JUNE 2021 / ISSUE 1

CARING FOR COUNTRY

IN A CLIMATE CRISIS

An ICOMOS Webinar Series

NEWSLETTER

In this newsletter:

1. Caring for Country Webinar series
Page 1

2. Webinar 1: Oceania Wisdom for a Climate Chance
Page 4

3. Webinar program
Page 10

4. Cyclone Pam disaster relief in Vanuatu
Page 12

5. Torres Straits sea level rise
Page 14

6. Caring for Country Committee
Page 16

1. Caring for Country – introducing the webinar series

by Helen Wilson

A webinar series on Caring for Country in the climate crisis is being organized by the Caring for Country Committee, led by Helen Wilson and Kerime Danis of Australia ICOMOS. The Committee comprises mostly ICOMOS members, both Indigenous and non-indigenous, from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

The Caring For Country webinars are part of the ICOMOS webinar series. The webinars will address climate change and its impacts on cultural heritage, the land and traditional practices in Oceania. The series will provide an opportunity for the voices of Indigenous people in Oceania to be heard and to discuss Indigenous Heritage, Cultural Landscape and Climate Change in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. Eight webinars are planned, starting on 7 July 2021 and finishing in early 2022. The series will be followed by a face-to-face workshop on Caring for Country in Climate Change, to continue the discussion in the leadup to GA2023 in Sydney.

caringforcountry.web@gmail.com

CARING FOR COUNTRY

IN A CLIMATE CRISIS

NEWSLETTER

2. Webinar 1: Oceania Wisdom for a Climate Chance

in the ICOMOS WEBINAR SERIES

by (Waskam) Emelda Davis, Dr Anne Poelina + Dr Marie Geissler

Wednesday 4 August 2021, 12.00 noon AEST (Duration approx. 1 hr 30 mins)

'Oceania Wisdom for a Climate Chance', brings together a group of distinguished First Nations Australians, Ni Vanuatu, and Australian South Sea Islanders, who will present their insights on the impacts of climate change on their respective domains of land and water and the Indigenous responses to these.

Co-ordinated by (Waskam) Emelda Davis, Dr Anne Poelina and Dr Marie Geissler, it highlights the 'climate chance' that now exists, as a window of opportunity for governments and outside agencies seeking sustainable and long-term solutions from the impacts of climate change, to work alongside First Nations people. Through this process they will be informed of the ancient wisdom traditions and intimate knowledge of lands and their interconnected biospheres and seasons that First Nations peoples hold. This knowledge draws on thousands of years of successful natural resources management of country by First Nations peoples, where practices for land stewardship are highly individualized and responsive to the different circumstances of each habitat. Elders to speak include Aunty Shireen Malamoo, (Waskam) Emelda Davis, Dr Anne Poelina, Uncle Ben Harry, Pastor Ray Minniecon and Samson Vivil Fare. Dr Marie Geissler will give the introduction to the webinar.

ICOMOS Webinar Series

2. Oceania Wisdom for a Climate Chance

NEWSLETTER

Oceania Wisdom for a Climate Chance: Speakers

Aunty Shireen Malamoo (nee Henaway), is distinguished Australian South Pacific Islander leader and activist. A Biri/Birri Gubba woman, she was born in 1938 in Ayr in northern Queensland and her early years were spent in the town camp in the Birrigubba Lands of Plantation Creek in Ayr. A third generation Australian, both her parents were born in Ayr in Queensland. Her father's mother was from the Birrigubba people from Barack in the Burdekin, and her mother's mothers' family were indentured labourers brought from Tongoa in Vanuatu to work on sugar plantations in Queensland.

Aunty Shireen has served on many government boards representing the interests of indigenous people in areas relating to human rights, ethics, culture, health and education. She was a Commissioner of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) from 1991 to 1993 and on the NSW Parole Board for nine years. She is the Chair of the Australian South Sea Islander Association (Port Jackson) in Sydney. Aunty Shireen is an accomplished jazz singer and professional artist.

