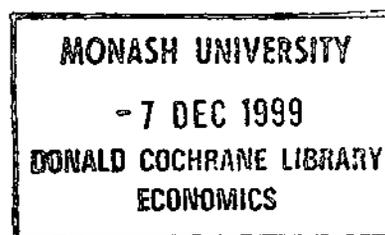


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ROCK ART SITES IN VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA: A
MANAGEMENT HISTORY FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT

A recent examination of the management histories of a select number of rock art sites in the Grampians-Gariwerd National Park in southwest Victoria, Australia, has found that management decisions, research and site interventions were often taking place in ignorance of what had gone before. Heritage site management is often conducted in an *ad hoc* manner with limited understanding of past planning and management. A framework for understanding the management history of indigenous rock art sites is presented. With some modification the framework could be applied to other indigenous cultural sites.

ROCK ART SITES IN VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA: A MANAGEMENT HISTORY FRAMEWORK

A framework for understanding the management history of indigenous rock art sites was developed for the Victoria Archaeological Survey in 1991.¹ Examples were drawn from the management of ten Aboriginal art sites in the Grampians-Gariwerd National Park and its environs in western Victoria, Australia. While the primary focus of this paper is arts sites, with some modification, the framework could apply to other indigenous cultural sites and any heritage place that has been identified, investigated, assessed, conserved and managed.

The 'management history checklist' was developed by examining the sequence of events in the management of many of these ten Grampians/Gariwerd heritage places. It was found that many were being managed in ignorance of what had gone before. Boyd and Ward² confirm that despite guidelines, on-site heritage site management is often conducted in an *ad hoc* manner with limited understanding of planning and management options. Similarly, previous planning and management is likely to be ignored in heritage site management.

The absence of a checklist or management inventory has meant that the implementation of management planning and management decisions has rarely been subjected to critical evaluation. Furthermore, the history of pigment sampling for chemical analysis has shown that some of this sampling occurred unnecessarily, and further sampling (with its concomitant dangers for conservation of pigments) could easily have been avoided if site management had been documented.

Frequent turnover of site management personnel is a further reason to implement a comprehensive management monitoring system.³ Inkeep's⁴ checklist for monitoring plan implementation could easily use the management history framework, expounded here, as a foundation.

Figure 1 presents the framework in a checklist format. The major headings and sub-headings in this paper are taken from the framework. Although there are over 100 known art sites in the Grampians-Gariwerd region, only ten are open to the public that are the primary focus of rock art tourism. These sites are Billimina, Bunjils, Gunangidura, Larngibunja, Manja, Jananginj Njau, Mugadgadjin, Burrunj, Ngamadjidj and Gulgurn Manja. In this paper examples will be drawn primarily from two of these public sites: Billimina and Bunjils Shelter.

1.1 History of non-indigenous knowledge of Art Site(s)

Rumours that Aboriginal art sites existed in the Grampians region circulated among the gold miners at the nearby Pleasant Creek diggings from the mid-1850s. Billimina was the first art site that came to the knowledge of non-indigenous people in the late 1850s or early 1860s; a local station-holder, searching for stray cattle, found a track that led him to the rock shelter. It is possible that this track was initially an Aboriginal path that came to be used by stock. The existence of Billimina did not become widely known until 1896 when the Reverend John Mathew read a paper to the Royal Society of Victoria, presenting his recording of the site. Mathew's⁵ study was considered by Coutts and Lorblanchet⁶ to be one of the first studies of Australian rock art.

The existence of Bunjils Shelter was revealed to AW Howitt, an amateur ethnographer in the summer of 1883/84 by an Aboriginal man, the son of a local Jardwadjali woman and John Connolly, a gold digger. Howitt⁷ published information on this site in 1904, but failed to give its specific location and, despite the fact that its location was known to local landholders for many years, the site did not become public knowledge until 1957.

Figure 1: Interpretive framework for management histories of indigenous rock art sites and other cultural heritage sites

- 1.0 Introduction
 - 1.1 History of non-indigenous knowledge of Art Site(s)
 - 1.2 Site Nomenclature
- 2.0 Site Management
 - 2.1 Site recordings
 - 2.2 Authentication: indigenous or non-indigenous origin?
 - 2.2.1 Pigment analysis
 - 2.2.2 Testing of floor deposits
 - 2.3 Graffiti and defacements
 - 2.4 Management plans and recommendations
 - 2.4.1 Site visitation surveys
 - 2.5 Intervention works
 - 2.5.1 Protective measures: grilles
 - 2.5.2 Protective measures: stabilisation works
 - 2.5.3 Protective measures: conservation
 - 2.5.3.1 Repainting art sites
 - 2.5.4 Graffiti obliteration and removal
 - 2.5.5 Cleaning of rock face
 - 2.5.6 Rubbish and vegetation removal
 - 2.5.7 Installation of interpretive material *in situ*
 - 2.6 Interpretation
 - 2.6.1 In publications
 - 2.6.2 Information sheets and tourist guides
 - 2.6.3 Proposals for an interpretive centre
 - 2.6.4 Information boards
 - 2.6.5 Replication of the art
 - 2.6.6 Tourism
- 3.0 Chronology of developments
- 4.0 References

In both these instances a pattern is evident that was repeated for other sites in the region until the mid-1950s. This pattern is that of a time lag between the initial non-indigenous knowledge of the site and its eventual publication. In the intervening years knowledge of the site was usually contained within a discrete group of local people.

