

1 11-16. Senior Archaeologist. Medium-sized heritage consultancy company.
2
3 1. I work for a private consulting firm called X in [city Y] and I've been there
4 about 6 years now. And I'm referred to as an 'Archaeological Consultant' which
5 means that I do a variety of archaeological tasks from directing excavations
6 through to client management, management of artefact collections, project
7 management, historical research, impact assessment of developments with a
8 view to advising clients first about archaeological potential on their sites and if
9 that archaeological potential is going to be subject to impact by a development
10 then mitigating that impact through excavation.
11
12 2. Private business
13
14 3. About 15 in [state X] and we've got two people in [state Y], a person in [state
15 Z] and a crew of about 4 or 5 in [another state].
16
17 4. In [the main state we work in and where I'm located] that directly involves
18 archaeology I'd say 13 of the 15. There are two office staff that just basically
19 (90%)
20
21 5. I'd say medium to large. I always think of [Heritage Consultancy Company X]
22 as the largest and I think they are still around 40.
23
24 6. [Four different states]
25
26 7. Mainly in our office but in terms of clients - statewide and national as well.
27
28 8. Do you work outside Australia? Yes I am at the moment - in [a country in the
29 Pacific region near to Australia]. I am in contact with archaeologists around the
30 world for a variety of reasons but in a work situation it's mainly in Australia.
31
32 9. Research, heritage conservation and heritage management. We are involved in
33 a little bit recently in tourism in the sense of providing interpretation - for
34 heritage tourism. Entertainment? No. Another thing we do that I make a point of
35 doing is having at least two, sometimes three, sometimes four work-experience
36 students come through the place and find out how interesting or not interesting
37 archaeology really is. So I get contacted quite a lot and just accept everyone who
38 contacts me. So that's Education.
39
40 10. All of the above.
41
42 11. Frequently
43
44 12. No
45
46 13. No
47
48 14. Not much at all. I once taught a course at X University here for [university
49 lecturer X] about ten years ago now on [a type of European archaeology] but that

50 is the only teaching I have ever done other than public lectures standing in front
51 of [people from organisations like the National Trust].

52

53 15. No.

54

55 16. Sadly yes [laughs] with variable experience. Some have been very nice and
56 some have been very bad experiences.

57

58 17. Positive experience has got to be something like [large urban historical
59 archaeology excavations in town X] which was good story, good client, lots to
60 show people, the media were interested in it. We're talking about the mid 1990s.
61 And yes that was very good.

62

63 18. In general terms, difficulty explaining the archaeological process to people
64 who come at it not really understanding the way that archaeology works and
65 heritage management works. And they are not interested in finding out how it
66 works. [SC: Is this the media?] Yes this is the media. And it's a misunderstanding
67 about legislation and about processes that we work under. [SC: So what are they
68 interested in?] They're interested in finding out the outcome – so what results
69 have we got and why there might be complaints about work done on a site and
70 the processes that have happened there, or not happened there. [SC: So they're
71 not interested?] They're not interested in finding out the process. It's a boring
72 thing but unfortunately the legislation and the planning process directs us in
73 what we are legally allowed to do and the order in which we do things. So I can
74 think of a particular example where the complaint was 'Why was this building
75 built here?' when it was known that it was of great archaeological potential. And
76 you'd need to understand the way that the process works to understand that the
77 development has to be okayed before the archaeologist goes in. And once the
78 archaeologist has finished their work the development has already been given
79 consent. The consent is not dependent upon what the archaeologist finds. [SC:
80 Can I just ask you about that and there was an issue there which I don't want to
81 put on the tape but there was an issue there where you were bound by a
82 confidentiality clause as part of your contract with the client?] Yes. [SC: and that
83 makes it difficult for you to talk to the media – is that right?] Yes. And we've
84 requested from our client an option to talk to the media directly and they've
85 refused it and they are releasing their own information that we believe doesn't
86 go to the heart of the questions asked in the article. So it doesn't.. there are
87 motherhood statements made by our client but we believe the questions raised
88 for example in this article specifically need to be refuted so that our reputation
89 isn't trashed but also so that a better understanding of how the situation
90 unfolded is reported to the people who are interested in this story. [SC: Can I ask
91 you – I mean – if you don't want to comment on it..] That's fine. [SC: With the
92 client are they dealing with the media.. through a.. do they have a media
93 specialist?]. They don't seem to as they weren't aware of any of these stories
94 until we brought it to their attention. [SC: Alright. So the client is not dealing with
95 the media?] We don't think they are dealing with them effectively in any sense.
96 They are not aware that the articles are being written. They're not meeting any
97 of the queries. They just initially made no comment and then...[SC: Thank you I
98 can follow that up later as I think it's a broader issue.]

99

100 19. In terms of use giving public lectures and things? Yes we are regularly
101 approached to give public lectures and people seek us out rather than we offer
102 our services.

