



## 14. Air, Land and Sea

This session explores aviation heritage in both land and maritime contexts. How is it valued by communities and managed through regulatory frameworks? What challenges exist for the future of aviation heritage as it is investigated, accessed, conserved and interpreted as a distinctive component of 20<sup>th</sup> century heritage and contemporary archaeology?

Session Convenor: Tracy Ireland

### 1. South Australia's Lost Aircraft, and their Value as Undersea Heritage

*Anna Jackowiak- Department for Environment and Water (South Australia)*

In oceans around the world there exists a veritable museum of shipwrecks and ancient relics. Uniquely protected by their environment, they act like time capsules, providing fascinating windows into the past. These relics and sites have gained increasing value and appreciation worldwide for their significance as underwater cultural heritage. What is lesser known is that aircraft, too, have been lost beneath the waves, a fascinating resource which has, up until recently, been largely overlooked.

The study identified 32 aircraft that have been lost in the waters around South Australia and explores their potential as underwater cultural heritage items. The presentation will explore the illuminating stories around the people involved and the circumstances of the losses.

These wrecks provide fascinating glimpses into South Australia's history. They also present exciting opportunities for discovery, research, and community

empowerment. The potential for an extended scope study of aircraft wrecks around the rest of Australia, its territories and further afield is both daunting and exciting.

However, without protection, these sites are vulnerable to damage and exploitation. It is imperative therefore that they are conserved, both out of respect to generations past, and responsibility to secure their benefits for generations future.

## **2. I can still remember the roar of the engines’’: memory, attachment and archaeology of the Fairy Firefly VX381 wreck site and the Rose Bay flying boat base**

*Stirling Smith- Heritage, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet*

On 24 August 2018, the Australian Parliament passed the Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018. For the first time aircraft wrecks 75 years and older located in Commonwealth waters will now be afforded protection. To raise awareness of these legislative changes the NSW Maritime Heritage Program has been undertaking a series of projects to record submerged aircraft and aircraft related infrastructure sites, including archaeological survey of the Fairy Firefly VX381 wreck site in Jervis Bay and the Rose Bay flying boat base in Sydney. While these projects began with the simple goal of recording site attributes, they have unexpectedly revealed a range of strong personal and community connections. This has been evidenced through local community custodianship and advocacy for these places as well as volunteers travelling from afar to participate in the fieldwork projects due to personal connections with the sites. This paper will outline the survey projects, consider why people have such an affinity with these sites and discuss the relevance of aviation heritage in the present and its ability to connect communities both local and global.

## **3. The practicalities of managing airport heritage**

*Ken Owen- Environmental Contractor*

Aviation related heritage values on airports can be comprised of three key, inter-related aspects:

- Built environment
- Technology
- Aircraft

Airport heritage values can be at Commonwealth, State or local levels and are managed through a variety of Commonwealth and state legislation.

This paper focusses on airport built heritage environment. However, it is noted many airports also have important Indigenous cultural and European settlement heritage values.

Airports are not static environments and must evolve in response to changes in aircraft fleets, industry requirements, passenger growth, operational requirements as well as regulatory requirements. Airports also have finite land area and often limited development sites available.

These issues provide a challenge to airport operators and regulators in managing heritage values on airports. Heritage buildings need to have a value to the owner if they are to survive so adaptive re-use is often the best approach. Existing heritage buildings are often of a specific aviation-related nature and can be difficult re-use particularly if located in security areas of an airport. Modern business and WHS requirements can be a problem for adaptive re-use. If a contemporary use is not readily available, demolition can be the outcome.

A number of Australian and overseas airports provide examples of good heritage management.

#### **4. Balancing Heritage Conservation and Defence Capability**

*Erin Finnegan- Principal Heritage Consultant, Environmental Resource Management (ERM) Australia*

*Shelley James- Assistant Director, Directorate Environment & Heritage Policy Development, Department of Defense*

The Australian Defence Force is tasked with the defence of the nation, and the ability to sustain military capability, including aviation operations from airbases, is of critical importance to the national interest. Defence is one of the largest land managers in the country, with important stewardship responsibilities for an estate which includes diverse and significant Indigenous, natural and historic heritage values. There are currently 130 Commonwealth Heritage Listed places across sixty Defence properties, which also include National Heritage Listed places and lands adjacent to or part of a World Heritage listed place.

Defence is tasked by Government to deliver the ADF mission to protect Australia and its national interests and is required to comply with a broad range of legislation including heritage obligations under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. Defence seeks to provide a sound balance between capability and environment and heritage conservation. This can involve challenges when an asset has assessed or listed heritage significance, but no 'feasible and / or prudent' alternative can be identified for its future use within the context of operational requirements.

This paper aims to explore the tensions between Defence's operational requirements and heritage conservation, through the lens of Royal Australian Air Force heritage places. This discussion seeks to promote a better understanding of the issues and processes involved in balancing heritage outcomes with operational and financial efficiency factors within the Defence estate.

## 5. Aviation Archaeology, a vanishing trade?

*Frankie Bryant- Artefact Heritage Services*

Emerging hot on the heels of the field of maritime archaeology was aviation archaeology, yet it hasn't blossomed in the same way. Why? This session assesses the impact that Annex 13 to the Chicago Convention (1944), Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation, has had on this area.

Archaeology relies on the investigation of material remains to answer research questions. Accident Investigation protocols in relation to the collection and analysis of aircraft remains means that limited, if any, material evidence of modern aviation wrecks enters the archaeological record. Using Australia as the location and 2014 as the year, investigation of final reports and remote examination of wreck sites showed that only 2.5% (2 from 80) retained sufficient wreckage to form a site for later archaeological investigation, noting that one of these was in water and the location of the other was unknown (MH370, ATSB Report AE-2014-054).

The safety imperative for aviation wreck investigation means that it is unlikely that substantial material remains of modern wrecks will be available for archaeological investigation in the future, yet it may be possible to include elements of archaeological methodology in the wreck investigation process to enable relevant information to be available to future practitioners. Aviation archaeology may yet survive.