A central site register did not exist in Victoria until 1973 when the Aboriginal and Archaeological Relics Office was established, and it is not surprising that another pattern is evident: the repeated notification of sites. It is difficult to know, also, how many sites were presumed to have been known and so went unreported.

Until the formation of the Relics Office, the discovery of art sites in Victoria was somewhat fortuitous and *ad hoc*. Until this time there were two distinct periods of involvement in locating sites and two distinct groups of individuals involved. The first period dates from 1929 until 1943 and involves local people, often land-holders, who had known of the location of the sites for some time, revealing this knowledge to Melbourne-based 'enthusiasts' who were members of the Ethnological section of the Royal Society of Victoria. Prominent individuals included C Barrett, AS Kenyon, and SR Mitchell, and while these people did not locate any sites, they were responsible for publicising their location; Barrett was also responsible for developing site nomenclature. They were also responsible for the construction of the first protective grilles at three art sites in western Victoria (in 1937).

The second period dates from 1955 and continued to 1973; it involved local field naturalists and Aldo Massola - the Curator of Anthropology at the National Museum of Victoria. Sites were often located during field naturalist excursions whose primary object was to seek out botanical specimens. Other sites were accidentally found by people seeking to visit newly found sites. Sites were sometimes found after new tracks had been made by the Forests Commission for the purpose of fire-fighting.

From 1980 until 1986, the Australian Heritage Commission supported the 'Victorian Rock Art Survey Project', which employed the services of a consultant to survey and record known art sites and to provide management recommendations. The project included a field component that saw over fifty new sites located.

The documentation of the location of art sites is vital research, particularly interviews with those people credited with uncovering their locations. Where individuals have died, family records and family histories should be tapped if possible. This research may uncover photographs and unpublished notes made by those responsible for finding the sites.

1.2 Site Nomenclature

Until 1929, when Barrett and Kenyon began to take an active interest in Victorian art sites, sites were given names by locals who knew of their existence. For example, Billimina Shelter was known as 'Blackfellows Rock' until Barrett conferred three names in 1929: 'Red Rock', 'Painted Rock', and 'Glen Isla Rock'. Barrett followed two naming conventions, and was not adverse to applying them to the same art site. In the first place, he chose names that were idiosyncratic or descriptive of the dominant motifs found at the sites, such as 'Cave of Hands'. Secondly, he chose names that were locational, such as 'Brimgower Cave'. Interestingly, Barrett⁸ continued to use the descriptive 'cave', even though he was aware that this site was better described as a large rock shelter.

In 1964, Massola abandoned Barrett's naming convention, replacing it with a numeric system that reflected the order of discovery, hence sites located along Cultivation Creek became Cultivation Creek Shelter No.1, Cultivation Creek Shelter No. 2, and so on. This locational numeric system was continued by the Relics Office, and its successor, the Victoria Archaeological Survey, and is still in use by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria.

In 1984, preparations commenced for the development of a management plan for the proposed Grampians National Park. From a number of submissions to the National Parks Service, it became clear that site names were a management tool, and that they played a role in site protection. Many site names were criticised because they invoked inappropriate expectations in tourists that often lead to disappointment, ridicule and, in some cases, vandalism. The consensus among site managers was that names based on incorrect or outdated interpretation were misleading and, in many cases, increased the threat to the continued preservation of the motifs.

Almost all the site names included the term 'cave', which was quite misleading for sites that are in fact only shallow rock over-hangs. Similarly, Eurocentric descriptive names, such as 'Cave of Ghosts' and 'Cave of Fishes' were misleading. In the case of 'Cave of Fishes', the site name was deemed to be contributing to the kind of graffiti that were occurring at the site; for example, vandals had scratched fish silhouettes and 'shark-jaw' cartoons into the rock face. One person had renamed the site 'Cave of Jaws'. Gale and Gillen⁹ recommended that each site name include the words 'Aboriginal Art Shelter' in the place of 'cave'.

In 1989, the Victorian Tourism Commission, in conjunction with the indigenous communities responsible for indigenous heritage in the Grampians-Gariwerd region, began a process of restoring indigenous place-names to landscape features in and around the national park, and to confer more appropriate names on the sites. Names taken from nearby named features or dominant motifs found at the site were proposed, in the vocabulary of the local Djab wurrung or Jardwadjali languages. The submission to the Victorian Place Names Committee for the places with rock paintings has since been accepted, with minor changes, and gazetted.¹⁰

2.0 SITE MANAGEMENT

The first reservations of land in the Grampian-Gariwerd ranges were made during the period 1872-84, and with these the nucleus began to form of what was to become the Grampians State Forest. In 1919 the Forests Commission was established by the Victorian government to control and manage state forests. In 1923 the Country Roads Board constructed the first tourist road through the northern Grampians.

