

1 11-02. Archaeology Manager Heritage Property.

2

3 Q1. Okay. I work at Place X. I'm the Archaeology Manager so I'm essentially in  
4 charge of coordinating all the archaeological activities on the site, whether that's  
5 research or monitoring activities for works and conservation interventions,  
6 assisting with the writing of management plans, managing the archaeological  
7 collections, and making available the results of archaeological research to as  
8 wide a public as possible. At least that's the intention.

9

10 Q2. We're a government business enterprise, so it's semi government. It's a  
11 business enterprise set up and wholly government owned. [Does that mean it  
12 has to be self-funding?]. No. Up until now it gets a [medium term] grant from the  
13 state government and I think we're supposed to break even. I don't think it's  
14 intended that we make a profit. I think it's supposed to be revenue neutral.

15

16 Q3. It would be around the 100 mark. It varies seasonally – obviously more in the  
17 summer when the visitor numbers are higher. That one hundred includes  
18 everyone from food and beverage operators, guides.

19

20 Q4. There are two dedicated positions (involving archaeology) [...] So there are  
21 two of us whose work is specifically involved with archaeology but there are  
22 several others on staff with backgrounds in archaeology. [Sounds like you are in  
23 a minority?]. In terms of the professional group. A lot of the staff at [Place X] are  
24 in food and beverage, buildings maintenance, gardens and grounds, tourism  
25 operations, so the core staff of what you might consider to be the normal  
26 heritage professionals we are probably about even with the buildings  
27 conservators, the gardens managers, the collections specialist and the  
28 interpretation staff. So we're probably about even against the other professional  
29 staff.

30

31 Q5. Comparatively we'd be one of the largest. Our permanent staff complement is  
32 unusually high for a heritage site. [So it's like a 'heritage site'?]. Well we actually  
33 manage three now. I don't know what the other comparable site would be.  
34 [Places A, B, C] maybe? [More like a house museum maybe? Like [historic house  
35 X] or something – I'm not sure..].

36 Q6. Located in [state X].

37 Q7. People I communicate with are located mainly in [state X – where the place  
38 is] on site.

39 Q8. Communication is mostly face to face, on-site and with visitors who come to  
40 us.

41 Q9. In general terms (if possible to easily answer) where do most of your visitors  
42 come from? Don't have the figures but most of them would probably be  
43 Australian. Following that, probably the largest group of visitors would probably  
44 be from Asia mainly Japan, increasing numbers from China and increasing  
45 numbers from India. Q9. Involved with all aspects but most important are  
46 heritage conservation, travel or tourism and heritage management.

47

48 Q10. Me personally would be research and heritage management as the main  
49 ones.

50 Q11. Just trying to think. It's kind of difficult because on a professional basis it's  
51 kind of all the time within the organization. So part of my role is to look after the  
52 archaeological agenda and that affects pretty much everything [we] do,  
53 especially as our legislation requires us to have a view to the archaeology as well.  
54 It's one of the few pieces of legislation in Australia that's like that. So in terms of  
55 management the archaeological view is ever present. In terms of communicating  
56 a kind of broader knowledge of archaeology to a wider public personally for me  
57 that would probably be 'Sometimes'. Most of the face to face interaction would be  
58 done by the other archaeological staff member. That's only partly to do with the  
59 difference in role. At the moment it's more to do with the fact that I'm a relatively  
60 new staff member so once I become more familiar with the site my role in  
61 communication will probably get greater, once I become more familiar with the  
62 issues.

63  
64 Q12. Yes we have a media marketing manager who operates as the interface, or  
65 usually, between us and various media outlets. But that's really in terms of  
66 organizational stuff. When it comes to the nitty gritty it's pretty much whichever  
67 film crew turns up not us and them. It depends how you read the question. In  
68 terms of 'Do they teach us how to interact with the media?' - no - 'Do they  
69 organize media stuff?' - yes. [Laughs]. That's generally how it works.  
70 Occasionally you'll get media enquiries that you'll feed back through the  
71 marketing office. But things like radio interviews, film crews they're generally  
72 organized by the marketing manager then it's up to us to work directly with  
73 them.

