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Christine
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Heritage
Consultants



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Volume 10, 2021

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Front cover:

Participants at the zoom webinar panel discussion by Traditional Owners at the 2021 Colloquium. Top row: Darren Griffin, Liz Foley, Dave Wandin—Wurundjeri Woiwurrung; bottom row: Racquel Kerr—Dja Dja Wurrung, Tammy Gilson—Wadawurrung, Ben Muir—Wotjobaluk and Jardwadjali. (Screenshot by Caroline Spry)^e

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Editorial note

The papers included in this 10th issue of *Excavations, Surveys and Heritage Management in Victoria* were presented at the annual Victorian Archaeology Colloquium held on-line via zoom webinar between 1 and 4 February 2021. This allowed even more than our usual number of people to register as participants, including some from interstate and overseas: their commitment and involvement testifies to the importance of this fixture within the local archaeological calendar. Many were fortunate to be able to meet in person, under appropriate protocols, for an outdoor boxed lunch at La Trobe University on 5 February.

We have taken the opportunity of celebrating our 10th anniversary by looking back over the last decade, both through a more formal analysis and through a less formal panel discussion of the history of the Colloquium and this publication. Another panel discussion transcript allows space for some Traditional Owners to reflect on particular examples that they feel have been of value in the complex process of cultural revival through a form of experimental (perhaps better experiential) archaeology.

The other papers published here deal with a variety of topics and approaches that span Victoria's Aboriginal and European past. While some papers report on the results of specific research projects others focus on aspects of method, approach, education and the social context of our work and approach. These all demonstrate how our Colloquium continues to be an important opportunity for consultants, academics, managers and Aboriginal community groups to share their common interests in the archaeology and heritage of Victoria.

In addition to the more developed papers, we have continued our practice of publishing the abstracts of other papers presented at the Colloquium, illustrated by a selection of the slides taken from the PowerPoint presentations prepared by participants. These demonstrate the range of work being carried out in Victoria, and we hope that many of these will also form the basis of more complete studies in the future. Previous volumes of *Excavations, Surveys and*

Heritage Management in Victoria are freely available through La Trobe University's institutional repository, Research Online <www.arrow.latrobe.edu.au:8080/vital/access/manager/Repository/latrobe:41999> and through Open at La Trobe (OPAL) <<https://doi.org/10.26181/601a321a11c0d>>. We hope that this will encourage the dissemination of ideas and information in the broader community, both within Australia and internationally. We have also now set up a website for the Colloquium <<https://victorianarchaeologycolloquium.com>>

For the first time we have included an obituary to mark the passing of a member of our community: David Rhodes of Heritage Insight, a long-time supporter of our activities. Here we should also mention that we have also lost Ron Vanderwal who made important contributions to archaeology and the curation of heritage, although he was unable to participate in the Colloquia.

Once again we have been fortunate in the support given to the Colloquium by many sponsors: ACHM, Ochre Imprints, Heritage Insight, Biosis, ArchLink, Christine Williamson Heritage Consultants and Extent, while La Trobe University continued to provide facilities and a home for our activities, even if this year it was a virtual one. We would like to thank them, and all others involved for their generous contributions towards hosting both the event and this publication. Yafit Dahary of 12 Ovens was, as always, responsible for the catering, despite the limitations on her usual spread.

All papers were refereed by the editorial team. This year Deb Kelly managed this process and the sub-editing of this volume. Layout was again undertaken by David Frankel. Preparation of this volume was, like so much else in the last year, undertaken during the severe restrictions imposed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope that 2022 will be a better year for all.

