

Putting their money where our mouths are.

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This paper proposes that in the absence of any substantial recurrent commitment from government, the cultural heritage community should engage with global capital – and specifically international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the transnational extractive industries sector – to expand capacity building efforts in heritage management in less-developed nations such as those in Australia's Asia-Pacific neighbourhood. The World Bank Group includes the "private-sector" International Finance Corporation as well as the "public sector" International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Development Association, the two agencies comprising what most people think of as the World Bank. The Bank is the world's most powerful development agency and has an enormous impact on archaeology and cultural heritage through its funding of a wide array of projects in many different parts of the world. Some of these projects promote development through cultural tourism but most are undertaken to protect cultural resources to be affected by developments underwritten by the Bank. The extractive industries sector – i.e. mining – has a similar global reach and enormous effect on archaeology and cultural heritage, also largely through its efforts to mitigate the physical impact of its activities on cultural resources. Both the Bank and the mining sector have an explicitly-expressed interest in boosting local capacity in heritage management. Yet neither has developed a co-ordinated approach to the matter, nor communicates with the other to any significant extent about co-operating between themselves and with the heritage community to take advantage of pooled expertise and economies of

scale to advance solutions to problems affecting all the parties in question. This is not to say that neither the Bank nor global representatives of the mining sector don't talk to each other a great deal about other issues, many of which relate to cultural heritage, or that they don't talk to heritage professionals – a lot of consultants around the world make a handsome living working for the Bank and/or the mining industry. Rather, it is to suggest that collaboration on heritage issues is not as prominent on their radar screens as it could be, to the benefit of all parties. Some background is in order.

Examining recent Australian government documents such as the 2003 Senate Committee report on PNG and the Pacific and the government's response to it, the Pacific 2020 report, and the AusAID Pacific Regional Aid Strategy, it is clear that cultural heritage does not rate very highly as an issue. Tourism is identified as a major focus for sustainable development in the region and there is some awareness that heritage tourism could make a contribution but such awareness remains limited. I made a submission to the 2003 Senate Committee on behalf of the Australian Archaeological Association, linking capacity-building in heritage management to sustainable cultural tourism and the strengthening of national cultural capital, but while I like to think I can see it there between the lines, it was not actually cited in the Senate's final report. Heritage does not rate a mention in the AusAID Pacific aid strategy, but the background paper on tourism for Pacific 2020 did acknowledge in passing that "historic or archaeological sites" could become "unique attractions for individual destinations" in the Pacific region. The "possible policy response" to this prospect was to support Pacific states "to identify and develop unique attractions that can be incorporated into national and industry". That was it. No mention of the possibility that the identification and development of unique historic or archaeological sites might have to be managed to ensure the long-term survival of the sites and thus underpin the sustainability of any cultural tourism they might support.

I know that Australian governments support a number of programs relevant to this issue. For instance, AusAID assists Bill Logan's Asia-Pacific heritage centre and has a museum support program, the Federal environmental department has its Asia-Pacific focal point for world heritage management, various state museums are paired with various Pacific museums and there have been Australian-funded heritage training programs provided over the years in this and that Pacific nation. As valuable as these sorts of things unquestionably are, the briefest visit to just about any national museum or heritage management agency in the Pacific is enough to indicate they are still crying out for substantial, continuing assistance. Plainly, the archaeological and heritage communities aren't doing enough to convince the Australian government to re-order its priorities, though I would have thought it was plain for government to see that there is a demonstrated connection between adequate cultural heritage management, sustainable development of cultural tourism and the strengthening of national cultural capital on the one hand and on the other between that group of factors and an issue that concerns Australian governments of both political colours, namely socioeconomic and political stability in the nation's neighbourhood. I suspect that even if we did put in more effort, the links I am alluding to would not be taken seriously by hard-headed foreign policy "realists" despite the empirical evidence that it ought to be.

If the government is not interested in doing more despite the benefits that such action would deliver, it behoves those of us who think these benefits are worth it to investigate ways we can augment government-funded efforts. Here, as most of you will already suspect, is where the World Bank and international mining industry come in. Both are seeking better rapport with the people whose lives their developments affect, and particularly Indigenous peoples, in the context of social as well as environmental sustainability. The Bank is changing its processes and procedures to