103

104 21. The first thing is we try to communicate archaeology and the value of it to
105 our clients. That's important in getting clients to understand why we do what we
106 do, the value in it, and to make clients feel better about the whole process as
107 well. We are also involved in more public communication of archaeological
108 values. Talks to Historical Societies and the occasional media interview – radio
109 or newspaper – about a specific site or an issue. That's also to increase
110 awareness and public interest in archaeology. We see a value in increasing public
111 interest in archaeology and the value of what we do because we believe that
112 what we do is valuable and we think that more people should understand that.

113

114 22. Very generally, we just try to provide a précis of the history of the site and
115 highlight the importance of understanding archaeology as an adjunct to
116 understanding the past – an important element of understanding the past. Not
117 just historical documents.

118

119 23. I'm giving a talk to my daughter's school in August. [Aboriginal groups] – yes
120 in the past. Volunteers on archaeological sites. Public tours of archaeological
121 sites I've given. Historical Societies – yes. [Alternative archaeologists] I've spoken
122 to some – but I've not given them formal talks. [Other professionals] Architects
123 mostly in dealing with clients and talking about what we do. Teachers – yes.
124 Others? Yes I suppose I'll be speaking to the Army shortly.

125

126 24. Developers and architects and other archaeologists.

127

128 25. Standing in front of a backhoe monitoring and talking to the backhoe driver
129 and the foreman about what I'm looking for and why I'm looking for it and how
130 I'll recognise it when I find it.

131

132 26. I've given a couple of seminars to people like builders project management
133 groups about large scale projects so that they understand the [state heritage
134 management legislation] and the archaeological process so that in that large
135 development they are better equipped to deal with it.

136

137 27. I would think public tours on archaeological sites where you might get. I've
138 done a public tour that's had X [a retired senior archaeologist] on it [...] and
139 different people on the tour might be interested members of the public. And X I
140 remember gave me a very thorough going over about one interpretation of
141 something down at [excavation project X] – was unhappy with the way I
142 explained it to him. And certainly my knowledge and expertise was very much
143 open to question on that. And on other public tours you might get interested
144 members of the public who come along and say 'But that's not what I understand
145 about the history of this site' and you're brought up and questioned about it and
146 you feel 'Wait a minute – no. Let me just go- "No – what I said *is* right. The aliens
147 never did land here. This is not Roswell." [laughs]. You do get that sort of attitude

148 occasionally on a public tour. [SC: That's interesting. The circumstances under
149 which that happens – and it does happen – is a bit variable.]

150
151 28. [Minimal hesitation] Well in the first instance I suppose successful
152 communication as far as a client is concerned is that the project goes smoothly
153 and you can see that your explanation has hit the salient points and they don't
154 question every part of the process with you any longer. Going to the other end of
155 say the communication spectrum when you are standing in front of a backhoe
156 and three guys around with shovels and they've gone through all the usual jokes
157 about gold, dinosaurs and people's bones then you move on to what the history
158 of the place really is about and then they know. And they go 'Ah right – yes – ah.
159 Yes that is interesting. I would never have known that about this place.' You get
160 that comment quite a lot – 'I would never have known that that had happened
161 here'. That seems to me a success – you know. Clients and architects are one of
162 where you work with them at a sort of an – not an intellectual level that's not
163 right – an administrative level about making sure the project runs properly. We
164 explain how the process of archaeology will work and they accept that. But there
165 are other levels and standing in front of a backhoe with a guy who all of a sudden
166 seems to – you won't say that you've converted them and they want to become
167 archaeologists – but they show interest in what you are doing from then on in.
168

169 30. Our main job in terms of communicating archaeology other than just
170 speaking to people is writing reports. And that's a form of communication. And
171 the idea is the report – ultimately – is written for a consent authority or an
172 expert but it is also commissioned by someone who is not necessarily and expert
173 in archaeology so you've got to make the thing comprehensible. So we use the
174 usual software applications – Microsoft Word, Excel. We do use a lot of GIS
175 technology increasingly – for example in our next project in [the Pacific] we're
176 providing the client with a digital elevation model of the site, a GPS map of all of
177 the features with a view to first of all understanding what's there and surveying
178 it adequately, but also one of the ultimate aims might be to provide that as a
179 digital presentation for people to interpret the site properly. It is difficult in the
180 jungle circumstances to do that so some of this technology can be used for
181 interpretation as well. [SC: With the client there – do they have the infrastructure
182 to do that? Sorry – that's come up before where a lot of people use GIS obviously
183 – and when I've been talking.. you're the first person whose said what I thought –
184 it's not just an analysis tool it's..] Yes there are other options – yes. [SC: How
185 would you present that digitally to the client?] Well in the first instance we will
186 have to present it as a paper document and show them what's possible –
187 different views of it – then we really need to sell the options of interpretation.
188 The difficulty is that with the site it's going to be probably interpreted on-site in
189 a standard way. It's going to have to be robust signage, guided tours, that sort of
190 thing. Because it is a difficult landscape to give digital presentations but our
191 client is very digitally savvy. He's using Twitter a lot to communicate about
192 developments on the site, they have media files, they've used YouTube and so I
193 think a website which is able to use some of this digital data for interpretation is
194 certainly an option that this client would consider. [SC: I presume you have a
195 website in your company?] We have a website but it's not very good.
196