NEWSLETTER

2. Oceania Wisdom for a Climate Chance

(Waskam) Emelda Davis is a second-generation human rights activist for Australian South Islanders. She holds a Masters of Arts degree from the University of Technology Sydney for her work on Children of the Sugar Slaves, and from 2009 she has been the President of the Board of the Australian South Pacific Islander Association (Port Jackson) (ASSI-PJ) in Sydney. ASSI-PJ was voted the official representative voice as the ASSI National Secretariat in 2012, and since then has been a vehicle that ensures full, fair and transparent participation for communities at large and Australian South Sea Islanders on a state, national and global scale. http://www.assipj.com.au/.

Emelda's landmark achievements include the 2013 NSW Parliament bipartisan support in the name of social justice for ASSIs. Emelda as a director with four other women has formed The Lillian Crombie Foundation (TLC) to assist Indigenous and broader communities facing hardship. In 2015 ASSI.PJ received the NSW Council for Pacific Communities Award in the 'Community Events' and 'Stronger Families' category. In 2016 Emelda was been nominated for NSW Women of the Year by her local member for Sydney Alex Greenwich in furthering the plight of her people.

Emelda is a founder of the working group for The Black Collective AU of 2018 and on the Pacific Cultures Advisory Panel at the Australian Museum. For her advocacy work she has received many awards including in 2020 the NSW Premiers Multicultural Community Medal. She was recently appointed to the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore's representative team.

NEWSLETTER

2. Oceania Wisdom for a Climate Chance

Dr Anne Poelina is a Nyikina Warrwa (Indigenous Australian) woman in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Poelina is an active Indigenous community leader, human and earth rights advocate, filmmaker and a respected academic researcher, with a Doctor of Philosophy, Master of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, Master of Education, Master of Arts (Indigenous Social Policy) recently submitted a PhD (Health Science) titled, 'Martuwarra First Law Multi-Species Justice Declaration of Interdependence: Wellbeing of Land, Living Waters, and Indigenous Australian People'. Signatory to the Redstone Statement 2010 she helped draft at the 1st International Summit on Indigenous Environmental Philosophy in 2010. As the Inaugural Chair of the National First Peoples Water Engagement Council in 2011 and later the same year she was elected onto the Broome Shire Council and became Deputy Shire President in her first term of office.

Anne is a 2011 Peter Cullen Fellow for Water Leadership. In 2017, she was awarded a Laureate from the Women's World Summit Foundation (Geneva), elected Chair of the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council (2018), Adjunct Professor and Senior Research Fellow with Notre Dame University and a Research Fellow with Northern Australia Institute Charles Darwin University. Poelina is a Visiting Fellow with the Crawford School of Public Policy at the Australian National University, Canberra Australia Water Justice Hub to focus on Indigenous Water Valuation and Resilient Decision-making.

Professional website: www.martuwarrafitzroyriver.org
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6461-7681
Personal website: www.majala.com.au

NEWSLETTER

2. Oceania Wisdom for a Climate Chance

Pastor Ray Minniecon is an elder Indigenous statesman, and a descendant of the Kabi Kabi nation and the Gurang Gurang nation of South-East Queensland. He is also a descendant of the South Sea Islander people from Ambrym Island. He graduated in Arts from Murdoch University, Western Australia and since has been a distinguished local and international Indigenous leader through his successful advocacy for the self-determination of Australian Indigenous culture and law. He has also been a driving force in the movement to recognise Indigenous contribution to the Australian armed forces. In 1995 he made an intervention at the UN in Geneva on behalf of Indigenous Peoples at the first hearing of the Draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous peoples.