74  
75 Q13. Formal qualifications no.

76  
77 Q14. Other experience a lot. Ten years university teaching and then about 14-15  
78 years 'in service training' with various people mostly in [region X].  
79

80 Q15. Yes we do. We have an Interpretation Manager who has a background in  
81 archaeology. Not that I don't think that's a requirement of the position, just so  
82 happens that the incumbent is an archaeologist with [formal qualifications] in  
83 Archaeology. And we have an Education Officer who is an ex-teacher and they  
84 handle a whole range of educational activities and are currently looking at how  
85 [the organization] can assist in training teachers in terms of the national  
86 curriculum. So that's a very active part of the organization. There also has been  
87 to date quite an educational focus for some of the [special archaeological  
88 education programmes] and they were designed by the educational specialist  
89 with the archaeologists and run jointly as well. [Are they aimed at university  
90 and/or school students?]. Well there's a range. The [archaeology education  
91 programmes] that ran up until this year was targeted at undergraduates and that  
92 was designed and run entirely by the archaeologists. And then there was a public  
93 archaeology programme and a children's archaeology programme and the  
94 children's archaeology programme was the one that was jointly planned and run  
95 with the educational specialist. [Sounds like there's quite a bit of professional  
96 emphasis on that area of your work]  
97

98 Q17-18. I've been involved with two film crews since I've been there. One was  
99 with [a UK media producer] who was doing a series on [aspects of Australian  
100 history] and they spent I think three days or two days [in our area]. So that was a  
101 fairly major event. Also involved staff from X University. And then the second  
102 film crew was from the ABC doing a short segment for the X Programme. So that  
103 was just a single day event. [Any comments on the positive aspects of that?  
104 And/or]. I guess in terms of the site it is.. as long as you can.. it is a vehicle for  
105 reaching a wider public. And in both instances I think it was quite good in that  
106 one – the ABC [programme] - had a greater focus on archaeology. In both  
107 instances the focus was on a theme rather than on the discipline. So I find that  
108 the most useful way of approaching it. Like the ABC [programme] were looking  
109 at the origins and history of tourism at [place X] so there was some  
110 archaeological material that spoke to that but there was also museum collections  
111 and historic documents.

112  
113 The [other] film actually used very little in the way of archaeological material but  
114 it was again a themed event so. I'm not sure given current exposure of  
115 archaeology on television we actually need to foreground the discipline any  
116 more. What I think we need to be concentrating on now is what the discipline  
117 has contributed. And I think this is where [our public education programme] is  
118 now changing. We don't have to justify our own existence any more. We don't  
119 have to tell people 'Well archaeology does this or that'. What I think we need to  
120 be doing is actually showing what new information is generated and how that  
121 fits into a much larger story. [So are you saying – which I think you were – that's  
122 it's not so much about the practice of archaeology and digging things up as more  
123 about the knowledge?]

124  
125 Yes I think so. It just seems to me that it's slightly apologetic to keep on harping  
126 on about 'Well archaeology is the method for doing this' and "It's really  
127 important "if you don't actually demonstrate why it's important. You don't see –  
128 if there's a programme about Architecture you don't have somebody spouting for  
129 half an hour on why Architecture is important or what the objectives of the  
130 discipline are. They talk about buildings. And it seems to me we've got to start  
131 putting some runs on the board in terms of well this is what the archaeological  
132 agenda has contributed to our knowledge about [place X] and the [historic  
133 theme] in this particular case. [Q. On that can I ask – do you think the push to  
134 emphasise your know 'This is how archaeologists dig a hole in the ground' has  
135 come from the media themselves or do you think it's something that  
136 archaeologists have pushed? I mean it's..]

