Towards a thematic research framework for Australian historical archaeology

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In a climate of limited resources for the long-term conservation and management of archaeological resources, their significance must be assessed not only with reference to the research design of the archaeological project that recovered them, but also from a clear understanding of wider regional and national research frameworks to which they may be able to contribute new information. Currently, no state or national level research frameworks exist for Australian historical archaeology. There are therefore few reference points against which the relative importance of archaeological resources can be assessed or management policies and decisions justified.

This paper presents a preliminary thematic framework for Australian historical archaeology and discusses the results of the publications analysis on which it is based. The framework was developed in the context of a broader research project aimed at developing a model for assessing the research significance of Australian historical archaeological collections. The preliminary thematic framework is presented here as a foundation upon which state and national research frameworks for Australian historical archaeology can begin to be built.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of assessing the value of historical archaeological resources according to their aesthetic, historic, scientific and social significance has been accepted in Australia since the publication of the Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS 1979). The research ('scientific') significance of archaeological resources is considered to be the most important criterion in assessing their longer term value and is understood to be a measure of the degree to which archaeological resources can contribute to important research questions (Bickford and Sullivan 1984:21; Bowdler 1984:1; Glassow 1977:413; Hardesty 1990:43; Moratto and Kelly 1978:5; Pearson 1984:27; Raab and Klinger 1977:632; Schaafsma 1989:43; Schacht 2008; Schiffer and House 1977b:46). It is accepted that assessing the research significance of archaeological resources is a very subjective process and that archaeological sites and artefacts do not have an unchanging, inherent value waiting to be identified. Rather, research significance is attributed through an external, intellectual frame of reference (Bickford and Sullivan 1984 Pearce 1990:57; Schiffer and House 1977b:239; Smith 1996: 68; Thompson 1982:42-43). The intellectual frame of reference for historical archaeology is the collected research questions of its practitioners. Significance assessment of historical archaeological resources must therefore take place with reference to the research designs of archaeological projects and more broadly, to wider state and national research frameworks. Such frameworks can not only direct management decisions about archaeological sites but also the significance assessment and management of the artefact collections recovered from them.

The use of clearly formulated and explicit research designs in archaeology has been advocated since the 1970s and is a key requirement in many archaeological codes of practice and ethics (e.g. Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology 2003, B1.3; Institute of Field Archaeologists 2000, 3.3.1). What defines a good research design is widely understood (Burke and Smith 2004: 3-6; Fowler 1982:23-24; Hardesty and Little 2000: 63; Raab 1984: 80; Schiffer and House 1977a: 252-252) and has been broadly summarised by the New South Wales Heritage Branch as 'a set of questions that can be investigated using archaeological evidence and a methodology for addressing them' that is 'intended to ensure that archaeological investigations focus on genuine research needs' (New South Wales Heritage Office 1996a: 35). Identifying the important questions that underpin archaeological research designs is fundamental to producing informed state and national level research frameworks, which have been described as 'a coordinated approach to archaeological research and investigation developed for a large area or precinct incorporating research questions and themes that apply to a number of sites' (New South Wales Heritage Office 1996a: 35).

Although all questions have some value, what is needed to populate research frameworks are questions and themes of substance, because 'in the context of what we know of the historic past and how we find out about it, some questions are more productively asked than others … their potential for producing knowledge is far greater than other questions' (Cleland 1988:13). What these questions of substance are has been and continues to be debated at conferences and in publications (Bowdler 1984; Cleland 1988; Deagan 1982, 1988; Casella 2006; Paterson and Wilson 2000). An oft-cited reason (e.g. Philippou 2004:29) for the reluctance to identify the questions and themes that can be used to make decisions about the fate of archaeological collections, is the inescapable fact that we cannot predict the research questions that will be important to the discipline in the future. However, in the face of the practical constraints and limited resources at the disposal of those managing archaeological resources, we can no longer afford to brandish the impossibility of seeing the future as a reason for inaction. Our only option is to assess the significance of archaeological resources and build strategies for their management according to our current knowledge of the resource and the important questions of today.

Research frameworks built on such a foundation, if they are organic, will grow to encompass changes in our understanding of the resource, as gaps in our knowledge are filled and new areas of interest identified. This pragmatic approach to the development of research frameworks is supported by developers of existing research frameworks (e.g. English Heritage 1991: 5) and by significant numbers of Australian archaeologists when interviewed (Schacht 2008:43-44, 51-53). All accept the practicality noted by Iacono that research frameworks must also offer research

approaches 'commensurate with available resources of funding and time' (Iacono 2006:78).

