



# RECOVERING FROM DISASTER

EIANZ VIRTUAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## MEDIA STATEMENT

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ) is committed to the protection and enhancement of our nations' cultural heritage, both indigenous and European. Environmental professionals recognise the value that our rich heritage brings to the built and natural environment.

The loss of heritage buildings, such as Queensland's Binna Burra Lodge destroyed in last summer's horrific bushfires, highlights the risk to cultural heritage arising from natural disasters. The more recent destruction of the 40,000 year old Juukan Gorge caves in Western Australia indicates that heritage is also threatened by inappropriate development and inadequate protection. Earlier this year, the EIANZ released a **special statement** on the shameful destruction of the caves. Our members have been heartened to see the international awareness of indigenous heritage and the importance of adequate protection that have followed this disgraceful vandalism.

EIANZ Board member Alan Chenoweth says "the EIANZ shares the disappointment of the global community following the destruction of the Juukan Gorge caves, earlier this year. As environmental practitioners, we must work to educate industry, governments and the public on the critical contribution our heritage sites bring to society, and the need for protective measures."

This week marks the UN World Day for Audiovisual Heritage (27 October). Audiovisual documents, such as films, radio and television programmes, are our common heritage and contain the primary records of the history of the 20th and 21st centuries. This is particularly important for the self-identity of nations such as Australia and New Zealand. Unfortunately, that heritage is now endangered, as sound recordings and moving images can be destroyed or irretrievably lost as a result of neglect, decay and technological obsolescence. Through initiatives such as the World Day for Audiovisual Heritage and the Memory of the World Programme, the work of preservation professionals is encouraged, in order to safeguard our audiovisual heritage.

The Board of the EIANZ says "the cultural heritage of all Australian and New Zealanders is critical to our nations' identity and future. We must recognise our histories and acknowledge the importance of both indigenous and European heritage values. Our historic records, whether communicated via ancient cave paintings, or by audiovisual records from more modern times, should form part of our education, communication, advocacy and industry excellence."

Our members and Certified Environmental Practitioners (CEnvP) are well placed to assist governments and industry to identify and promote positive heritage outcomes. The Institute's Heritage Special Interest Section will continue to promote excellence in practice and is an active participant in advocacy.

We invite you to join us for our Annual Conference online, this year focussing on Recovering from Disaster. This week's session on Wednesday, 28 October will be facilitated by Alan Chenoweth. We will hear from Dr MacLaren North, who will provide insight into how practitioners recover from legal disasters in the heritage space, and Richard Mackay AO, who will speak on our heritage crises in terms of national identity. We will also hear from Traditional Owners Charlie Ord and Afzal Khan, together with James Carr who will discuss impacts of the 2019 Australian bushfires on cultural heritage.

**Learn more & register >**

[www.eianz.org](http://www.eianz.org) | [office@eianz.org](mailto:office@eianz.org) | + 613 8593 4140 | +64 9887 6972



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of Australia and  
New Zealand