The presenters, editors and authors acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and heritage discussed at the Colloquium and in this volume, and pay their respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Talking heritage: tracking change in a decade of discussion about local archaeology

Caroline Spry¹, David Frankel¹, Susan Lawrence¹, Elizabeth Foley¹ and Deborah Kelly¹

Abstract

The Victorian Archaeology Colloquium represents a first-of-its-kind in Australia, as an annual event bringing together archaeologists, academics, First Peoples, and heritage practitioners for an informal discussion of local archaeology and cultural heritage in the State of Victoria, Australia. This event is designed to encourage people from diverse backgrounds, organisations and perspectives to discuss heritage legislation, developments in methods and approaches, and the results of fieldwork and artefact analysis. Here we investigate trends over the past decade of the Colloquium, as well as archaeological and cultural heritage investigations in Victoria, using quantitative data compiled from the past 10 years of the Colloquium and its associated publication, Excavations, Surveys and Heritage Management in Victoria. The results point towards a vibrant and dynamic community, strong industry engagement, and a broad increase in collaboration and First Peoples participation. The impacts of COVID-19 in 2020, and areas for improvement in the discipline and industry, are also explored.

Introduction

Over the last century, there have been several major shifts in the complex entanglements of archaeology, heritage, research and management, reflecting broader changes in the academic, social and political context. In Australia, these changes include the exponential expansion of the cultural heritage industry and the very significant development of First Peoples engagement and authority. Different perspectives on earlier developments have been presented, for example by Griffiths (1996) in his influential *Hunters and Collectors*, aspects of which have been challenged recently by Spriggs (2020). A slightly different approach, more immediately relevant to the Victorian Archaeology Colloquium, which focuses on archaeology and cultural heritage in the State of Victoria, Australia, is to note changing patterns of interaction and publication in the community.

Several overlapping groups developed interests in the

past of Victorian First Peoples, and their archaeology, in the early 20th century. White collectors' main interest was in acquiring stone tools, generally with little regard for their archaeological potential or associations with living First Peoples. Others, coming from a variety of academic backgrounds—including anthropology and geology—made use of journals such as the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Victoria* to publish their work on sites and artefacts, their research studies falling broadly in what we would now consider as 'archaeology'. *The Victorian Naturalist* provided another outlet, especially for less academic observations and papers: these included numerous notes by Aldo Massola, sometime Curator of Anthropology at the National Museum of Victoria. His many popular books introduced Europeans to world of Victorian First Peoples in the late 1950s to 1970s (e.g. Massola 1969, 1971), while his role in promoting the Anthropological Society of Victoria provided a forum for amateur interests.

A significant development followed the appointment of John Mulvaney as a lecturer at the University of Melbourne (Frankel 2016; Griffiths 1996; Mulvaney 2011). Although Mulvaney did little fieldwork in Victoria, a major contribution was suppressing the activities of collectors, arguing for the value of formal archaeological research, published locally and later internationally in specialist journals. This provided the springboard for the first Victorian heritage legislation, the *Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act 1972* (Vic.), and for the establishment of the Victoria Archaeological Survey, with Peter Coutts as its first Director. Coutts believed that it would not be possible to develop appropriate management strategies unless there was a basic knowledge of Victorian archaeology. He therefore developed vigorous program of archaeological research attracting many people to the discipline through large-scale summer schools. To ensure publication of the results he initiated the *Records of the Victorian Archaeological Survey* (later followed by the *Occasional Reports* series).

At the same time, several substantial projects produced a series of PhD theses, aspects of which were published, as often as not, in more specialised archaeological journals, primarily *Archaeology in Oceania* (originally

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Archaeology and Physical Anthropology in Oceania) and later in *Australian Archaeology*, but also in international journals such as *World Archaeology* and *Antiquity*.

These reinforced the academic professionalisation of the discipline (especially after the establishment of archaeology (then prehistory) at La Trobe University in 1977; Spry et al. 2020). Consequently, there was a decline in the active engagement of amateurs, such as those involved in the Archaeological Society of Victoria (later amalgamated with the Anthropological Society to become the Archaeological and Anthropological Society of Victoria). Nevertheless, the society's journal, *The Artefact*, provided, as it still does, another avenue for publication, especially of general and preliminary studies and dealing with areas well beyond the boundaries of Victoria.

By the end of the 20th century, it is possible to characterise the situation in Victoria as somewhat unco-ordinated, with disparate projects published in a variety of places, and intended largely for specialist readership. Outside of academia, two very significant developments were taking place. The number of non-academic, practitioners and applied archaeology projects began to increase dramatically, while social and then legislative changes such as the enactment of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic.) increased the role of First Peoples in all aspects of their heritage (Spry et al. 2020). However, there was no forum for considering Victorian archaeology as a distinct focus, or, indeed, for finding out what work was being done and what interest it might hold.

