



## Annual Report: 2020

<b>1. Administrative Details</b>
<b>1.1 - Name of National Committee:</b> Blue Shield Australia
<b>1.2 - Date Report Completed:</b> April 2021
<b>1.3 - Reporting period covered:</b> January 2020 – December 2020
<b>1.4 - Names, positions and emails</b> of all those who were the governing body/ trustees / principal officers on the date the report was approved or who served during in the reporting period:  Sue Hutley, Chair, Blue Shield Australia July 2019 – June 2021 suehutley@gmail.com Kathryn Dan, Deputy Chair, Blue Shield Australia July 2019 – June 2021 kathryn.dan@anu.edu.au Annette Mills, Secretary and Treasurer, Blue Shield Australia July 2019 – June 2021 info@blueshieldaustralia.org.au
<b>1.5 - Address of the main office:</b> c/- Australian Library and Information Association, Deakin, ACT 2600
<b>1.6 - Website and social media (if applicable):</b> www.blueshieldaustralia.org.au
<b>1.7 – Email Blue Shield Australia email should forward to:</b> info@blueshieldaustralia.org.au
<b>2. Income:</b>
What is the total income of your committee? Total Annual Income 2020 = AUD \$6150.00  Member Associations pay a sliding scale of fees, depending on their representation and size and capacity to contribute funds.  What are the primary sources? Membership Fees
<b>3. Report of Activities: Achievements &amp; Performance</b>
<b>3.1 - Law, policy development and implementation:</b> <b>Submissions</b> BSA provided a submission to the 2020 Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements and the Parliamentary Inquiry into the destruction of 46000 year old caves at the Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. <a href="https://blueshieldaustralia.org.au/news-events/submissions/">https://blueshieldaustralia.org.au/news-events/submissions/</a>
<b>3.2 - Education, training, and capacity building:</b>  A number of events were planned for early 2020. These were subsequently cancelled due to the Covid Pandemic.



### **May Day and International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction**

Blue Shield Australia decided at its July 2020 meeting not to focus on May Day activities in future years, but rather focus on raising awareness of preparedness at the start of the Australia Disaster Season (fires, floods, cyclones).

BSA will focus its a preparedness campaign around the United Nations' International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, which is the 13th October each year. This is more closely aligned to the start of Australian disaster seasons. <https://blueshieldaustralia.org.au/day-for-disaster-risk-reduction/>

### **Symposiums / Events**

Blue Shield Australia and South Australian cultural heritage organisations partnered to present the *Disaster Preparedness and Our Cultural Heritage and Collections* half-day symposium in recognition of the International Day for Disaster Reduction held at the State Library of South Australia on 14 October 2020. The symposium raised awareness of the role that cultural heritage collections play in building community resilience.

Blue Shield Australia continuously promotes disaster preparedness and recovery and cultural property protection events conducted by Member Associations including Australia ICOMOS and ICOM Australia via our website and social media.

### **Webinars**

A Webinar was held on May Day, 1 May 2020, by the Australian Museum and Galleries Association Victoria, Grimwade Conservation Services and Margaret Birtley AM, *Caring for Collections during Covid Closure* on how to best care for collections with limited access. This followed the release of the 'Closed by Covid' resource by AICCM.

### **Research Projects**

An Australian Research Council Linkage Grant proposal was developed during 2020 but was unfortunately ceased in December 2020.

BSA provided Bond University Students with a suggested project topic relating to sea level rises and cultural heritage locations for a final year university assignment. Final assessment reports were provided to the Blue Shield Australia committee in December 2020.

### **3.3 - Proactive protection and risk preparedness:**

Blue Shield Australia continually promotes various disaster risk preparedness resources to member associations and the general public during Australia natural disasters via <https://blueshieldaustralia.org.au/resources/>

### **3.4 - Emergency response in disaster, domestic emergencies, and armed conflict:**

During 2020 Blue Shield Australia continued to maintain contact with key personnel in the Australian Defence Force who are making further advancements in developing training activities for ADF personnel regarding cultural property protection.



### 3.5 - Stabilisation, post-disaster recovery, and long-term/ongoing support:

BSA conducted a survey to quantify the impact of the bushfires and extreme weather events experienced across Australia from 1 November 2019 to 31 January 2020.

A report of the survey summarises responses from 32 respondents and gives an insight into the impact on cultural heritage institutions from these events. The report is available from <https://blueshieldaustralia.org.au/news-events/reports/>

#### **Closed by COVID-19 – Checklist for GLAMs and Historical and Heritage Sites.**

Blue Shield Australia and Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material (AICCM) released the Closed by COVID-19 Checklist to provide guidance in closing collections of movable cultural heritage in collecting organisations such as archives, galleries, herbaria, historical societies, libraries and museums and at heritage sites, with the aim of preserving the collection for the long term, by achieving high standards in management of the collection and its environment.

Available from <https://blueshieldaustralia.org.au/news/closed-by-covid-19-checklist-for-glams-and-historical-and-heritage-sites/>

### 3.6 - Co-ordination (of Blue Shield and with other relevant organisations):

In 2019 and 2020 Blue Shield Australia provided co-ordination of communications regarding the widespread and significant impacts of the bushfires across Australia on heritage and cultural property. Following the catastrophic bushfires of 2019-2020, Commonwealth Government representatives met with members of BSA founding organisation Australia ICOMOS and its Risk Preparedness Working Party, as well as Aboriginal communities, regarding the recovery of Australia's World and National heritage properties. State governments also met with Australia ICOMOS and Aboriginal representatives in regard to the emergency response and recovery of places of state and local cultural heritage significance.

During the bushfire season a group of senior cultural and heritage institution leaders formed a network called the 'Cultural Response Roundtable' to facilitate meetings and discussions to share experiences from the bushfires and then the impacts of Covid19. This group will continue to meet when significant and widespread natural disasters occur again in Australia to provide easier sharing of information and collaborative activities.

The Blue Shield Australia committee met six times during 2020 via video and teleconference. Documentation for the committee is maintained by the Secretary via a Dropbox.

BSA focusses external communication via the website and the BSA Facebook and Twitter social media accounts.

## 4. **Main issues faced:**

The Blue Shield Australia committee is a representative committee and committee members have faced greater pressure on availability of volunteer time during 2020 (due to Covid). The BSA committee is small and further discussions need to be held to widen the committee structure or capacity so that other interested volunteer representatives on our various Associations can more easily contribute their time and skills to the work of BSA.



Member Associations have found 2020 a difficult year financially due to the Covid19 pandemic. BSA has decided to only charge ½ membership fees for 2021. It is unclear how sustainable these membership fees into the future will be.

### 5. **Future goals**

The Blue Shield Australia committee will continue to advocate to and work with relevant Australian Government agencies and other key national stakeholders with the aim for Australia to ratify the Second Protocol of the 1954 Hague Convention as soon as possible.

Further work is needed to gain greater awareness of Blue Shield Australia throughout the Member Associations.

Greater connections with emergency services agencies is also a future goal.

### 6. **Other**

Blue Shield Australia has connections with a number of Australian universities and would be willing to progress joint research initiatives if volunteer time and expertise is available.

Report Submitted By:

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As at 14 April 2021