The development of state and national level research frameworks in Australia has long been recognised as desirable and necessary (Bowdler 1981; Iacono 2006; Lydon 1993; Mackay 1996; NSW Heritage Branch 2009:8; Pearson 1984; Schacht 2008). Such frameworks can be used to identify local and regional research priorities, thereby situating site-specific projects in a broader context and providing access to cumulative knowledge about particular site-types and artefact assemblages. Importantly, research frameworks can inform judgements about the relative significance of archaeological sites and collections. This assists state heritage agencies and artefact repositories to justify the resources spent, the decisions made and the policies developed about the investigation and management of sites, the preservation and management of collections, and the collections-based research projects undertaken.

The fact that state and national level research frameworks have yet to be developed is undoubtedly due to the practical impediments noted by some authors (Bowdler 1981; Pearson 1984; Lydon 1993; Mackay 1996) and discussed in detail by others (e.g. Iacono 2006, Schacht 2008). These issues need not be explored again here, but in summary they include problems related to: legislative processes; insufficient funding resources; the development of agreed standards for site excavation and recording; the adequate documentation and management of artefact collections; monitoring accountability for these activities; the lack of communication or publication of research results by members of the discipline; and the lack of consensus on the significance assessment of archaeological resources.

It is easy to become mired in this multitude of difficult-to-resolve obstacles to developing state and national level research frameworks. These issues have not however been barriers to the development of focused local archaeological management plans, such as the *Parramatta Historical Archaeology Landscape Management Study* (Godden Mackay Logan 2000) and the *Newcastle Archaeological Management Plan* (Suters Architects et al. 1997), and such management plans, where they exist, will of course be an invaluable resource for the initial and ongoing development of broader research frameworks.

In the United Kingdom, impediments similar to those recognised in the Australian context were also identified during an extensive survey of existing research frameworks in archaeology, entitled *Frameworks for our Past* (English Heritage 1995). The recommendation from this report to formulate regional research frameworks was implemented with funding from English Heritage and through consultation with members of the archaeological discipline at dedicated conferences and workshops (e.g. Brennand 2006; Petts and Gerrard 2006; Campion 2001). This resulted in a framework (or a framework under development) for each region of England and also several research frameworks for specific classes of artefacts (e.g. Willis 1997).

These regional frameworks were based on the three-stage structure envisaged by English Heritage: a resource assessment; a research agenda; and a research strategy (English Heritage 1995:5-6; Nixon et al. 2002:4). A 'resource assessment' describes the current state of knowledge of the archaeological resource; a 'research agenda' identifies gaps in knowledge, the potential of the resource to fill those gaps, and objectives for future research; and a 'research strategy' sets out proposed methods for achieving the stated objectives. These elements are presented as stages in developing a research framework, each based on the proceeding stage, each in turn justifying the next (English Heritage 1995:5).

For example, the research framework developed for the region of Greater London (Nixon et al. 2002) provides an assessment of the region's archaeological resource, identifies research priorities for defined chronological periods, proposes a research agenda of major themes to focus research as it develops and outlines a strategy that describes proposed actions for addressing the research agenda. In the research framework, identified priorities for each chronological period (which are based on an assessment of the archaeological resource and research conducted previously) are organised thematically using the research themes of the framework. Authors of the framework expressed an expectation that the themes would evolve and change as research answered old questions and presented new ones (Nixon et al. 2002: 78) and they were careful to stress that the research framework is designed to shape research, not dictate it (Nixon et al. 2002: 2).

The research framework developed by the Museum of London was envisaged as 'a vital tool for guiding, facilitating and integrating research … that will actively contribute to a deeper and holistic understanding of London's past' (Nixon et al. 2002: 2). It is seen as an aid to identifying research priorities, which guide the planning of salvage excavation and also increases the information return.

A similar process to that used in the United Kingdom to develop regional frameworks for archaeology has potential for application in Australia. Consideration has in fact already been given to the historic and archaeological themes that are relevant to Australia's heritage. The former Australian Heritage Commission developed a framework called 'Australian Historic Themes' designed to '… assist in the identification, assessment, interpretation and management of heritage places' (Australian Heritage Commission 2001: 2). The themes were intended to foster a comparison of sites within a theme and also to identify unrepresented themes in particular regions. The authors suggested it could also function as an aid in cataloguing museum collections and developing the historical context of the objects being catalogued (Australian Heritage Commission 2001: 4).

Similarly, the New South Wales Heritage Office developed two lists of historic themes specifically for use with the state's terrestrial and maritime heritage items. These themes were developed for similar reasons to those stated by the Australian Heritage Commission, i.e. 'historical themes provide a context within which the heritage significance of an item can be understood, assessed and compared' (New South Wales Heritage Office 1996b: 2). In particular, the themes were designed to provide the context needed to be able to assess whether an item is of state heritage significance: the more themes an item can be assigned to, the more likely it is to be of significance (New South Wales Heritage Office 1996b: 5).