The first efforts to manage and protect art sites in the Grampians date from 1929 when members of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria, and the Anthropological Society of Victoria, visited Billimina Shelter with the intention of obtaining tracings for a model of the site. This was to be displayed at an 'Exhibition of Aboriginal Art' planned to be staged at the National Museum of Victoria in July of that year. When they returned to Melbourne they announced they would approach the Victorian government to provide funds to protect the paintings at three sites; they proposed to enclose the paintings with strong wire-netting as was done with similar relics in New Zealand.

The Billimina site had been public knowledge since the 1870s when shepherds visited the site and wrote their names over the art using charcoal. When Mathew recorded the site in 1896 the graffiti made his task difficult. No action had been taken by the relevant government authority until this request in 1929. This inactivity reflected prevailing community attitudes to Aboriginal cultural heritage. The matter was delayed for eight years, however, because the Forests Commission was reluctant to get involved in site management and protection, largely due to doubts some local foresters held about the authenticity of the motifs at one of the shelters.

Officers of the Stawell Forest District of the Forests Commission perceived that they did not have the staff, the equipment, or the expertise to undertake the required site works; also they were reluctant to be involved at the site they considered had been painted by two young non-indigenous girls, and thus was not an indigenous site. The position of the Forests Commission was reactive, it did not proceed from a clearly stated policy of site protection or management. This position continued as further sites were found and their locations became public knowledge. In relation to all ten sites in and around the Grampians, the Forests Commission was approached in every instance to undertake the work of erecting protective screens.

In 1964, Aldo Massola¹¹, as Curator of Anthropology at the National Museum of Victoria, prepared a paper entitled 'Aboriginal Relics in Victoria' for Forests Commission staff. He noted that, to combat vandalism, it had been found necessary to withhold as much information as was possible about the locations of the painted shelters, and to have them protected by a strong wire-netting enclosure. He reported that a visitors' book had been placed at Bunjils Shelter with 'great success'.

In 1969, the National Museum of Victoria, which by that time had become responsible for administering Aboriginal sites in Victoria, outlined a Bill to make provision for the Conservation of Archaeological Sites and Aboriginal Relics. The impetus for this had been the passage of the South Australian *Aboriginal and Historic Relics Preservation Act 1965*. In 1972, the Victorian parliament passed the *Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act*, which was concerned with the protection and preservation of archaeological sites and portable 'relics' (stone tools, spears, shields etc.) The following year the Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Office was established. The Aboriginal community of Victoria was not consulted in the outlining process, and the legislation was passed on the mistaken assumption that Victoria's Aboriginal population had been dispossessed of their cultural heritage and no longer maintained links with traditional cultural areas.

The Relics Office developed a resource policy in the form of seven priorities: data collection by implementing a site register system; determining significance of archaeological sites; surveys of areas considered likely to be affected by future development; salvage work and environmental assessments; surveillance and protection of archaeological sites; an educational programme; and Aboriginal involvement. An archaeologist, Dr Peter JF Coutts, was appointed 'Curator of Archaeology' and 'State Archaeologist'. In

1975, the Relics Office was restructured and became part of the Ministry of Conservation and became known as the 'Victoria Archaeological Survey' (VAS).

In 1972, a dichotomy of responsibility between the Forests Commission and the Relics Office/Victoria Archaeological Survey emerged. Matters relating to painted sites, such as a request from an academic in 1974 to have Billimina repainted, was seen by the Forests Commission to be the responsibility of the Relics Office. The academic's request to have the grille at the site modified so that it enclosed all the motifs at Billimina, was perceived to be the responsibility of the Commission, although the consideration of the Relics Office was welcomed.

In 1974, M Lorblanchet, a rock art specialist from France, who was employed at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, in Canberra, as a research consultant, undertook comprehensive documentation of twenty sites in the Grampians.¹² The purpose of his study was to document deterioration agents so that initial protection measures could commence; to establish an intensive research programme; and to initiate research into suitable recording methods for Grampian sites.

Lorblanchet recommended the following conservation programme: in the immediate future: clearing of vegetation; cleaning of shelter floors; archaeological test excavations, and covering shelter floors with clean sand; modification and replacement of grilles. In the near future (1975-76): a very intensive study of Billimina; the study of erosion phenomena, and the determination of new protective measures for the site. Later in the future (from 1976): intensive recording of all Grampian sites and new protection measures; a reorganisation of tourism through the concentration of visitation in only three shelters: Billimina, Bunjils, and Manja. Tourism at other sites should only take place in the company of guides. With regard to interpretation, Lorblanchet suggested that these sites could be served by three information centres.

Many of Lorblanchet's recommendations were implemented. For example, the 'Victorian Rock Art Survey Project' commenced in 1980, and continued until 1986, supervised by the Victoria Archaeological Survey, and funded by the Australian Heritage Commission. The project had the following goals:

- to survey known rock art sites in Victoria;
- to record as many known art sites as possible by means of general sketches, drawings, plans, sections and photography, both in black and white, and colour;
- to provide an assessment of the importance of the recorded sites;
- to provide an assessment of the condition of each site and an assessment of what factors currently threaten the site, or may do so in the future;
- to provide recommendations on how the sites could be best preserved in respect to a) physical protection, b) future land status, c) future management; and
- to provide a list recommending the priority in which sites should be recorded in detail.