137  
138 I think it's a bit of both and I think now the media kind of expect that there are  
139 going to be holes in the ground. You can understand why because it's visually  
140 kind of interesting and there's things going on and there's the excitement of  
141 finding stuff you know.. But it's not. A lot of the programmes are not about  
142 archaeology - they're about excavation – and that's a completely different thing  
143 and I'm a little bit worried that the message is now 'archaeology is digging holes  
144 in the ground to find stuff – end of story'. Whereas I think we could tell some  
145 really interesting stories without any holes in the ground at all. But I think we've  
146 been the victim of our own success to some extent. That visually very appealing

147 and very exciting thing about excavation is the easy story to tell because if you  
148 haven't got a story to tell you've still got things to show. It's like but 'Oh! Here's  
149 a..' (laughs..) the death mask of Agamemnon or "Here's a convict nail that  
150 nobody's touched for 150 years". That's got an appeal of its own but it's not  
151 really what we should be doing, I don't think. [SC – I'll move on in a minute – but  
152 do you think.. obviously these two shows were emphasis on history and the  
153 other one on some aspect of visiting the site and collecting. They weren't really  
154 focused on archaeology – is that right?]

155  
156 True. The X programme certainly wasn't. It was very much a broader exploration  
157 of [key historic themes of Australian history and heritage] And in fact we had  
158 very little input into that in terms of script. We didn't see the script before they  
159 came. Researcher Y from X University did have the script and they were the local  
160 expert, the local talent as they say (.. laughs). So we had very little input into  
161 what actually came across and certainly weren't given.. we were given very little  
162 information upfront about what they wanted to film, why they wanted to film it,  
163 how it fitted in with any particular kind of a story. Clearly a lot of the script was  
164 going to be done as background voiceover. So we never even got to clearly see  
165 that or hear that. So while we could control some of the images we couldn't  
166 necessarily control what was going to be said because that wasn't recorded on  
167 site.

168  
169 With the ABC they used the [X] archaeological excavations as kind of the lead in  
170 to the story because it just so happened that the excavations were partly sited on  
171 a early 20<sup>th</sup> century rubbish deposit which is associated with X becoming a  
172 tourist [place]. So there were some objects that spoke to the development of  
173 [Town B] you know the town after [place Y], but that was an entirely unscripted  
174 segment. So they came down with a very rough idea of what they wanted, but no  
175 script. So again we had very little control but for a different reason. It wasn't that  
176 we didn't see the script, it was there wasn't one. And it was.. going to be a three  
177 minute segment you know..[It's not worth it?.. is it? laughs. That's not very long is  
178 it?]

179  
180 Well. You don't want people to be giving the wrong message – but in a 3 minute  
181 segment – what is the message? So I guess one of the challenges and difficulties  
182 are the extent to which you can control what's going on given that the visuals  
183 and the sound can be completely separate things. So that even if you might be  
184 able to control the script on site that's not necessarily the sound that's going to  
185 come out in the piece. And I can't see any way in which you could have editorial  
186 control over the finished product. [Okay..]. Well you possibly could. [Yeah..if you  
187 made your own video but there you are]. Yes but in terms of an ABC programme  
188 – no. It's not going to happen. [No.]. Because if you want that level of editorial  
189 control they are going to say no – we'll go somewhere else. [I'm sure – that's  
190 alright, anyway...]

191  
192 Q19. Um. I think that it's both. The marketing manager is very active and he uses  
193 a whole suite of technologies to communicate with the public. There's a website,  
194 we're on Facebook, Twitter, there's a government intranet it's linked into [state  
195 tourism organization]. Increasingly now there are kind of joint press releases

196 and engagements on the basis of the new [...] heritage listing because we're part  
197 of a serial nomination. There's various things coming out under that. We  
198 probably seek out more than we get requests for, I think. And that happens on a  
199 daily basis.