It is against this background that the initiation of the Victorian Archaeology Colloquium and associated publication can be placed (Spry et al., this volume). One particular stimulus was a discussion between Ilya Berelov and David Frankel in 2011 about the value of short notes on archaeological projects, with examples already being published overseas (e.g. Israel Antiquities Authority 2021). As others, including Shaun Canning at Australian Cultural Heritage Management, Susan Lawrence and Anita Smith at La Trobe University, and Mark Eccleston at Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (now First Peoples State Relations), were brought into the developing conversation, the advantages of a small conference as a precursor to publication became clear. The first such event was held in February 2012; the intention behind the term 'Colloquium' was to emphasise the interactive conversations, rather than seeing it as a more formal 'Conference'. And, of course, the focus was to be on the local, Victorian, context.

From the start, the aim was to make the Colloquium as inclusive as possible, and to avoid unnecessary divisions between heritage management and academic archaeology, or between historical and First Peoples subjects. Another aim was to include everyone with an interest in the broad field, and to encourage

involvement—not only of academics, but also all those involved in heritage management. To this end, the Colloquium has been restricted to a single day and costs have been kept as low as possible.

But more importantly, it was recognised that, while perfectly capable of presenting material to clients, pitching for projects and preparing substantial reports, many people feel hesitant about performing or writing for more academic journals. Here, the aim was to create a safer space, less judgemental and more encouraging: a chance to share and communicate information and ideas rather than to compete for academic status. This flowed through to the publication of the first volume of the Colloquium proceedings (Berelov et al. 2012). The intention was never to compete with specialised journals such as *Archaeology in Oceania* and *Australian Archaeology*, or the more general *The Artefact*, but again to encourage people to communicate interesting work and ideas. As many still felt inhibited, and did not feel comfortable preparing more complete articles, the now standard policy of including illustrated versions of abstracts was developed to provide a record of the kinds of work people were doing.

The immediate and positive response to the initial Colloquium and its subsequent success has turned this event into a fixture in many practitioners' calendars: a 'work outing' which serves not only to provide an outlet for presentations and publications, but an important opportunity to engage with colleagues.

After a decade, it is interesting to look back and identify changes or trends in the development of the Victorian Archaeology Colloquium, and associated publication, Excavations, Surveys and Heritage Management in Victoria. This article interrogates data compiled from the past 10 years of the Colloquium and associated publication to investigate how this event has evolved, what changes have occurred in archaeological and cultural heritage investigations in Victoria, and what these changes reflect about broader developments in the discipline and industry.

Methods

Two datasets form the basis of the study presented here. The first dataset contains information about presentations given at the Colloquium since its inception. This information includes:

- Full names of presenters;
- Number of authors (1, 2–5, 6+);
- Full presentation title;
- Subject (First Peoples archaeology/CHM, Historical archaeology, Maritime archaeology, Teaching/education, Other);
- For First Peoples archaeology/CHM, whether the study included a dating component (Yes, No);
- Lead author organisation (Archaeological

consultancy, Government, Individual, First Peoples, University, Other, N/A);

- For First Peoples archaeology/CHM, whether the list of authors includes a Traditional Custodian/representative of a First Peoples organisation (Yes, No);
- Whether the presentation was published as a conference abstract or peer-reviewed article in the Colloquium proceedings;
- If published as an article in the Colloquium proceedings, the count of article views and downloads (data courtesy of the La Trobe University Repository—Research Online <http://arrow.latrobe.edu.au:8080/vital/access/manager/Repository/latrobe:41999>).

The second dataset documents Colloquium attendance over the past 10 years, namely the numbers and types (Professional, Student/unwaged, Other) of attendees. A breakdown of attendee type is unavailable for 2012–2013 as this information was not recorded for registrants during these years.

The results presented below are divided into engagement, presenting and publishing.