In 1984, Stewart Simmons, of the Site Management Unit of VAS, formulated a management checklist which enabled assessment of site access; car parking facilities; pathways; and site and environs: grille, field viewing area, and interpretation.

The Grampians National Park was declared in 1984. The management plan clearly differentiated the roles of VAS, and Conservation Forests and Lands (CFL) with regard to site management: 'VAS is responsible for identifying, researching, documenting and providing management advice for Aboriginal sites in the Park. The [Horsham] Region [of CFL] is responsible for the management of the sites'. The working rule of thumb was that VAS looked after what was within the grille, and CFL looked after the area external to the grille.

In 1984, a meeting was held in Halls Gap to enable Aboriginal input into and involvement with planning of tourism and other developments specific to Aboriginal interests in the National Park. An interim committee was formed until an Advisory Committee was established, with terms of reference that included decisions

relating to the siting of a proposed Aboriginal cultural centre. In 1986, the committee adopted the name Brambuk, after the two Bram brothers, ancestral heroes who were responsible for the creation and naming of much of the Grampians-Gariwerd landscape. In 1990, the Brambuk Living Cultural Centre was formally opened, and an Aboriginal cultural site management officer commenced employment.

In 1990, VAS staged a Grampians rock art management workshop in Halls Gap. It was the opinion of staff at VAS that *ad hoc* decisions had plagued the management of art sites and associated research for the previous fifteen years or so, which had left a legacy of partly completed site works and inefficiently expended funds. Although some extremely valuable research had been undertaken, and a variety of strategies applied, coherent strategy to achieve long-term management goals was lacking. A reactive, or even reluctant, management approach had resulted from the interplay of these significant factors: the attitude of the former Forests Commission to management of cultural heritage; the effect of a settling-in period from when National Parks took management control of the area in 1984; and an imprecise demarcation of responsibility and lack of communication between the former Department of CFL and VAS. The condition of the public art sites had degenerated to such a state that they were an embarrassment: access roads and walking tracks to some sites were severely eroded; older grilles were dilapidated and required maintenance; and there was a general lack of signposting and interpretation.

At the 1990 workshop, participants included representatives from Brambuk Incorporated (the responsible Aboriginal organisation), the Victorian Tourism Commission, VAS, and the Department of Conservation and Environment (DCE). The general aims of the workshop were to clarify the roles and responsibilities of primary management agencies and interest groups; to develop a common understanding of management requirements of art sites open to the general public; and to consider the future of art sites given increased visitation. Specific objectives were: to discuss site-specific management problems, and future management problems; to develop a list of priorities for works to be undertaken; and to place a time-frame on proposed works. General recommendations that resulted from the workshop included the formation of a Grampians Aboriginal Sites Working Group; installation of visitors books at all public art sites; investigation of longer-term options for the presentation of the public sites; and the development of new signage.

Two related factors (appear to have) influenced decisions made at the workshop. The first was the recent growth in cultural tourism in Victoria; the second, the new policy of the Victorian Tourism Commission to promote visitation at Aboriginal sites. These had resulted in the promotion of the Grampian sites. The workshop participants decided that unless visitor amenities equalled visitor expectations, public dissatisfaction was considered inevitable, and incidents of unappreciative behaviour, such as graffiti, were more likely. A further factor that called for a reassessment of site management was the active involvement of the Aboriginal communities in the management of their heritage.

The outcome of the workshop with regard to site management responsibility was as follows: the role of Brambuk was to be advisory; it would advise the Horsham Region of DCE of the wishes of the Aboriginal community. Brambuk was also to take a lead role in on-site management by advising the Horsham Region of intervention required at specific sites and general interpretive needs. A Brambuk representative would supervise site works. The role of VAS was to advise DCE on management of cultural sites. All site works were to be the primary responsibility of DCE.

2.1 Site recordings

The first recording of painted motifs in the Gariwerd mountains was published in 1897 by John Mathew.¹³ Coutts and Lorblanchet¹⁴ regard this to be not only the first recording of a Victorian art site, but one of the first extensive studies of Australian rock pictures.

In 1976, Lorblanchet recorded Billimina. Gunn¹⁵ considered the standing of this recording surpassed those previously published in Victoria, and that it was equalled by few elsewhere in Australia; however when it was eventually published in 1982¹⁶ much of its impact was lost, because the standard of Australian recording had improved considerably between 1976 and 1982.

Of the ten public sites in the Grampians region, detailed recordings have been published for only seven.

2.2 Authentication: indigenous or non-indigenous origin?

In the Grampians/Gariwerd region the authenticity of motifs at four sites has been questioned by the general public and/or archaeologists: Manja, Bunjils, Ngamadjidj, and Mugadgadjin. One opponent of the efforts of the Victorian Tourism Commission and Brambuk Incorporated to restore indigenous place names, (absurdly) claimed in a letter of protest to the VTC in 1990, that all the art in the Grampians had been painted by a French artist in the mid-1850s after the painter had seen central Australian paintings.