He is a Director of Bunji Consultancies, which supports leadership, business initiatives and community development projects; a current Board Member of NAIITS: An Indigenous Learning Community, which is an accredited international Indigenous University, offering post graduate degree programs; a Council member of St Andrew's Cathedral School. Founder of Gawura Private Aboriginal School; a Board member of Red Dust Role Models; and a Board Member annexed to aged care services. Ray was World Vision leader for their Indigenous programs in Australia for over twelve years. In the Anglican Diocese of Sydney Ray is the Pastor of Scarred Tree Indigenous Ministries at St. John's Anglican Church, Glebe NSW. He is currently working locally and internationally on climate advocacy issues on behalf of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

IN A CLIMATE CRISIS

2. Oceania Wisdom for a Climate Chance

NEWSLETTER

Samson VILVIL FARE is the High Commissioner of Vanuatu based in Canberra. He was appointed in August 2019. In this role, he represents his Government's interests in the bilateral relationship with the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia and its partners, including international organizations (U.N. and NGOs) based in Australia. H.E. also works closely with other Foreign and Diplomatic Missions (40 of them) based in Canberra with cross – accreditation to Vanuatu.

Prior to his appointment to this position, His Excellency occupied several significant international development roles for over 10 years in Europe. His Excellency's experience is informed by his academic background in Sciences, Biodiversity and Conservation (Honors) and Environmental Policy and Sustainable Development, having completed studies at the master's level (2 Master's Degrees) in Paris, France (Master of Economics and Social Sciences at Institut Catholique de Paris, Paris France, Master of Sciences: Biodiversity and Conservation: Sorbonne Université, Paris France).

Under his work with UN Agencies, H.E. Mr. VILVIL FARE was instrumental in transforming key Small Island Developing States (SIDS) portfolios as well as conceptualization and implementation of SIDS initiatives, such as "Food Security and Nutrition for Small Islands Developing States strategy", "Blue Growth Strategy for SIDS" and successful introduction of Blue Fashion initiatives for SIDS.

CARING FOR COUNTRY

IN A CLIMATE CRISIS

NEWSLETTER

2. Oceania Wisdom for a Climate Chance

As the Technical Expert for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) with Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (UNFAO) based in Rome; he worked collaboratively with Small Island Developing States (across the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea [AIMS], Caribbean and the Pacific), a total of 52 countries, as well as with key donors - Bilateral and Multilateral - and development partners including International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), European Union, Nordic Council of Ministers and World Bank and, etc.

Prior to his role with UNFAO, His Excellency was employed as the Intra ACP Agricultural Policy Programme Coordinator, an African, Caribbean and Pacific-European Union joint institution in the Netherlands. During his tenure, he successfully managed a 26 million Euros Program over 4 years and coordinated work programs at policy and technical level between the Caribbean and the Pacific Island regions with cross learning experiences from Africa and Indian Ocean.

Prior to that, His Excellency was Vanuatu's Deputy Permanent Delegate to U.N.E.S.C.O (between 2011-2013), where he ensured that Vanuatu's interests in the area of Education, Culture, Sciences and Social Sciences, including World Heritage were prioritized effectively. Concurrently in his capacity as a Vanuatu diplomat in Europe, His Excellency also provided technical expertise to support the work of the Embassy of Vanuatu in Brussels on thematic areas relating to Climate Change, Environment, Fisheries and Sustainable Development.

IN A CLIMATE CRISIS

NEWSLETTER

2. Oceania Wisdom for a Climate Chance

Dr Marie Geissler will introduce the webinar

Dr Marie Geissler is an academic writer and curator of Indigenous Australian contemporary art and was an Honorary Associate Fellow at the University of Wollongong, Faculty of Humanities, Law and the Arts from 2019-2020.

She is Research Associate to the National Museum of Australia in Canberra and an Investigation Team Member of the Indigenous Knowledge Forum, at the Law School at the University of Technology Sydney (https://www.indigenousknowledgeforum.org/), a research advisor to (Waskam) Emelda Davis, the chair of the Australian South Sea Islander Association in Sydney (http://www.assipj.com.au/wantok-strategy-team/) and to Dr Anne Poelina Chairman for the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council in Western Australia (http:// https://martuwarrafitzroyriver.org/about).