200

201 Q21. Why are you involved in communicating archaeology? – just broadly.]  
202 Laughs... [Because it's part of your job? Prompting..]. Well it's part of my job and  
203 to some extent I play devil's advocate here – is because it's now a tradition. [A  
204 tradition?]. Well [the place] always had this focus on archaeology. A lot of the  
205 work's been run by archaeologists, the legislation requires that we look after the  
206 archaeology, and [we've] been at various times at the forefront of developing  
207 certain technologies and training and so on. So now it's almost become part of  
208 the accepted role – that's what we do. I think times have changed and that some  
209 of the role was that we traditionally had are no longer warranted. They've been  
210 taken up by other people. So.. yes.. [That's alright..]. I'm not sure that we think  
211 about it too much. That's a bit of a problem. Bit that's the view of a new boy on  
212 the block. I'm looking to move this now towards not communicating archaeology  
213 but to communicating the results of archaeology.

214

215 [What kinds of content about archaeology are involved -? I know that's too big a  
216 question..]. Mm. [But I mean is it like – presumably – the history of X and other  
217 aspects of the site or? On that level – that's all I'm..]. Um. Yeah I think there's kind  
218 of almost an equally one about the conduct of archaeology just as an enterprise,  
219 the methods, the techniques and it's often kind of site specific. A lot of the  
220 engagement with the public this year was around an excavation on the old [X].  
221 The main focus is on [themed] history but that doesn't preclude us looking at the  
222 [other aspects] of history. One of the areas that we don't communicate about is  
223 Aboriginal material. That's specifically excluded at the moment from our remit  
224 and that's the result of an agreement with [organization Z]. So how that's going  
225 to be done is yet to be worked out. It's say it's not a matter of urgency for the  
226 Aboriginal community at the moment.

227

228 Q23. [List of groups who you communicate with..]. TAFE – not yet. Unorthodox  
229 archaeologies – not yet. Aboriginal groups – not yet – there will come a time.  
230 Development companies – federal hotels – yes – smaller ones. Local Historical  
231 Societies.

232 Q24. General public.

233 [Qs. 25-7. Blends. SC explains the questions. What are the contexts/mode of your  
234 communication??] Work in all three. Expert role to educate others. We work with  
235 a lot of university students, secondary school students and that's a kind of more  
236 formal type of educational experience I suppose where you really are in an  
237 educational role.

238 The second one (Q26) is really about the management regime that we have so  
239 the managerial meetings or the development of planning documents or  
240 whatever. That will be a group of people. There'll be Architects, Historians,  
241 Water Engineers, there'll be Building Codes specialists, Landscape Managers and  
242 so on. Everybody's got a particular skill and it's a matter of reaching common  
243 ground. One example of that would be we're developing a management plan for  
244 the [X] site which has really complicated mixed values which involve vegetation

245 management, threatened species, coastal erosion, archaeological values,  
246 buildings, community values, fire management. There's a whole range of areas  
247 that require expert involvement and that's quite a dynamic and continuing set of  
248 meetings about how these things interact with each other.

249 The third one – probably is best when you are talking with people who really  
250 who have no idea. Certain sections of the general public but also some local  
251 community members some of whom have a very good understanding of  
252 archaeology, and some of whom not at all. Or there's a certain skewed perception  
253 about what it does. And that's partly a result of the fact that the visible part of  
254 archaeology at [place X] for a long time has been excavations, which have  
255 happened within a month to six weeks right in the middle of summer. And to  
256 many people really their only engagement with archaeology is some odd people  
257 digging holes in the ground. And that's what they think we do – that's all we do.  
258 Dig holes in the ground and get stuff, you know. So they might have an idea of  
259 what [place X] archaeology looks like but they don't necessarily have an idea of  
260 what archaeology is.

261 [This is a really hard question as well – you can either answer it for yourself or  
262 for the organization..]