Where the authenticity of a motif is questioned, it might be authenticated by comparison with other known authentic markings using visual parameters such as style, appearance, and context. A second technique may be by dating organic materials mixed with or contained within paints. Another technique is pigment analysis, a fundamental assumption of which is that Aboriginal peoples used traditional ochres and non-Aboriginal peoples used non-indigenous paints. Caution is needed, however, as Aboriginal peoples could have used non-Aboriginal pigments and vice versa.

Since Bunjils Shelter was first reported in 1957, its authenticity has been questioned; the motifs of Bunjil, the creator spirit, and the two dogs are 'fakes', painted by non-Aborigines. Massola¹⁷ considered the paintings to be of Aboriginal origin; however he conceded that the figure of Bunjil did not appear to be genuine. In 1979 (on the basis of pigment analysis that has since been criticised¹⁸), Coutts became convinced that the paintings at the shelter were inauthentic, and VAS was prepared to produce signs to be placed at the site declaring the paintings were not of Aboriginal origin. Some time during 1979 or 1980, the site was struck from the VAS site register. Despite the fact that, in late 1981, scanning electron microscopy (SEM) analysis had confirmed the indigenous origin of the site, it was not restored to the VAS register until 1983. A study of the management history of Bunjils Shelter by Clark,¹⁹ has removed doubts about the origin of the site when it was shown that although Howitt had been informed of the existence of two dogs by his indigenous informant in 1883/84, in his 1904 publication he chose to state that the site contained the figure of 'Bunjil and his dog'. It would appear that this apparent conflict had formed the basis of local speculation that some of the painting had been done by Europeans.

2.2.1 Pigment analysis

Pigment analyses have been undertaken at three of the ten sites: Bunjils, Mugadgadjin, and Ngamadjidj. McConnell²⁰ has been highly critical of the sampling and analytical history. She concluded that inappropriate analytical techniques were used; that these had generated unsatisfactory results; and that sampling was often unnecessary.

2.2.2 Testing of floor deposits

Archaeological testing of floor deposits has been done at nine sites. These radio-carbon determinations are among those that have been reported:

Mugadgadjin: 3330 ± 100 BP²¹

Billimina: 2940 ± 80 BP²²

2.3 Graffiti and defacements

The occurrence of graffiti at sites in the Grampians was first noted in 1894 by Ingram who stated that in the early 1870s shearers working at Glenisla station visited Billimina and wrote their names over the paintings using charcoal.²³ Ingram also described the tradition of shearers at Glenisla of erecting temporary platforms to enable heights of seven to ten metres to be reached. Conole²⁴ considered this premeditated approach to graffiti reflected an entirely different view to that seen in modern efforts at defacing sites. When Mathew recorded Billimina in 1896, the charcoal graffiti was so prolific that the paintings were almost obliterated and he had considerable difficulty identifying them.

The earliest dated graffiti in the sites includes Ngamadjidj ('1903'), Bunjils ('1911'), Mugadgadjin ('1922'), Manja ('1928'), and Larngibunja ('1942').

The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria tried, in 1929, to protect three sites from graffitists. Unfortunately, some of the first grilles erected at sites by the Forest Commission did not encompass every motif at particular sites. At Billimina, for example, about ten percent of the motifs were not protected. In these instances, the grilles displaced graffiti to their perimeters, resulting in obliteration of unprotected paintings.

In 1980, two youths from Hamilton, to the south of the Grampians/Gariwerd, vandalised Jananginj Njaui. They were subsequently apprehended and charged under the 1972 *Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act*. The prosecution was seen as a test case since there was some possibility that loopholes in the Act could see a prosecution fail. The case was heard in the Hamilton Magistrates Court in 1981, and the convictions became the first under the 1972 Act relating to the defacement and desecration of Aboriginal rock art in Victoria.

The problems of graffiti were not seriously addressed until Lorblanchet's²⁵ assessment. In 1986, a variety of techniques of graffiti removal were tested in areas where neither the treatment nor its possible failure would constitute a threat to the management of sites. In 1987, Hough and Conole made an assessment of graffiti at sites in the Grampians;²⁶ they reported: media eg. spray paint, charcoal, felt-tip pens; the nature of the graffiti eg. names, political comments; an estimate of the number of graffiti; environmental and management effects on graffiti, eg. presence or absence of grilles, distance from road. They noted that the graffiti consisted predominantly of drawings made either in charcoal or a soft stone. In cases where hard stones were used, scratching of the rock surface had occurred; chalk, wax crayon and felt-tip pen usage was minor, and spray paint was seen at only two sites. The graffiti consisted predominantly of names and to a lesser extent figures and symbols which resembled motifs; political comments and obscenities were rare.

2.4 Management plans and recommendations

The first detailed management plan, done by Lorblanchet²⁷, included recommendations for site works, such as vegetation clearance and modification of grilles; research into the deterioration of the art, such as placing an apparatus to register climatic variations in shelters and chemical analysis of microscopic vegetals; and cultural tourism, such as the closure of certain sites to uncontrolled visitation.