enhance culturally-appropriate content in and local ownership of its world-leading environmental, social and heritage safeguards. It also wants to reduce the costs that the safeguards are said to impose on borrowers and the Bank, and early in the process critics including WAC and ICAHM decried the proposed changes, which the two professional organizations contended would debase international professional standards and put highly significant heritage resources at great risk. The Bank counters that the changes should make developing countries more inclined to borrow from the Bank. It concedes this would be good for the Bank financially at a time when it needs the money to fund poverty-reduction measures such as large-scale debt-cancellation, but it is also supposed to make such countries more likely to apply internationally-benchmarked standards of social and environmental (including cultural heritage) protection. This is because the proposed changes to the safeguards are intended to see the Bank working with borrowers to develop procedures that respect local autonomy rather than dictate supposedly global standards. It is a simple fact, recognized by the Bank, that these so-called “global” standards are largely developed in the West (and especially the Anglo-American world), largely to suit Western (and especially Anglo-American) conditions, and are thus arguably just another element of a pervasive hegemonic discourse aimed at maintaining the neocolonial status quo. Building local capacity on the basis of local perspectives and approaches is one way to begin to remedy this situation.

In a similar vein, the extractive industries sector, as represented by peak global bodies such as the International Council on Mining and Metals, is seeking, to quote its documentation, to contribute “to sustainable development by integrating economic growth with environmental protection, social progress and effective governance. In practice”, says the ICMM, “this means identifying, managing and mitigating the negative impacts of activities while at the same time adding value, for example, by contributing to biodiversity conservation and bringing employment,

infrastructure and community development programs which last beyond the life of an operation or facility". To this end, the ICMM committed its members to ten "principles of sustainable development" that were benchmarked against World Bank safeguards, OECD guidelines and ILO and other international conventions. These principles concern ethical behaviour, capacity building and so on. Principle 3 is to "Uphold fundamental human rights and respect cultures, customs and values in dealings with employees and others who are affected by our activities" and includes the requirement to "Respect the culture and heritage of local communities, including Indigenous Peoples". On this basis, heritage is slowly receiving more attention from the organization. Thus in 2003 member companies pledged not to explore or mine in World Heritage areas, to be followed up this year by a workshop on mining and World Heritage. Also in this incremental but positive vein, the ICMM's 2005 Mining and Indigenous Peoples Issues Review discusses heritage amongst other questions requiring a sympathetic sector-wide approach. Interestingly for a document prepared by a US consultant, and probably surprisingly for those of us trying to work with the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Acts, the ICMM's Indigenous Issues report places Australia and particularly Queensland at the international forefront on such heritage matters, but nonetheless issues a plea for help even in places with advanced heritage protection regimes. It states that "While some countries have legislation requiring a greater attention to these details, such as Australia's Queensland Aboriginal Heritage Act of 2003, generally the legislation does not give adequate guidance on how to engage with an Indigenous community to appropriately describe and document these concerns". All this clearly indicates that the ICMM is not only open to discussion on heritage issues, and especially local capacity building in heritage management, but is asking for help from the heritage community.

That this help could come in the form of a co-operative effort with the World Bank is suggested by the fact that the mining industry and the Bank joined together in 2000 to undertake an “Extractive Industries Review”. Despite the mining sector’s evident uncertainty about heritage matters, it used the review to force the Bank to move in what most of us here would see as a positive direction. How did this occur? Well, the review had a number of telling findings, not least of which was that industry associations in the mining, oil and gas sectors

are often progressively and proactively improving their environmental and social standards to meet the demands of civil society. On many issues...industry associations like the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association and ICMM are more progressive and forward-thinking than the WBG in its Safeguard Policies.

It concluded that despite its shortcomings, the Bank could collaborate with the extractive industries sector to help alleviate poverty and promote socially and environmentally sustainable development. I suspect many people, at least in the Bank, might have presumed it would be the other way around, and that it would be the Bank, with its vaunted safeguards, that was in the lead on such questions. However, much of the review’s focus was on community issues, including heritage, and especially Indigenous communities, and the Bank had not at that stage ratified its Indigenous Peoples safeguard policy (nor, for that matter, its closely-related Cultural Resources safeguard policy). Paradoxically, however, while this process was unfolding, the Bank was coming under intense pressure from both within its own ranks as well as from outside to water down if not completely abandon its social and environmental safeguards as part of a wider consideration of the conditions placed on development funding (known as ‘conditionality’). The safeguards review was

couched in terms of “expanding the use of country systems in bank-supported operations”. As intimated at the beginning of the paper, this means the Bank wants to use borrower countries’ social and environmental protection protocols in conjunction with or in place of its own safeguards, where the former are or can be built up to be ‘equivalent’ to the latter. Many of the Bank’s critics believe this approach is a smokescreen to hide the dismantling of the safeguards regime, but positive views of local solutions have a long history in the Bank’s approach to cultural heritage, and it something that I think we can build on.