Results

Engagement

The total number of people who have attended the Victorian Archaeology Colloquium since it began in 2012 is close to 2,000 people. Of course, this count duplicates ‘repeat customers’—that is, people who have attended multiple colloquia over the years. The average number of attendees per Colloquium is 165, more than doubling from 130 people at the first Colloquium in 2012, to 270 people in 2021. The online format of the 2021 Colloquium, and absence of any registration fees, enabled more people from diverse backgrounds

and geographic locations—including interstate and overseas—to participate.

Most of the Colloquium attendees are professionals (**Figure 1**). The number of Professional attendees has increased dramatically (+22% since 2012), whereas Students/unwaged attendance has decreased (–9% since 2012). These results suggest that the Colloquium has generated strong industry interest and engagement, but that student participation requires improvement.

Presenting

A total of 203 presentations have been given at the Colloquium over the past 10 years, representing an average of 20 presentations per Colloquium. Most have focused on First Peoples archaeology/Cultural Heritage Management followed by historical archaeology (**Figure 2**). In some years, the number of presentations on First Peoples archaeology/CHM has been comparable with those on historical archaeology. This is despite the fact that a higher number of CHM investigations are carried out every year compared to historical archaeology.

In general, the number of First Peoples archaeology/CHM presentations has decreased slightly, and the number of historical archaeology presentations has increased somewhat. Peaks in the number of historical archaeology papers in 2015 and 2019 (**Figure 2**) may reflect the timing of major infrastructure projects in Melbourne’s CBD, pulling professional focus in those years towards the archaeology of early Melbourne. A smaller number of presentations have discussed teaching/education or maritime archaeology. This fluctuation probably reflects several variables, including changes in the economy, industry demand, and the award of research funding (e.g. ARC grants).

The impact of COVID-19 in 2020 resulted in most CHM fieldwork being postponed during the first national and second statewide lockdown

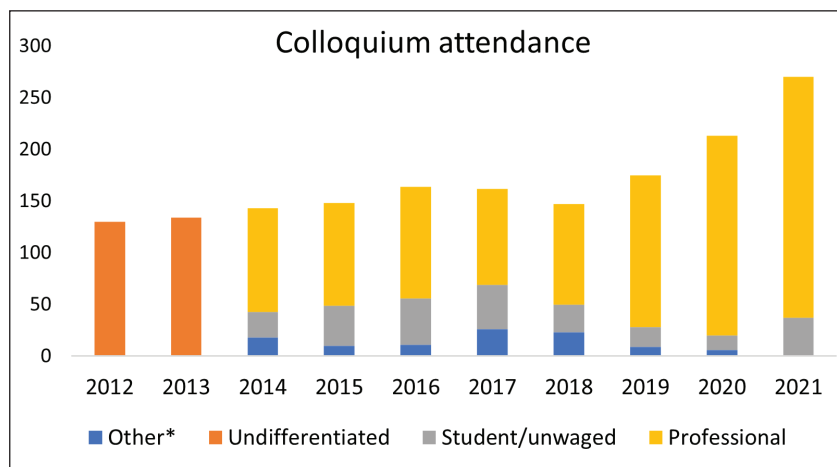


Figure 1. Number of Colloquium attendees per year by attendee type. * = Co-convenors, volunteers, unknown. ** = approximate total not including refunds, last-minute cancellations, no-shows etc.