Between 1975 and 1991 there was approximately eight sets of recommendations for site management and interventions.²⁸ In many respects, each repeats previous recommendations and they all discuss sites in a vacuum. For example, the issue of closure of certain sites was first mooted by Lorblanchet in 1975, and the need for information sheets at sites and improved signage were recommended repeatedly.

2.4.1 Site visitation surveys

From 1984 until 1987, vehicle counts, using an induction loop traffic counter, were made at various car park entrances and access roads to seven sites in the National Park. During Easter 1985, CFL surveyed visitors' access to information and eight major topics on which they wished to obtain information; Aboriginal culture/paintings received a middle-order ranking.

Gale and Gillen²⁹ undertook a study of visitor use of nine sites in 1987. Managed by VAS, the study was funded by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies under its Rock Art Protection Program. The methods used included on-site observation and a visitor questionnaire. The survey revealed that most visitors wanted more information about the sites, including techniques used, age of the motifs, and their meaning and significance.

2.5 Intervention works

The purpose of this section in the checklist is to document intervention work that has taken place at sites. Only implemented site works are discussed here; documentation of site works was found to be very poor, and they are mentioned, it is rarely in detail.

2.5.1 Protective measures: grilles

Since 1937, the Department of Conservation and Environment (formerly FCV and CFL) has undertaken four major fencing programmes: in 1937 (three sites), 1965-66 (six sites), 1976-77 (five sites), and 1984 (six sites).

The 1937 grilles were not implemented with adequate understanding of the extent of the motifs and consequently they did not fully enclose all motifs. This first protective measure was modelled on protective practises employed in New Zealand.

The documentation concerning early intervention is very poor, and with some sites, such as Ngamadjidj and Larngibunja, our knowledge practically non-existent. People involved with the fencing programmes that have taken place since the early 1960s are a useful source of information that should be tapped. It may still be possible to gather information about the 1937 installations.

2.5.2 Protective measures: stabilisation works

Lorblanchet³⁰ recommended that two sites be excavated, then covered with a layer of clean sand to inhibit dust pollution and to protect occupation deposits. In 1976, Billimina and Mugadgadjin were excavated and the deposits were sealed with paving stones. In 1984, chain board walks were installed at Jananginj Njau and Manja shelters.

2.5.3 Protective measures: conservation

Lorblanchet's recommendation that air temperature and humidity be monitored led, in early 1977, to the purchase of six French thermo-hygrographs funded by the National Estate Grants Program. The project was supervised by the VAS geologist. Monitoring ceased in 1985. Hough³¹ considered the project was a failure, and he was critical of the fact that much of the theoretical basis of rock art conservation stemmed from the French experience of conservation in deep limestone caves. He considered it simplistic to assume that an approach developed for caves could be used to address problems found in open shelters formed from a different rock type.

In 1983, sediment traps were installed in six shelters in an attempt to estimate the rate of destruction of surfaces in shelters containing rock art. Hough and McConnell³² found that areas undergoing granular disintegration, were retreating comparatively quickly, at approximately ten millimetres each one hundred years.

2.5.3.1 Repainting art sites

The question of repainting Grampian art sites has surfaced in the history of site management on at least three occasions: in 1972 from a local field naturalist; in 1974 from a Monash University lecturer in psychology; and in 1980 from a member of the Portland Aboriginal community. In the latter instance, the director of VAS responded that the general attitude throughout Australia was that repainting should not occur unless there were direct descendants of the original artists who knew and understood the paintings and who could still paint.

2.5.4 Graffiti obliteration and removal

The earliest record of graffiti removal at an art site in the Grampians is in 1929 when Barrett, Kenyon, Mitchell and Leeson removed charcoal graffiti that had accumulated at Billimina since the 1870s. During the 1960s, the Stawell Field Naturalists Club is known to have removed graffiti at Billimina by washing the rock face.

After the Bunjil site had been vandalised in 1980 (see above), the Stawell Shire attempted to 'clean' the site by spraying rectangles of black paint over the graffiti, thus obliterating it. A small red human figure outside the protective grille received a coat of spray paint.

Painted graffiti have been removed at various sites on several occasions: at Bunjils (1981, 1988, 1989), and Manja and Larngibunja (1989). Efforts have been made to obscure the scratches at Jananginj Njai on at least two occasions in 1980 and 1986.

2.5.5 Cleaning of rock face

In 1975, Lorblanchet recommended the cleaning of rock faces of all the sites, with the exception of Bunjils where destruction of lichens had to be avoided because some of the paintings covered fossilised lichens. He recommended that the walls be cleaned by wiping off the dust with a dry, soft, brush or by using a vacuum cleaner powered by a portable generator. Other than at Billimina in the 1960s, the cleaning of rock faces of sites is not documented.

2.5.6 Rubbish and vegetation removal

Lorblanchet recommended the clearance of all undergrowth for distances from between 15 to 40 metres in front of the rock sites. In addition, he recommended that the vegetation at the foot of the painted surfaces, inside the grilles, and thickets and small trees growing in the cracks of the walls be destroyed. While it appears to be undocumented, it seems that vegetation was cleared when grilles were installed and replaced or modified.