Although many of the broader themes in the 'Australian Historic Themes' cover subjects that may be suitable to historical archaeology, many key subjects of recent archaeological research are not represented in its sub-themes. This includes the lack of themes related to status and class, non-Indigenous ethnicity, and consumerism. Also not represented are questions related to archaeological science and artefact studies. Although many of the themes in 'Australian Historic Themes' may be adapted to suit archaeological subjects, the majority are purely historical and cannot fully represent the nature of Australian archaeological material or archaeological questioning.

The 'New South Wales Historical Themes' (New South Wales Heritage Office 2001) also do not provide specific themes relevant to recent archaeological research topics. The maritime themes developed by the New South Wales Heritage Office (1994) are however, much better suited to

archaeological material. Many of the themes relate directly to research areas in historical archaeology and many of the sub-themes are topics that are typically investigated by utilising archaeological evidence (e.g. Shipwreck encampments; Early settlement sites; Cargos; Trading patterns; Trade routes; Status; Diet). Other sub-themes are particularly applicable to artefact studies, e.g. 'Modification and use of shipwreck debris by Aborigines; Trade goods; Ship fittings; Maritime material culture; Religious artefacts and icons etc. However, the majority of sub-themes focus narrowly on maritime history and a number of themes are better investigated using documentary evidence (e.g. Insurance; Marine boards of enquiry; Strikes; Arbitration; and Union influences on legislation).

None of these historic thematic lists are in themselves sufficient to function as a broader research framework for Australian historical archaeology as they do not target or detail the current or past research interests of the historical archaeological discipline. They may however, be components upon which future Australian state or national level archaeological research frameworks can be built.

The development of a preliminary thematic framework for Australian historical archaeology

The research project from which the current paper stems (Schacht 2008) developed criteria for assessing the research significance of Australian historical archaeological collections. These criteria were part of a broader model which established that the research significance of archaeological collections is inextricably linked with the research questions the collections can address. The study was therefore reliant in part on linking case-study artefact collections to areas of research for which they might be able to provide data. In the absence of existing research frameworks for Australian historical archaeology, it became necessary to develop a thematic framework to facilitate this step in the research.

Obviously, the development of a comprehensive research framework as described by English Heritage (1991) and discussed above, that incorporates a complete resource assessment, research agenda and research strategy, would require considerable investment in time and consultation. However, to suit the needs of the study, some elements of the English Heritage model framework were used to develop a preliminary thematic framework.

The thematic framework was largely drawn from a survey of research themes present in recent Australian historical archaeological literature. Although unpublished excavation reports document the largest proportion of archaeological activity in Australia, the study found that in most states and territories very few reports list the research questions used to guide the recovery of artefacts and inform site interpretation (for example only 8 per cent of reports examined in Victoria did so, Schacht 2008:96). A secondary consideration was the difficulty in accessing this body of literature; although it is acknowledged that this material has in recent years become increasingly accessible online (e.g. University of Sydney 2011) and would make an important contribution to future literature surveys. For these reasons, archaeological publica-tions were used as the key source for identifying the research interests of the discipline.

In addition, the lists of themes produced by the Australian Heritage Commission and the New South Wales Heritage Office were accepted as important indicators of the historical and archaeological subjects considered important and pertinent by Australian heritage agencies. As such, themes and sub-themes with relevance to archaeological material and research were also adopted into the new thematic framework developed by the study.

An analysis of Australian historical archaeological publications

Publications produced between 1993 and 2009 were included in this survey to represent the recent research interests of the discipline of Australian historical archaeology. The survey only drew on publications where the subject matter related to Australian historical archaeology, including terrestrial and maritime archaeology and also historic sites with Indigenous values. It is acknowledged that the publications analysed tend to reflect past research questions and the interests of research archaeologists, rather than consulting or salvage archaeology. Obviously, the analysis does not constitute a complete reflection of all archaeological research being conducted at a particular time, but only the published work of particular researchers.

The publications were analysed with the aim of generating some of the elements described in the English Heritage model for a thematic framework. This included a list of themes and topics of recent archaeological research and a list of gaps in recent research. The academic merit of arguments posed or the rigour exercised in the individual publications was not assessed during this analysis. The majority had however, been subjected to a formal peer review process as part of their original selection for publication.

Finally, it is important to reiterate that in keeping with the aims of the original research project, the primary purpose of the thematic framework was to function as a reference for identifying areas of research for which historical archaeological sites and artefacts may provide data. The survey therefore did not include publications with a focus on:

- Non-archaeological built heritage
- Non-archaeological moveable heritage
- Heritage management, legislation, or policy
- Purely historical topics based only on documentary evidence

Within the parameters outlined above, the publications were examined to answer the following questions:

1. What are the research themes of the publications?
2. Which site-types are used as sources of information?
3. Which artefact-types are used as sources of information?
4. Can any gaps be identified in the research themes chosen for publication?