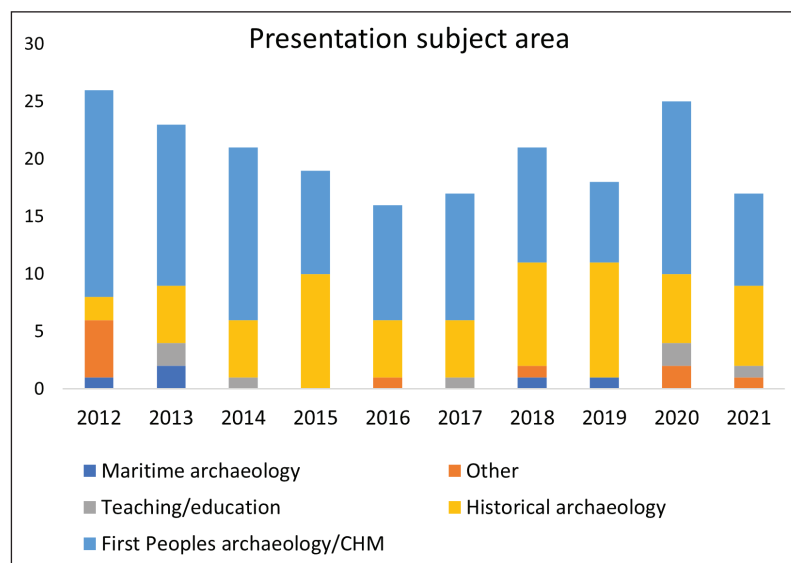


Figure 2. Number of Colloquium presentations by subject area per year

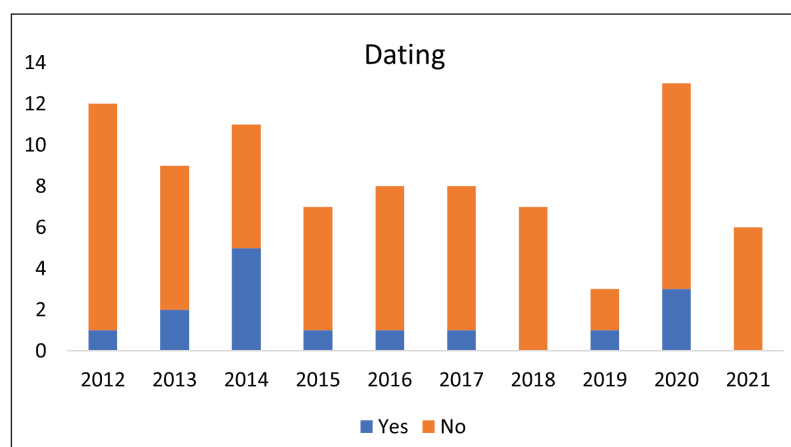


Figure 3. Number of Colloquium presentations on First Peoples archaeology/CHM with or without a dating component by year

(excluding state significant projects). The majority of Registered Aboriginal Parties shut down or operated at reduced capacity during both lockdowns, which has delayed projects in the First Peoples archaeology/CHM sector. Universities prohibited all fieldwork and most lab-based work. These impacts have probably influenced the relative decrease in the number of First Peoples archaeology/CHM presentations at the 2021 Colloquium.

The number of First Peoples archaeology/CHM presentations with a dating component (where dating was undertaken to investigate the age of an Aboriginal place or object) has fluctuated since the first Colloquium in 2012—but remains low (Figure 3). Tumney et al. (2020) reported that only 317 of the 38,000 Aboriginal places (<0.01%) registered on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register have been subject to radiocarbon dating. Of these 317 Aboriginal places, only 0.15% have radiocarbon ages assessed as being 'secure'. Dating of

Aboriginal places is essential for understanding of their nature and significance, as assessed under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic.). The relative paucity of dating studies presented at the Colloquium appears indicative of the First Peoples archaeology/CHM sector more broadly and is an obvious area for improvement.

There has been a general decrease in the number of single-author presentations and increase in the number of multiple-authored presentations (Figure 4). This suggests a general trend towards increased collaboration in the discipline and industry, which is likely to be mirrored in other publications. While most presentations were single-authored at the 2021 Colloquium, this is probably due to reduced opportunity to collaborate as people navigated the impacts of COVID-19 in 2020.

