



CULTURE: Conserving it Together
Suva, Fiji, 1-5 October 2018
An ICOMOS conference on heritage conservation across the Pacific

Australia ICOMOS Secretariat
Ph: +61 3 9251 7131
austicomos@deakin.edu.au
www.icomos.org/australia

CONFERENCE PAPER ABSTRACT

NAME OF PRESENTER:	Catherine Forbes
TITLE OF PAPER:	Are we really prepared for disaster? Responding to the lessons from Christchurch
THEME:	Theme 1: Heritage at Risk – Climate Change and Disasters
PAPER ABSTRACT: <p><i>Disasters can be sudden and traumatic events, coming without warning. Understanding the risks posed by various hazards, both natural and human, and the exposure and vulnerability of the heritage to them, enables us to put in place suitable mitigation measures to minimise the losses and protect our heritage for future generations. By adequately preparing for such events, we can respond efficiently and effectively, assess the damage, stabilise severely damaged structures and salvage their significant elements and contents, enabling their future recovery.</i></p> <p><i>However, as demonstrated in the case of Christchurch, the dynamic of large-scale disasters affecting urban centres can often exclude heritage from the emergency response and recovery agenda. Understanding the drivers (political, economic, social or other) and the mechanisms (including emergency response protocols, health and safety issues and damage assessment procedures) of large-scale emergencies and recovery planning, and being ready and able to respond to them, is critical to the survival of our heritage in such disasters. A post-disaster review of the issues that lead to the loss of almost 50% of Christchurch's listed heritage properties in its city centre, highlighted the importance of the heritage sector actively engaging with government and the emergency management sector, to ensure that heritage is included in emergency, resilience and recovery planning.</i></p> <p><i>In response to the findings of the Christchurch review, Australia ICOMOS and ICOMOS New Zealand have established a joint working group to develop strategies for improving the disaster preparedness of heritage places, the capacity of heritage professionals, and the inclusion of heritage in Government emergency plans. This paper will give a brief review of the findings of the Christchurch post disaster review and outline the goals of the working group.</i></p>	
BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRESENTER: <p><i>Catherine Forbes is a conservation architect with specialist training in disaster risk management for cultural heritage. She is an expert member of ICORP (ICOMOS ISC on Risk Preparedness), convenor of the joint Australia and New Zealand ICOMOS Working Group on Cultural Heritage Risk Preparedness and ICOMOS representative on Blue Shield Australia. She is also the Australian focal point for the ICOMOS recovery and reconstruction case study project. She has undertaken post disaster reviews of the earthquake impacts, emergency response and recovery processes on cultural heritage in both Kathmandu and Christchurch.</i></p>	