



nawi

EXPLORING AUSTRALIA'S
INDIGENOUS WATERCRAFT

Australian National Maritime Museum
CONFERENCE
30 May to 1 June 2012

Background

Sydney Aboriginal people used the word *nawi* to describe the bark canoes that plied their harbour. Early European colonists remarked how the craft were 'most perfectly adapted' to their functions. Across Australia there is a widespread variation in type, materials and construction technologies. However there has been no significant typological study of traditional indigenous craft across Australia, and no survey of craft in museum and other collections today. There is no national picture of such a significant area of more than 40,000 years of Australia's maritime history.

In 2012 the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) will host a two-day national conference on Australia's indigenous watercraft. This, the first major conference on the watercraft of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, seeks to bring together practitioners and theorists from a range of institutions, groups, communities and individuals interested in the history, conservation, construction, interpretation and presentation of indigenous watercraft. Demonstrations and talks by traditional canoe builders and people engaged in reviving canoe building practices and knowledge will be a highlight.

Call for papers and presentations

The conference steering committee is calling for papers, presentations, displays, demonstrations and performances that explore the history, diversity, significance and interpretation of indigenous watercraft.

Sessions will be held on stories and traditions, diversity and design, imagery, trade and navigation, materials and techniques, interpretation, collaboration and outreach.

Papers might address the role of watercraft and waterways in historical trade routes, the revival and continuity of traditional canoe-making skills, European and Indigenous views of watercraft, and histories of rivers and oceans as nodes of cultural exchange.

IMAGE: © Billy Missi

From the bound bark and reed canoes of Tasmania, the flat bark canoes of the Murray-Darling, to the fan-shaped Bardi rafts of north-western Australia and the double outriggers of Torres Strait, the conference will be an important and vibrant exploration of the wonderful array of traditional craft, their continuity and revival.

Proposals

Please submit either a written abstract of maximum 300 words, images or a short description of the activity you would like to present.

Abstracts, proposals or expressions of interest should be submitted by 31 October 2011. The steering committee will contact you by 30 November to discuss your presentation.

Please send proposals and queries to nawi@anmm.gov.au. For further information contact Steering committee chair, Daina Fletcher, Senior Curator, ANMM, on +61(0)2 9298 3777.

Join our mailing list

If you would like to be on our conference mailing list please send your email address to nawi@anmm.gov.au or visit the website at www.anmm.gov.au/nawi

The conference steering committee

The committee is made up of museum and community representatives from around Australia including Lindy Allen, Museum Victoria; Dr Keryn Walshe, South Australian Museum; Dr Moya Smith, Western Australian Museum; Tony Brown, Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery; Dr Stan Florek, Australian Museum; David Kaus, National Museum of Australia; Shane Phillips, Tribal Warrior Association; Dean Kelly, National Parks and Wildlife Service NSW; and David Payne, Dr Stephen Gapps and Daina Fletcher from the Australian National Maritime Museum.

Location

Australian National Maritime Museum
Theatre, performance platform and the waterfront studio
2 Murray Street
Darling Harbour, Sydney

Dates

30 May (evening – welcome function), Thursday 31 May – Friday 1 June 2012

Conference fee for two days plus welcome function

Full rate – **\$275**

Early bird (pay by 29 February 2012), ANMM members – **\$220** (20% discount)

Concession, presenter, Indigenous community members, non-profit organisations – **\$165** (40% discount)

Registration forms will be available on the ANMM website on the events page by 1 December 2011

www.anmm.gov.au/nawi