The majority of lead presenters are from an archaeological consultancy, followed by a university, government agency, no affiliation ('Individual'), or First Peoples organisation (Figure 5). However, there has

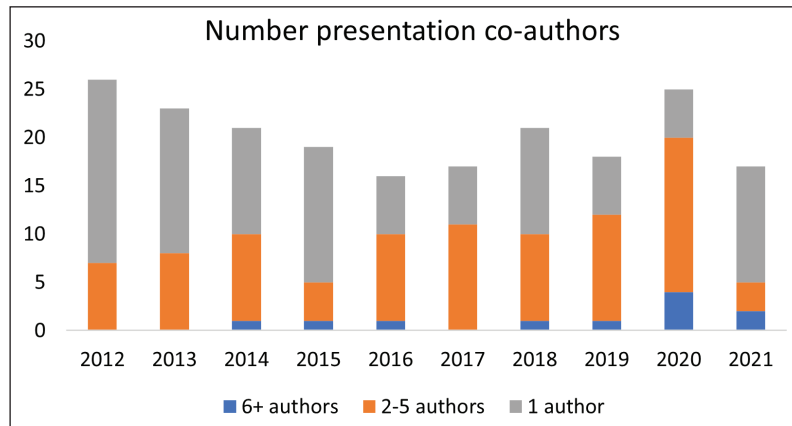


Figure 4. Number of Colloquium presentation co-authors by year



Figure 5. Number of lead-author organisation types by year.

been a general decrease in the number of lead presenters from archaeological consultancies or government agencies, and an increase from universities and government agencies, this probably reflects barriers to presenting—including time constraints, permission requirements and (at the 2021 Colloquium) the impact of COVID-19 on projects. For universities, this is likely to indicate increased industry collaboration, the award of ARC grant funding, and greater emphasis on disseminating the results of research to demonstrate impact and engagement. The increase in representation of First Peoples organisations is a positive step towards the self-determination of Traditional Custodians in Victorian archaeology/CHM.

Following on from this, there has been a general increase in co-authorship by Traditional Custodians/representatives of a First Peoples organisation (Figure 6). The gap between the number of presentations with or without such co-authorship has reduced considerably.

This suggests increasing collaboration with Traditional Custodians when undertaking projects in First Peoples archaeology/CHM.

Publishing

The Colloquium proceedings are published in hard copy and now also freely available online through the La Trobe University repositories, Research Online and Open At La Trobe (OPAL), and authors' personal websites. The articles have attracted close to 50,000 visitors and 2,000 downloads. However, as these numbers are based only on those available through Research Online the real figures are likely to be substantially higher.

A similar number of Colloquium presentations were published as conference abstracts or peer-reviewed articles in the Colloquium proceedings (Figure 7). The conference abstracts represent presentations given at the Colloquium that were not written up as articles subsequently. Since 2014, there has been a slight increase in the number of presentations published as articles,

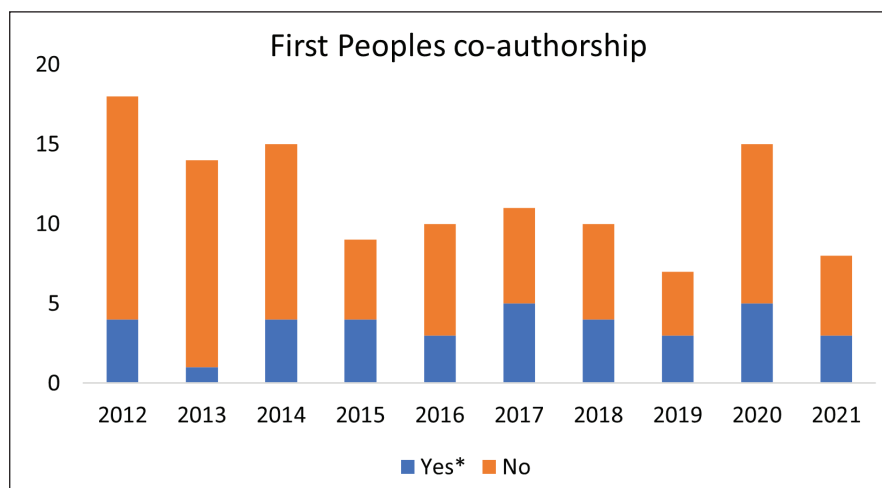


Figure 6. Number of First Peoples archaeology/CHM presentations with First Peoples co-authorship per year. * = includes a Traditional Custodian/representative of a First Peoples organisation