As recently as 2005, though, there seemed to be few grounds for optimism concerning efforts to co-opt the Bank. During the period that the public sector part of the Bank has been moving towards the ‘expanded use of country systems’, the IFC, the Bank’s ‘private-sector’ arm, undertook its own reappraisal of Bank safeguards. Hitherto committed to the same standards as the public sector parts of the Bank, the IFC introduced a set of draft “performance standards”. The IFC standards are very important because they are used as benchmarks by the ICMM as well as in such things as the “Equator Principles” of sustainable development that many of the world’s largest banks have signed up to. The revised IFC standards were hotly contested by civil society critics, resulting in revisions to the standards as well as the production of lengthy operational guidelines. The revised standards and the guidelines clarify a number of contentious issues and address many of the major concerns of civil society watchdogs. Importantly, this includes international benchmarking of a sort that was glaringly absent from the original proposals. When the much-criticized draft standards were released it seemed that the public-sector arms of the Bank might head in the same direction as the IFC and pare back safeguards because of the requirement that policies and procedures concerning matters such as safeguards are harmonized right across the World Bank Group. Even allowing for the fact that it deals with the private sector rather than with

governments in the way the public-sector parts of the Bank does, the IFC seemed to be scouting out the terrain ahead, seeking ways to diminish conditionality across the World Bank Group. This would have had dire consequences for cultural heritage as well as other areas of social and environmental concern. Though by no means perfect, the revised performance standards and guidelines make this scenario much less likely. The revisions introduced various small but important modifications to the draft standards concerning cultural heritage, and the guidance notes include 14 pages on the issue which provide a lot of professionally-oriented detail missing from the standards themselves.

That the approach to cultural heritage was improved in this way seems quite remarkable on the basis of the documentation I have examined. A summary of concerns raised in a two-day meeting between the IFC and civil society groups devotes a paltry six lines to cultural heritage. That is it. Cultural heritage did not rate a mention from any other party at this crucial meeting. I have not asked who modified the heritage performance standard or worked up the detailed guidance notes, though I suspect it was one or another of the World Bank's long-time heritage consultants, some of whom may not be too far from this room. Be that as it may, the lack of interest in heritage on the part of otherwise quite vociferous civil society critics really makes me wonder about the international standing of our sector, and the capacity of the archaeological and heritage communities to mount effective campaigns to influence processes such as this, which have a major impact on the way we do business in many parts of the world. How is it that the protection of archaeological interests in this vital sector of global activity hinges on the good offices of those behind the scene who came to the rescue? It is simple. As far as I can tell, no archaeologists or archaeological or cultural heritage organizations were invited to comment on the Bank's country systems proposals or the IFC proposed new performance standards. To make matters worse, none of the varied public responses



listed on the Bank's country systems web site mentions archaeology or heritage even in passing. It seems that the dispiriting observation Patrick O'Keefe made in 1999 still holds true: archaeology and cultural heritage are simply not on the international radar screen, at least in any way that counts when major shifts are occurring in global policy and procedure, even if those shifts directly affect archaeological interests right around the world. A management memorandum to the Bank's Board that I have seen states that the country systems issues paper was reworked to take civil society feedback into account. Any reworking might only have been minimal given the Bank's seeing determination to wind back its safeguards, though that appears not to have happened to the degree everyone feared. Yet to the extent that commentary from archaeologists and heritage professionals would have augmented that from bodies concerned primarily with the natural environment and/or indigenous and other vulnerable peoples, we had a duty to offer advice at a time when it might have had some effect. This we failed to do in any organized way that registered publicly with the central players.

It is time to remedy this situation. I know a lot of people in our sector are not naturally sympathetic to either the mining industry or to international financial institutions. To my mind, however, it makes sense to try to effect global change through collaboration with a major global player, the extractive industries sector, that is highly sensitized to heritage issues, and indeed is actively seeking substantial professional input on the matter, and which moreover has a proven capacity to work with and in fact shift the direction of policy and procedure at the world's largest development agency, the World Bank, to mutually beneficial ends which also positively impact upon some of the world's most disadvantaged people. In this connection, WAC has recently taken up an initiative of Rio Tinto's Elizabeth Bradshaw to begun exploratory talks to advance capacity building in cultural heritage in some of Rio's overseas operations (including, interestingly enough, the US). It is very early days yet, but with

Elizabeth and WAC in tow, I have begun talking to the World Bank about expanding such programs globally in collaboration with the ICMM if the Rio pilot program is successful. I hasten to add that I have yet to broach this with the ICMM, but will do so after the first formal meeting between WAC and Rio Tinto in October this year. As I said, it is early days, but I see no obvious reason why ICOMOS could not be involved in these sorts of initiatives if it wants to be, perhaps through ICAHM. Such co-operation across the global heritage sector could bring about significant positive change in an area where the need for such change is clear but where government seems reluctant to make the sort of substantial and sustained contribution that is necessary to really make things happen.