263 Q28. How do you judge if you've been successful in your communication? [You're  
264 obviously doing a lot of different kinds of communication – this is probably a  
265 leading question – but, for example, does your organization keep visitor surveys  
266 etc?]. Yes, they're done regularly. So they're done both formally with a pro-active  
267 survey using standard survey templates, and there's a new one being devised at  
268 the moment. The previous ones have largely been devised by the tourism  
269 operators. They are now being revised with input from the heritage  
270 professionals. There's also a system of visitor comments. All visitor comments  
271 are circulated to managerial staff on a monthly basis and we get to see what  
272 people have appreciated and what they haven't. But then you tend to get – they  
273 tend to be overwhelmingly either really positive “You're doing a fabulous job –  
274 darling?” or terribly negative like “The coffee was burnt.” or “Why don't you have  
275 people in costume?” So do you get feedback on individual things? No.

276 In terms of communicating archaeology, the children's archaeology programme  
277 had a feedback system worked into it which was directed at both the children  
278 and the parents. But the fact that it was administered on site immediately after  
279 the activity – you tend to get positive comments rather than negative ones. So the  
280 mechanisms for judging effectiveness I think are quite difficult to achieve.

281 [SC – I guess that was me giving you leading question. I guess those  
282 questionnaire surveys are not just about the message of the archaeology but the  
283 visitor experience.. Do you have any comment about whether you feel – this is a  
284 hard question. How do you judge the effectiveness of your communication about  
285 archaeology?]. I haven't even thought about that yet. (Laughs..). [SC – That's  
286 okay..]

287 [SC – Yes – I think we both know about this as having a teaching background we  
288 both know how complicated this is – where other people who don't do very  
289 much teaching haven't got much experience, it's interesting they give straight  
290 snap answers X, Y, Z..]. Yes – I've no idea how you'd go in that kind of  
291 environment you know where you might have fifty people for 5 minutes and  
292 they move onto the next thing. I don't know how you'd do that.

293 [Okay – but also the circumstances make it difficult [to judge the effectiveness..]

294 [SC – okay – someone said they ‘Got a warm inner glow’ – laughs]. Really? It’s if I  
295 don’t hit them – when I stop swearing I know it’s been a success (laughs)  
296 Q30 + [beyond word-processing and email..what ICT do you use to communicate  
297 archaeology?]. Through the website would be the main one. In terms of  
298 communicating it to a reasonably general public we have a bit of a technical issue  
299 because we have limited bandwidth so the amount of stuff we can poke out from  
300 [the place] itself is relatively limited given that our connections also have to  
301 handle all the tourism operations stuff, bookings and the rest of it. Now that  
302 we’ve got a bit of a presence in [larger town nearby] that may improve.  
303 Okay. Digital technologies. We’re kind of on the verge now of a major collections  
304 project and part of the remit of that is to make raw data and grey-literature and  
305 so on available. We might have to worry about this bandwidth issue, but if needs  
306 be we will upload characterization sets and if people want all the data we will  
307 work out how to get it to them whether its on disk or whatever. [Okay – right..].  
308 But at the moment we don’t use..the only vehicle we have up at the moment in  
309 the website. [Do you have any on-site..are there any interactive? -  
310 interpretation]. Not specifically for archaeology – no. There are some in the  
311 overall interpretation on parts of the site there are touch screen technologies but  
312 they’re not really there to communicate archaeology. But that’s not to say they  
313 couldn’t be. And there are moves at the moment towards developing iPhone apps  
314 and so on which may have a significant archaeological component in that  
315 hopefully some of the material they use will come from archaeological work.  
316 [But that’s in the planning stages?]. Yes it’s partly in semi-development now  
317 [And do you use Social Media sites as part of your work?]. As part of my work –  
318 no. The organization does but I haven’t yet. [The organization uses? Facebook?..]  
319 Facebook, Twitter and I think we’re on YouTube as well.  
320 [What do you like about using computers in your work and what are some of the  
321 challenges? You’ve already mentioned the problem with the bandwidth..]  
322 Yes that’s an external one. There’s a whole set of problems with our digital  
323 technologies at the moment. I could give you a whole long list. We have a very  
324 curious mixture of digital and hard copy data which is very poorly catalogued. So  
325 access to our own resources is very difficult without physically having to go look  
326 for things. Take for example project information. There’s been [many]  
327 archaeological projects at [our site] in the last [several] years. That’s everything  
328 from large-scale excavations to tiny little holes in the ground. With the exception  
329 of the stuff from the last ten years none of that is currently accessible except by  
330 going and looking in cupboards and drawers and shelves and filing cabinets and  
331 old files. We have access to a whole range of digital technologies and software  
332 suites. Some of those are directed at management so we have an asset  
333 management system which is based around MapInfo and it’s a development of a  
334 National Parks system. As I say – it’s essentially for management so it holds a  
335 subset of the entire data that we have and which is useful for management. Then  
336 we’ve got a whole range of databases of various kinds which I’ve done an audit  
337 of. Nowhere in our documents or our documentation does it say why we have  
338 them. We have them but nobody has actually said why we have them. Most of the  
339 databases have swallowed information but have never been used to extract  
340 information, so they’ve almost become and end in themselves. So people have  
341 said ‘we need a database’. [Are these archaeological information?..]. Yes we have  
342 a major archaeological collections database where I would guess let’s say 10 to

