



Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology, Inc.
GPO Box 2100, Flinders University, Adelaide, SA 5100 Australia
<http://www.aima-underwater.org.au/>

Ms Ulrike Guerin
UNESCO
Secretariat of the Convention on the Protection for the Underwater Cultural
Heritage 7, Place de Fontenoy
75007 Paris, France

Dear Ms Guerin,

Re: Report on activities contributing to the wider ratification and implementation of the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2017-June 2019)

Thank you for the opportunity to report on AIMA's activities in support of the 2001 Convention since the last meeting of the State Parties in 2017. To recap, in 2013 UNESCO accredited the Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology (AIMA) as an NGO supporting the Scientific and Technical Advisory Body (STAB) to the State Parties to the 2001 Convention.

Active in the Asia-Pacific region, AIMA is primarily based in Australia, a country with a proud history of maritime archaeology and State and federal protective legislation, but which to date has not ratified the 2001 Convention.

AIMA Constitution and Code of Ethics

Supporting the 2001 UNESCO Convention is a core objective stipulated in AIMA's Constitution. This has been the case for over a decade, and our updated AIMA Constitution passed unanimously at our Annual General Meeting held in Sydney, in November 2018 formally reiterated this stating that:

'The objectives of the Institute shall [include] to support the aims, rules and articles of the 2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage and adopt the rules as the process it will use in implementing any of its activities on underwater cultural heritage' (AIMA Constitution: <http://www.aima-underwater.org.au/constitution/>).

Accordingly, our AIMA Code of Ethics specifies that AIMA members must:

'Support and comply with the terms of the 2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage' (AIMA Code of Ethics: http://www.aima-underwater.org.au/uploads/52708/ufiles/AIMA_Documents/AIMA_Code_of_Ethics.pdf).



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The 2001 UNESCO Convention is enshrined in our organisation's leading documents that define both the rationale for AIMA as a whole, and the behaviour of its members. This means the promotion of and compliance with the principles of the Convention inform all of our activities including training, sponsorship, grants, conferences and publications.

Advocacy with the Australian Government

2019 is a crucial year in Australia for the protection of underwater cultural heritage. The Australian Government has recently passed the new *Underwater Cultural Heritage Bill 2018* which is set to become law in mid-2019. This will supersede the Commonwealth's *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*.

The new *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act* will expand protection beyond historic shipwrecks and was written to be compliant with the 2001 UNESCO Convention. However, there is no formal commitment from the Australian Government to ratify the 2001 Convention. As an NGO and community-based organisation AIMA is a key stakeholder here, and will continue to strongly advocate for ratification by Australia, particularly in light of the new legislation.

Outreach and training

AIMA, in conjunction with the Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS—United Kingdom), teaches a four-part training course on maritime archaeology. The 2001 UNESCO Convention and its underlining principles are a part of the training curriculum.

This internationally recognised course is currently run in the United Kingdom, South Africa, Canada, Micronesia and the USA, among other places. The aim of this course is to introduce the methods and procedures used in maritime archaeology, and to generate awareness of underwater cultural heritage preservation in Australia and New Zealand. In 2017-18 AIMA ran three AIMA/NAS courses in Western Australia, Queensland and New South Wales totalling 33 participants, and ran one AIMA/NAS Tutor training course in New South Wales with 7 participants. Further courses are planned for the first half of 2019.

Raising awareness through publications, conferences, scholarships and sponsorship

AIMA continually and consistently advocates for the ratification of the Convention and the principles underlining the 2001 UNESCO Convention across its many activities. This happens at the local level through our AIMA/ NAS training courses, formal and informal communication with members and the wider community, through our website, annual conferences, quarterly newsletter and journal. The AIMA Newsletter for example serves as an opportunity for researchers in countries developing their capacity in UCH research and management to share their results with the wider community, and for early researchers, avocational members and students to publish results of their work. This grassroots strategy raises the profile of the 2001 UNESCO Convention, highlighting it as a significant political and



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management issue, and the Annex as an internationally accepted standard to guide best practice management of UCH.

Since 2017 AIMA has sponsored projects in Australia and our Asia-Pacific region through our scholarship program, encouraging ethical research, conservation and publication according to the principles of the 2001 UNESCO Convention. In 2017 our annual AIMA scholarship was awarded to Ms Abhirada Komoot for her research into the internationally significant 9th century Phanom Surin shipwreck in Thailand. AIMA also works with other government, non-government and institutions providing sponsorship funding and support to aligned regional conferences, for example sponsoring the 3rd Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Underwater Cultural Heritage held in Hong Kong in 2017. AIMA members are currently represented on the 4th Asia-Pacific Conference Planning Committee, scheduled to be held in Taiwan in 2020. AIMA also maintains close relations with our Indonesian colleagues and is planning collaborative projects in the future.

AIMA engages with other non-government organisations sharing knowledge, advocating for change and promoting the underlining principles of the 2001 Convention, for example by holding observer status on the Advisory Council for Underwater Archaeology (ACUA) in the United States. In 2018 AIMA sent representatives to attend meetings of the UNESCO State Parties, STAB and accredited NGOs working collaboratively towards the widespread ratification of the 2001 Convention.

In conclusion the ratification and successful implementation of the 2001 UNESCO Convention in Australia, and its ongoing promotion through our international membership, remains a fundamental goal of AIMA, to which purpose we look forward to continuing to work closely with UNESCO and our other international colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D Steinberg'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David Steinberg
President, AIMA

20 January 2019