sites have been located and from the basis of the filing system.

Education

To date the Office has concentrated on advising Government Instrumentalities such as the Country Roads Board, Crown Lands & Survey Department and so on of the existence of the Office and its functions. Education pamphlets have been compiled and are available to the General public. During the summer of 1975 the Office undertook to run a Summer School in Archaeology which provided members of the general public with an introductory course in archaeology, plus practical aspects of conservation, excavation and laboratory processing. It is envisaged that similar schools will be run during future summers. Eventually, we hope that the amateur through the medium of such schools will become a main force in archaeology in this State. As the amateur graduates to professional standards, excavation permits will be granted when adequate supervision, laboratory facilities, equipment and advice is available.

Declaration of Sites

The Office is concerned with protecting and preserving important archaeology sites. Following the preparation of interim list of these sites in Victoria, one has now been declared an archaeological area. This is the Mt Rothwell ceremonial site near Geelong. It is anticipated that other sites will be declared during the next 12 months.

Warden & Inspectors

A State-wide network of surveillance has been set up. Victoria has been divided into eighteen regions each controlled by an Inspector under our Act, whose job is to supervise Wardens in areas under his control. There are now approximately 180 Wardens and Inspectors in Victoria. The Inspector is the site record keeper for his own area and responsible for maintaining surveillance of sites within his sphere of control. Superimposed on this system, there are Wardens with roving commissions who exercise control wherever it is deemed necessary. A third category of Wardens are those which are appointed to administer specific sites.

Excavation Permits

At the present time, it is the general policy of this Office to give permits only to persons with appropriate qualifications in archaeology. Potential applicants are required to sign a document which seeks to control their activities in respect of minimum standards and reporting. Basically the document seeks to control the activities of amateurs and professionals working on the premise that all archaeological sites are unique. Excavators have a responsibility to ensure that their field work is carried out in a professional manner, that maximum information is extracted from sites, and that all excavated materials are analysed and the results made available within a specified time. Unpopular though these measures may prove, we feel that in the present climate, it is necessary to impose such minimum standards. Finally, potential applicants for excavation permits in Victoria are strongly advised to plan their work well in advance and to give a much notification of their intention to apply for a permit as is possible. Three months notification would normally be appreciated. Copies of the relevant Act and forms to make applications for permits are available from the Office on request for a token sum.

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