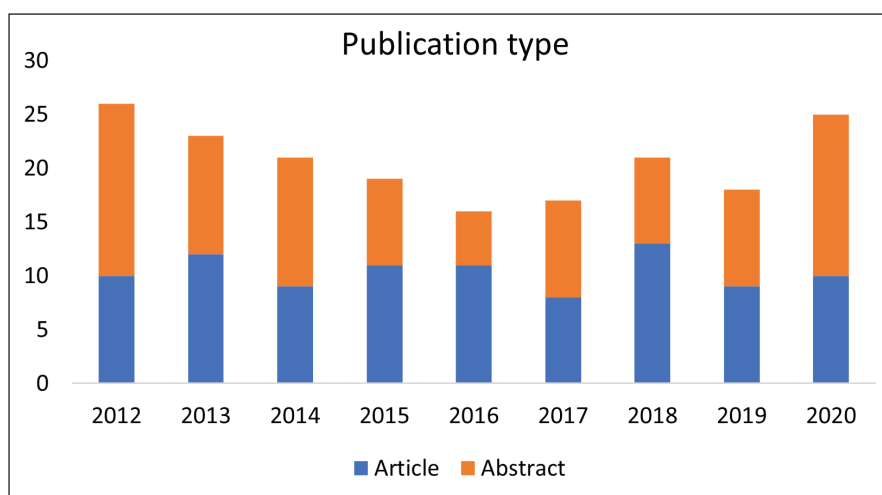


Figure 7. Number of Colloquium presentations included in the Colloquium proceeding as a conference abstract or peer-reviewed article by year.

but a decline since 2019. This is likely to reflect several variables, including time constraints and permission requirements. The impact of COVID-19 probably affected people's ability to set aside time to prepare an article in 2020, as they faced job uncertainty along with work and family pressures.

The top 10 most downloaded articles are listed below—with number one representing the most downloaded articles (**Table 1**). Pleasingly, these articles represent a variety of subjects including First Peoples archaeology/CHM, historical archaeology, heritage legislation and First Peoples perspectives.

Overall, several trends can be discerned since the Colloquium first began in 2012. The Colloquium is increasingly well-attended and demonstrates strong engagement with industry professionals. Most presentations have focused on First Peoples archaeology/CHM, although the relative frequency of

different presentation subjects is variable. The relative paucity of dating undertaken at Aboriginal places is an ongoing issue. Collaboration appears to be increasing. Presentations led by archaeological consultancies and government agencies have reduced slightly, whereas those led by university staff and students, or Traditional Custodians/representatives of a First Peoples organisation have increased. There has also been an increase in co-authorship by Traditional Custodians/First Peoples organisations. Finally, there is continued, strong interest in preparing peer-reviewed articles based on Colloquium presentations for the Colloquium proceedings, and in public engagement with the proceedings more broadly.

Discussion and conclusion

Trends evident in the data point to broader trends in archaeology and cultural heritage management

Order	Authors	Year	Article title
1	Martin Lawler (Biosis Pty Ltd), Rodney Monk, Andy I.R. Herries, Agathe Lisé-Pronovost, Rhiannon Ashton, Trish Terry and Ilya Berelov	2015	Investigations of a Holocene floodplain landscape on the Goulburn River valley at Yea: Preliminary results
2	Meredith Filihia (Dr Vincent Clark & Associates), Paul Kucera, Racheal Minos and Kym Oataway	2016	Salvage excavations at VAHR 7921–1151 ‘Lyndhurst Inland Port 6’: Carrum Swamp: Analysis of the archaeological assemblage’
3	Nicolas Zorzin (The British School at Athens)	2014	Socio-economics of archaeology in Victoria after the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
4	Jim Wheeler (Archaeological and Heritage Management Solutions (AHMS)), Alan N. Williams, Stacey Kennedy, Phillip Toms and Peter Mitchell	2014	A Pleistocene date at Chelsea Heights, Victoria: evidence for Aboriginal occupation beneath the Carrum Swamp
5	Caroline Spry (Ochre Imprints)	2015	Evaluating the recording system for high- and low-density stone artefact occurrences in Victoria, Australia: A stone artefact analysis perspective
6	Racquel Kerr (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation), Diana Smith	2016	Djaara tachylite: Resource and distribution on Dja Dja Wurrung Country
7	Darren Griffin (Wurundjeri Tribe Land Council), Delta Lucille Freedman, Bill Nicholson Jnr, Fiona McConachie and Alexander Parmington	2012	Partnerships and Indigenous Cultural Values recording within Victoria: the Merri Creek Cultural Values Project
8	Bill Nicholson (Wurundjeri Tribe Land & Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Inc.), Darren Griffin, Alex Parmington, Fiona McConachie and Delta Freedman	2013	The Koorong Project: Experimental archaeology and Wurundjeri continuation of cultural practice
9	Herman Kiriana (Australian Cultural Heritage Management (ACHM))	2012	The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006: Five years on
10	Tom Mallett (ArchLink), Sarah Myers, Sarah Mirams, Felicity Coleman and Fiona Shanahan	2015	Preliminary results of excavations at Langlands Iron Foundry and Stooke’s Shipping Butchers, 556–560 Flinders Street, Melbourne