197 32. No not on a regular – oh sorry – blogs. Yes blogs some I must admit and what
198 do you call them – RSS feeds for other people’s blogs. I have been using those
199 increasingly. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube I’ve seen a couple of things on but we
200 don’t use. LinkedIn I’ve never seen actually work properly I must admit. [SC: Are
201 you on discussion groups?] I get OzArch and a couple of British ones – I think I
202 get BritArch and MilitArch. [SC: Do you use Skype?]. No. [SC: I tried to make a list
203 [of social media and similar platforms for the questionnaire sheet] but I gave up
204 – I thought it’s not sensible.]
205

206 33. What do I like about computers? Data storage [laughs]. The ability to...the
207 one major practical change I’ve seen is I’m now able to take about a thousand
208 photographs of something and have them all available to me – of a site – whereas
209 ten or fifteen years ago 36 colour film and they end up in shoeboxes somewhere
210 and you can never keep a track of the damned things. So just for that. And high
211 definition images which you couldn’t get before – all those beautiful high
212 definition [...] files with the metadata available as well. That’s the main thing, and
213 data storage and the ability to do a lot of research from my desktop now. And a
214 lot of scanned documents, a lot of maps and plans now available from archives
215 digitally. And I can start doing research within five minutes of getting a project
216 up and running. I can get a Google Earth image of the site, I can speak to the
217 client while we are discussing the project and I can get Google Earth and Street
218 View straight up and see what’s on the site, what did it look like 12 month ago,
219 what did it look like when the latest image that I’ve got, what’s the landscape
220 around it like, and go down to Street View and be virtually standing outside the
221 building and looking at it.
222

223 34. Keeping up to date – myself – you know just trained properly in the new
224 technologies that are coming along. Making sure that – archiving a lot of this
225 information which is valuable and making sure that it is archived properly and
226 that you use the archive. There’s no point in having an archive if you don’t use it
227 so keeping on top of your own archive is difficult [laughs]. So working out
228 strategies by which we as a firm can manage our own archive. What sites have
229 we used? Have we dug here before? Do we have reports in the vicinity? In all the
230 PDFs and in all of the downloaded photocopied articles we’ve got in the office
231 how do I find the five that relate to the immediate area? So we virtually become
232 our own library. That’s one of the challenging – we find it interesting.
233

234 35. Somewhere between Above Average and Average.
235

236 36. The firm has now – we’ve had IT people for some time. We now have a crew
237 of IT people who work off site and we deal with them digitally coming onto site.
238 And we can ask them a range of questions which are rated in terms of criticality.
239 So – “I need to know right now as there’s smoke coming out of the back of my
240 computer” [laughs] or I asked them a question the other day – took them three
241 days to get back to me “I’m thinking of buying an iPad – is there an app for the
242 iPad that I can link into my desktop through the server?”. And the guy who
243 answered me did a trawl through the internet, found the best app and got back to
244 me and said “Here’s the website. If you’re thinking of buying it this would be the
245 best one to buy” so that sort of range of questions. [SC: Are you talking about –

246 are they in house or are they specialists?]. No. They are specialists – they
247 contract to us. [SC: They are specialist ICT support.] Yes and they set up a little
248 icon on the bottom of our screen. If we have a question we click on the icon and
249 up comes a whole range of – the critical nature of the question, write the
250 question, do you need this answered within 24 hours?, do you need – is it okay to
251 leave it for a few days? [SC: Sounds like they are doing a good job for you.] Yes
252 it’s great. It’s really very good. [SC: Most people complain about...]. Yes well
253 we’ve only had them for about 3 or 4 months and you know they keep on top of
254 the backups and a lot of the technical stuff that we don’t have time to do. So if
255 one server goes down – what’s the problem? And uploading updates and all of
256 the things that IT people do. [SC: Well that sounds good. It’s actually a really
257 important question, because again at the university and in big organisations
258 there is obviously a lot of infrastructure support – how effective it is.. but
259 obviously – you know that – you work in business –]. Well – what do [X & Y –
260 other smaller consultants] do for example? I don’t know. [SC: I haven’t really
261 gone into great depth on it but clearly for smaller companies that’s a very large
262 burden as well and I have had ‘Oh yes people had to come to my house and put
263 the wiring in’ and.. Obviously people can hire people but it costs.] Our people are
264 good. But to have someone on tap all the time is really good. [SC: Your company –
265 as you say – is a bit bigger.] It’s a bit bigger – so there are all those infrastructure
266 costs.