343 20 % of the entire collection is catalogued, and catalogued very, very precisely  
344 with huge numbers of attributes. This means we have 90% of the collection  
345 which isn't accessible at all. None of the project documentation – or what people  
346 consider to be documentation but I would consider to be part of the collection,  
347 which is your notebooks, stratigraphic sheets, photographs all that kind of stuff.  
348 With few exceptions none of that is kind of available as an archive. So you can't  
349 go in and say 'give me all the information from this excavation or this  
350 intervention'. So we have a big project this year to a) to start to characterize all of  
351 these projects and to link those into the much broader [Y] collection which  
352 involves books, manuscripts, historic plans, historic objects. [So..is the Y  
353 collections more generally – is that digitally managed?]. Some of it is – a lot of it  
354 isn't. A lot of the objects.. people seem to have assumed that the collection.. that  
355 the majority of the collections are objects. And then with the objects you have  
356 documentation. And I'm trying to get people to think of all of our holdings, all of  
357 our data holdings as a single collection whether its an archaeological artefact or a  
358 map or a photograph or a [X] postcard or whatever it is. And so we're moving  
359 now towards rather than splitting up the collection into various little bits is to  
360 try to at least digitally pull it together. We'll probably do that through Mosaic. [I  
361 don't know what that is – is it a museums..?]. It's a museums kind of database, a  
362 relational database. And we're using that partly because some of the stuff is  
363 already in there so it makes sense to continue with it and it seems to do most of  
364 what we want. And its also used by a number of other sites so the potential to  
365 link our collections to other sites is there. [SC – That sounds to me like an  
366 information and collections management issue rather than just a digital..]. Yes.  
367 It's a kind of philosophical issue not a technical issue at the moment. And we're  
368 particularly well-funded I think so, you know, it's just a matter of there's a huge  
369 backlog of material to catalogue. And we're in one of those phases where you  
370 need to transfer written catalogues into digital catalogues. And that just needs a  
371 lot of grunt work. Most of our photographic collection is slides, negatives and  
372 prints. Well to turn those into digital stuff is going to take forever.

373  
374 Q. 35 [competency ICT]. I'd say above average as it's been part of an interest over  
375 the last ten years or so.

376 Q36 [ICT support – within the organisation]. We have an IT guy [laughs..] but he  
377 services the entire organization and he's competent to fix most basic stuff. When  
378 it comes to more specific technologies and in particular the overlap between the  
379 IT issues and the professional issues is where he's not as good. We do have a  
380 limited access to state government IT people but they tend to support only the  
381 stuff that they've written or developed.