Her recent publications include: Contemporary Indigenous Australian Art and Native Title Land Claim'. Arts 2021,10, 32. https://doi.org/10.3390/arts10020032, Ulli Beier, The Aboriginal Arts Board and Aboriginal Self Determination'. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art, December 2020. https://doi.org/10.1080/14434318.2020.1837380 and The Making of Indigenous Australian Art. Arnhem Land Bark Painting 1970-1990, 2021 Cambridge Scholars, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom.

Caring For Country Webinars in the ICOMOS WEBINAR SERIES

Webinar 1: "OCEANIA WISDOM FOR A CLIMATE CHANCE"

Wednesday 4 August 2021, 12.00 noon AEST

(Webinar duration approx. 1 hour 30 mins)

Please Register at:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_rZT69IjTSKGL1eEBdR3RXg

Webinar N° 959 0721 9926

Code: 718730

3. Caring for Country Webinar Program

Traditional lands and associated cultural practices through the process of caring for country are of fundamental importance for Indigenous peoples. Climate change is impacting on lands, traditional practices and cultural heritage in Oceania and directly and immediately threatening this fundamental relationship.

The webinars in the Caring For Country webinar series will address different aspects and examples of the impact of climate change on lands, Indigenous people and culture. Eight webinars are planned, starting on 7 July 2021 and finishing in early 2022.

The first Webinar in the series, 'Oceania Wisdom for a Climate Chance', is introduced in section 2.

In Webinar 2, we will hear about a project which aims to increase the capacity of NSW Aboriginal communities to discuss and consider adaptation decision-making around climate change impacts. An example will be discussed on how climate impacts have been addressed recently on traditional land and how mutual strength, linkages and support have been gained from interaction between scientists and the Joint Management Committee.

A further webinar will discuss the impact of culture and climate change on traditional fire practices and how Indigenous practices can contain the answers to addressing damaged landscapes and climate change.

3. Caring for Country Webinar Program

A number of webinars will look at community resilience and traditional practices in the Pacific Islands in adapting to climate change, as well as the impacts of climate change upon small island states resulting in the need to shift from ancestral homes.

Social justice for Australian South Sea Islanders (ASSI) and First Nations Peoples throughout the Pacific and the impacts of climate change on local lands, cultural heritage sites and threatened local economies will be the subject of one of the later webinars.

The final webinar will be a Wrap-Up discussion with a selection of speakers discussing issues arising in the previous webinars.

For information on upcoming webinars go to:

ICOMOS Webinar Series | Caring For Country: Webinar 1 - International Council on Monuments and Sites

4. Cyclone Pam disaster relief in Vanuatu

Words by Helen Wilson from "Pam Disaster Relief Supplies Report" cited below, images by Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) – (ASSIPJ)

Category 5 'monster' cyclone Pam hit Vanuatu in March 2015 and caused massive destruction particularly in the Shefa and Tafea islands of Erromango, Tanna, Aniwa. Futuna and Aneitym, damaging homes and gardens that most people in the area depended on for subsistence living.

PHOTO CREDIT: Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) – (ASSIPJ)

4. Cyclone Pam disaster relief in Vanuatu

Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) – (ASSIPJ) supplied relief which was distributed by TACC collaboratively with Tafea Provincial government Council, Niko Letan council of chiefs, Tafea cultural centre, Lenakel municipality and relief centres.

PHOTO CREDIT: Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) – (ASSIPJ)

This has had tremendous positive effect on the re-strengthening of tribal council's structure, as people in remote areas rely on community/tribal governance that encompasses leadership, community harmonisation and livelihood sustenance.

Words by Helen Wilson from information on page 2, "Pam Disaster Relief Supplies Report" compiled by Lutu Sakita, 25 August 2015 (supplied by Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) – ASSIP)).

Images supplied by ASSIPJ.

5. Torres Straits sea level rise

By Helen Wilson, from the Sydney Morning Herald articles cited below.

We usually think of climate change flooding islands and impacting peoples in the Pacific – but this is happening in Australia too – in the Torres Strait Islands.