Table 1. Top 10 downloaded papers in the Colloquium proceedings. Note that only the organisation of the lead author is listed.

in Victoria, and Australia more generally. Most lead authors work in commercial archaeology, which reflects the composition of the archaeological profession locally and globally for many years (Mate and Ulm 2016; Ulm et al. 2005, 2013; Zorzin 2014), but also demonstrates the contributions to the advancement of knowledge that are being made by archaeologists in the commercial sector (Wallis 2020). This contribution is even more meaningful as the Colloquium has, from the outset, been made possible by the financial support provided by industry sponsorship.

The strength and visibility of historical archaeology in Victoria, underpinned by robust heritage legislation and policy (Smith 2017), is demonstrated by the consistently high number of papers from this field. Aboriginal archaeology/CHM is also particularly well-represented. The increasing visibility and authority of First Peoples is evident in the data with the strong representation of papers co-authored by Traditional Custodians and representatives of First Peoples organisations. This trend has also increased over time, and is likely to continue to

do so as Victorian First Peoples work towards Treaty and self-determination.

Archaeology has always been a discipline that requires collaboration, and the current importance of collaboration is reflected by the general increase in the number of presentation co-authors. Co-publication following the science model is increasingly favoured in universities, and co-publication with industry and community colleagues is particularly valued in university-ranking exercises, where it is seen as evidence of research impact and community engagement (Smith and Wilson 2020; Spry et al. 2020). Perhaps of greater genuine significance is that such collaborations are also evidence of strong bonds between diverse sections of the Victorian archaeological community, the kinds of bonds needed for a resilient and dynamic profession (Roberts 2020).

As an event that brings people together on an annual basis to discuss local archaeology and cultural heritage management, the Colloquium is unique within Australia and unusual internationally. As the data highlighting

participation shows, this event has proven to be a popular forum for presenting and exchanging ideas. Presenters have shared information about changes in legislation and their impacts, developments in methods and approaches, and the results of fieldwork and artefact analysis. The significant decision to make an ongoing commitment to publishing the Colloquium publication has further added to the value of the Colloquium. *Excavations, Surveys and Heritage Management in Victoria* (2021a, 2021b) provides an enduring record of each year's papers, and makes them accessible to those unable to attend the Colloquium. Having the proceedings freely available online amplifies their reach at a time when much research is now restricted behind pay walls. Data on the quantity of downloads makes it clear that the published papers are themselves an important resource on which people continue to draw. By striving to be inclusive of, and accessible to, a variety of interest areas and voices, the Colloquium provides an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds, organisations and perspectives to meet and discuss important issues and emerging trends. It provides the basis for a healthy community of practice in Victorian archaeology and cultural heritage management.

Acknowledgments

We thank the presenters and attendees of the Victorian Archaeology Colloquium for their integral role in its success. Thank you to La Trobe University for providing the Colloquium venue and facilities, and to Yafit Dahary of 12 Ovens Catering for her wonderful catering over the years. We pay our respects to Victorian First Peoples—including Elders, past and present—on whose Country archaeologists, academics and heritage practitioners have undertaken archaeological and cultural heritage investigations.

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