2.5.7 Installation of interpretive material *in situ*

The history of the development and installation of interpretive signs in the public art sites in the Grampians/Gariwerd is poorly documented and there are many gaps in the record. A proposal made by Massola in 1964, to paint site names at each site in a visible, yet 'non-vandalic', manner for the information of bushwalkers who might happen to stumble upon unmanaged sites, never eventuated.

In 1971, the Forests Commission installed interpretive signs in the form of small laminated cardboard sheets in most of the sites. The text was supplied by Massola.

New signage was installed at Billimina in 1976 by the Relics Office which had some concerns about the information presented in the FCV/Massola sign. The remaining FCV/Massola signage was removed in 1981.

In 1989, signs were installed, but were removed by Brambuk because of general dissatisfaction with their layout and content. New signage was installed in 1989 but this too was subsequently removed by Brambuk. New text was prepared and replacement signs were installed *in situ* in most sites in 1991.

The provision of walking tracks, car parking areas, and picnic facilities at the ten sites is poorly documented. Presumably walking tracks or paths of some basic standard were provided or upgraded at sites when protective works were first undertaken.

2.6 Interpretation

When Billimina was 'discovered' by Europeans in the late 1850s, Djab wurrung and Jardwadjali clans had been depopulated by a combination of introduced diseases, massacres, and the general upheaval that resulted from European invasion of their lands.³³ Despite dispossession of their lands, the older people still retained a considerable body of knowledge of their cultural heritage. Nevertheless, with the exception of Aboriginal interpretation of Bunjils and Billimina, we do not know the original meanings or the significance of the paintings in the Grampians-Gariwerd region.

In 1988, Hough³⁴ produced a discussion paper for VAS in which he noted that interpretation of Victoria's indigenous cultural heritage had been undertaken by VAS, the Victorian Tourism Commission, Conservation Forests and Lands, numerous community and private interest groups, and individuals. Hough noted that some site interpretation in the past had been counter-productive to site protection, factually incorrect and in some cases prejudiced. He considered it essential that VAS play a major co-ordinating role in the interpretation of Victorian cultural sites; he argued that, as interpretation impacts on sites, VAS, as the

site protection agency, should control interpretation. Hough outlined the following process: decide what message VAS wanted to convey; identify sites which best conveyed this message; select sites for tourism development, prepare a management plan for each site, install protective measures to minimise visitor impact, install interpretive and visitor facilities, and continually monitor sites that are open to the public.

2.6.1 In publications

Gunn³⁵ has noted that the lack of any interpretive framework for the paintings in the Grampians/Gariwerd region has opened the way for speculative interpretation and that while most can be readily dismissed (such as that of Halls³⁶), some has been more enduring. For example, Barrett³⁷ interpreted the elongated human figures at Larngebunja as hardhead fish found in adjacent streams, and for the next forty or so years the site was known as 'Cave of Fishes'. Gunn is particularly critical of the views/publications of Massola, former Curator of Anthropology at the Museum of Victoria, considering his theories untenable and that they should not be disseminated.

The books by Coutts and Lorblanchet³⁸ and Gunn^{39,40} are the only available texts on Grampians rock paintings; neither of these were designed for the tourist market.

2.6.2 Information sheets and tourist guides

Lorblanchet noted that some of the farms close to art sites benefited from rock art tourism. For example, a small farm on the track to Ngamadjidj sold drinks to tourists, and the owner of Glenisla Homestead, which operated as a 'guest house', had published a brochure to attract tourism which included a photograph of Manja shelter, and promoted the fact that art sites were within a twenty-minute drive from the homestead.

The operator of Glenisla organised tours for guests at his homestead. Lorblanchet considered this to be an ideal form of tourism activity, because it tended to ensure the protection of the sites and enabled tourists to receive information and interpretation. In Lorblanchet's schema, all but three of the ten public sites would be closed to visitors unless they were accompanied by a tour guide. He considered that being a tour guide should be a full-time occupation, and that at least one Aboriginal person could be so employed in the Grampians.

A local forester with the Forests Commission was amazed by Lorblanchet's suggestion that planned tourism be controlled by private individuals. He noted that the two individuals who guided groups to sites were motivated by reasons other than scientific interest.

The Stawell and Grampians Tourist Association in the 1970s first produced a tourist guide, entitled 'Stawell and Grampians Tourist Guide', that promoted Grampians art sites as attractions. In 1975, the Town of Stawell in conjunction with the Stawell and Grampians Tourist and Promotion Advisory Council produced a foolscap information sheet entitled 'Bunjils Shelter in the Black Range near Stawell'. In 1986, the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands published a tourist map that located art sites and provided a short introduction to Aboriginal heritage of the Grampians National Park. In 1990, fliers discussing art sites in the northern and southern Grampians were produced by Brambuk. The Victorian Tourism Commission in 1991 released a brochure, entitled 'The Grampians - Mountains of Fun', which mentioned art sites.