Sea walls have been built of the sea-front in some islands, but as the locals say, these are only band aid solutions and do not solve the climate impact problem of sea incursion long-term.

The seawall on Saibai Island built to protect the island from increasing tides and sea levels caused by climate change. PHOTO CREDIT: Kate Geraghty, The Sydney Morning Herald, https://www.smh.com.au/national/torres-strait-lodge-complaint-with-the-un-against-australian-government-20210614-h1whyj.html

CARING FOR COUNTRY

IN A CLIMATE CRISIS

NEWSLETTER

5. Torres Straits sea level rise

Torres Strait Islanders have lodged claims with the United Nations against Australia for lack of action on climate change. The Human Rights Committee of the United Nations may hand down its findings to these claims in July 2021.

The seawall being built on Boigu Island to protect the island from increasing tides and sea levels caused by climate change. PHOTO CREDIT: Kate Geraghty, The Sydney Morning Herald, https://www.smh.com.au/national/torres-strait-lodge-complaint-with-the-un-against-australian-government-20210614-h1whyj.html

The information in this newsletter comes from the SMH articles below. You can read more about this issue in the SMH articles:

https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/united-nations-set-to-decide-climate-claims-by-torres-strait-islanders-against-australia-20210614-p580sj.html

and

https://www.smh.com.au/environment/torres-strait-islanders-just-guessing-now-when-predicting-weather-20210614-p580vm.html

6. Caring For Country Committee: Pacific and Indigenous Voices on Culture, Heritage and the Climate Crisis

by Helen Wilson and Kerime Danis
Co-Convenors, Caring For Country Committee

The Caring For Country Committee has been operating for a year. Members are mostly Australia ICOMOS members, with some ICOMOS NZ and ICOMOS Pasifika members and also a few non-ICOMOS members, including Indigenous members. We were recently accepted by Australia ICOMOS as an 'official' committee, the 'CARING FOR COUNTRY COMMITTEE, a Working Group of Australia ICOMOS'. We are working in the Climate Change, Cultural Heritage and Indigenous area and are busy organizing a series of around 8 webinars in 2021-2022, then we will organize a follow-on day workshop as a side event to GA2023.

Background to the formation of the committee:

Andrew Potts (Convenor of the ICOMOS Climate Change and Heritage Working Group - CCHWG) was originally organizing a Caring For Country workshop as a side event to the Sydney ICOMOS General Assembly (GA 2020): *Caring For Country: Pacific and Indigenous Voices on Culture, Heritage and the Climate Crisis*. This workshop was to be a space for Indigenous Pacific people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island voices on cultural heritage as human right and on caring for places and community in a changing climate, as well as for discussing partnerships and solidarity with the global cultural heritage community. A certain amount of work was done, however as Andrew is based in the US it was difficult for him to make local contacts and arrangements and organize the GA2020 workshop from afar, so Helen Wilson, a member of the Climate Change and Heritage Working Group and Sustainability Focal Point for GA2020/2023, took on the organization of the GA2020 workshop.

6. Caring For Country Committee

Convenors:

The leadership team comprised Helen, Kerime Danis and Diane Menzies (NZ), although Diane has recently taken leave from the committee because of other full-time commitments. Helen Wilson and Kerime Danis are now co-convenors of the Committee.

Our Membership:

The Committee will run until GA2023 and conclude its work after the General Assembly in Sydney in 2023 (GA2023). We have invited Indigenous and non-indigenous members from Australia and the Pacific and we currently are looking for more members in NZ and the Pacific. We have also invited a number of Emerging Professionals in the heritage field to join us, mostly through the Australia ICOMOS NSW Mentoring program, to assist with webinar organization and technical advice. It is useful to have the flexibility to select our members quickly as we need to be able to respond to deadlines in our work program. We need all our committee members to be active and to contribute and assist in all the tasks that need to be done in order to get the webinars up and running.

The committee meets every month to organize the webinars and liaise with presenters.

If you are interested in joining the committee and contributing to the organization of the webinars and later workshop, please contact us at caringforcountry.web@gmail.com.