2.6.3 Proposals for an interpretive centre

Lorblanchet had recommended that interpretive centres be constructed near three sites: Bunjils, Billimina, and Ngamadjidj. The Relics Office supported the spirit of the proposal but not its scale, and sought support from the Forests Commission to construct full-scale facsimiles of the three sites and place them in one proposed centre near the picnic ground at Billimina. The project had several names, including 'Grampians Facsimile Project', 'Grampians Aboriginal Archaeological Museum', and 'Grampians Interpretive Centre'.

In 1975, an application was submitted to the National Estate Grants Program seeking funds for the facsimile project. The project was seen as an attempt at introducing 'planned tourism' into the Grampians, revitalising the art for the general public, and providing more protection for the sites. The submission was

rejected owing to lack of funds and the project lapsed. The project was reactivated the following year when the Relics Office was restructured, but again lapsed through lack of funding commitment.

In 1981, the Publics Works Department and the Ministry for Conservation produced a feasibility report and design proposal for an Aboriginal art museum at Halls Gap. The construction of the museum was seen as an opportunity to house reproductions of select rock shelters for research purposes. Six full-scale replicas were to be housed in the museum, along with dioramas and an exhibition space for audio-visual displays.

The following year, the facsimile project was reactivated when the Tourist Development Committee of the Ministry for Conservation expressed an interest in the project. In August 1983, VAS suggested that the 'Grampians Interpretive Centre' be incorporated into Victoria's sesqui-centenary year. In May 1984, the Ministry for Tourism proposed establishing an 'Aboriginal Art Museum' in the Grampians as part of the Victorian Tourism Strategy Plan. In October 1984, the 'Grampians Aboriginal Interpretive and Culture Centre Committee' was formed. The committee included representatives from western Victorian Aboriginal communities. In 1985, the Victorian government committed one million dollars to build the interpretive centre in the Grampians National Park. In May 1985, the Grampians Aboriginal Interpretive and Culture Centre Committee resolved that Aboriginal membership of the committee should be on the basis of ties and association with the Grampians area. In October 1986, the committee resolved to name the cultural centre the 'Brambuk Living Cultural Centre'. When the centre was officially opened in December 1990, it was in many respects the fulfilment of Lorblanchet's recommendation.

2.6.4 Information boards

Only two sites have had information boards erected at them: Bunjils and Billimina.

2.6.5 Replication of the art

The proposal to produce facsimiles of painted motifs, was largely a response to the moral and philosophical arguments against restoring the paintings. In 1975, those involved with Stawell's proposed 'Mini World tourist project' - a visitor attraction designed to highlight significant icons from around the world, such as the Great Pyramids of Egypt - corresponded with the Museum of Victoria about their planned Aboriginal exhibit. It was their intention that the Aboriginal exhibit be representative of the 'former Aboriginal occupation' in the Stawell district, and they considered that the most appropriate form was a replica of the nearby Bunjils Shelter. They argued that a replica in their visitor attraction would minimise the impact of tourism on the original. Bunjils Shelter was eventually replicated and incorporated into the 'world in miniature' project.

2.6.6 Tourism

The first serious attempt to address rock art tourism in the Grampians in a planned and systematic way was Lorblanchet's recommendation for a re-organisation of site-oriented tourism. He considered this could be achieved by suspending unplanned tourism access to Manja, Larngibunja, Gunangidura, Mugadgadjin and Burrunj shelters. He recommended the removal of all signage that indicated the location of these sites. Tourism should be concentrated at three sites: Bunjils, Billimina, and Ngamadjidj, and visits to other sites would be possible only in tour groups lead by guides.

The 1990 Grampians rock art workshop recommended that four sites (Billimina, Bunjils, Gulgurn Manja, and Ngamadjidj) be presented as primary focus sites for tourism. Jananginj Njau and Larngibunja were considered unsuitable for display. Manja and Gunangidura were considered 'secondary presentation sites', and as the quality of the primary focus sites improved, these two sites were to be gradually demoted. Another recommendation that came out of the 1990 workshop was the exploration of Brambuk-led tours of sites.

3.0 CHRONOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENTS

This section is designed to include a chronological listing of major developments relevant to the management history of the site(s) in question.

CONCLUSION

This paper has presented a framework for detailing the management history of indigenous rock painting sites. Examples have been selected primarily from the management histories of two art sites in the Grampians; Billimina and Bunjils. This discussion was selective and by no means exhaustive. The framework was developed from an in-depth study of the management history of sites in the Grampians-Gariwerd mountains. In relation to other sites, some of these categories may not be relevant, just as there may be categories peculiar to other sites that were not relevant to the Gariwerd examples.

Boyd and Ward⁴¹ have shown that the complexity of management structures can undermine effective site management and lead to a reduction in site quality for visitors. They argue that on-site management appears to be one of the major sources of tension about particular sites, often resulting from poor quality, non-responsive and inflexible management. They noted the growing advocacy for more highly organised and development structures such as the implementation of forward planning, and inbuilt and continuous monitoring. The checklist presented in this paper is capable of becoming a management tool that enables continuous monitoring of site management and intervention. It is hoped that it will become a necessary part of responsible tourism practices and contribute to the management of resources in ways that achieve optimum benefits for the different communities of interest.⁴²

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