The final sample of publications resulted in 465 references, most of which were journal articles (see Figure 1).
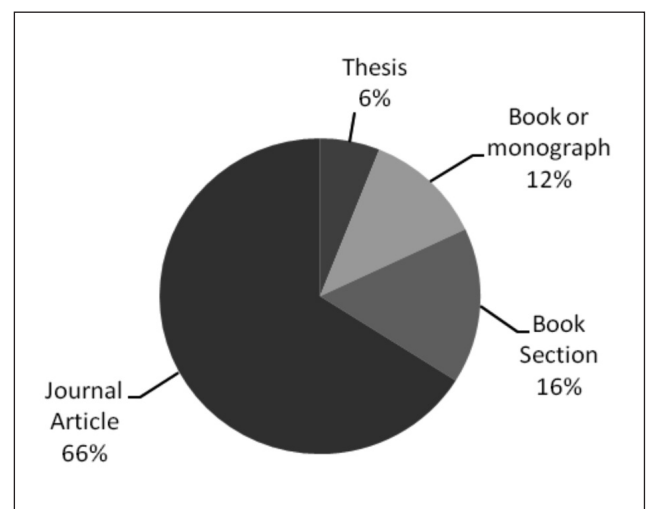

Figure 1: Distribution of publications survey sample (n= 465)

Key themes of the publications surveyed

Individual publications in the survey sample with similar subject matter were grouped into subject areas and within this, into themes and sub-themes. A 'theme' was defined as a broad subject area that was identified as recurring in the publications. 'Sub-themes' are the sub-categories that relate to a particular theme. The research focus of a publication was labelled a 'Topic'. Figure 2 shows the structure of these categories which together comprise the thematic framework developed.

The subject matter of individual publications often covered a range of topics and therefore had relevance to more than one theme. These publications were assigned to as many themes as they could contribute information to. This did not impact negatively on the findings of the survey, since the aim was not to quantify the publications per se but to identify the variety and frequency of different research topics across the publications sample.

Table 1 lists themes occurring in the publications sample which were relevant to more than ten of the publications in the sample. Only the three most common themes (Infrastructure and transport, Primary industries, Cross-cultural encounters) accounted for more than 10 per cent each of the publications in the sample, indicating the wide range of themes chosen for publication. Although producing a variety of data about Australia's archaeology, this diversity may perhaps reflect the oft-perceived lack of orientation of research aims and priorities (e.g. Iacono 2006: 78-79; Lydon 1993; Mackay 1996: 134-136; Murray 2002: 13; Schacht 2008: 50-52) that can result in the inefficient use of the finite resources available for the analysis, preservation and management of archaeological sites and collections.

Table 1: Principal themes (by number of publications) from the publications survey (n=465)

Theme	No. of publications
Infrastructure and transport	99
Primary industries	90
Cross-cultural encounters	57
Status and class	48
Trade and commerce	41
Secondary industries	40
Demography, death and disease	39
Consumption	36
Built environment	35
Ethnicity	35
Immigration and settlement	34
Defence	26
Convicts and incarceration	25
Geology and geomorphology	18
Climate and landscape	16
Flora and fauna	12

Archaeological site types used as sources of information

Archaeological sites discussed in the publications were noted and then grouped according to site types (see Appendix 1). Of these, the largest group by far is 'underwater sites' which is the focus of more than one-third of all publications discussing a specific site type[1]. The next most popular site types are: urban settlement sites, mining sites, transport and infrastructure sites, and industrial sites (see Table 2). Table 3 shows the types of site most often referred to in publications related to a particular theme.

Table 2: Site types featured in the publications sample (by % of sample referring to sites)

Site type	%
Underwater sites	30
Urban settlement sites	8
Mining sites	7
Transport and infrastructure sites	7
Industrial sites	7
Hunting and fishing sites	6
Pastoral sites	6
Other settlement sites	6
Various sites*	6
Penal sites and asylums	4
Indigenous sites (historical)	4
Cemeteries and burial sites	2
Commercial sites	2
Military sites	1
Hospitals and asylums	1
Municipal sites	1

*Publications referring to a number of site types

People and Society (Subject)

National identity (Theme)		(Topics) • Development of Australian identity • Role of landscape in determining national identity
Status and class (Theme)	Social identity (Sub-theme)	• Socio-economic differences between site occupants • Establishing and maintaining socio-economic status • Social structure of mining communities • Social hierarchies at mill sites • Chinese social structures • 'Gentility' in the archaeological record • 'Slum' image and conceptions about lives of the poor • Social identity reflected in architecture • Urban social values • Rural social values • Tracing individual lives in the archaeological record • Identify and self-expression of the incarcerated
	Power relationships and status (Sub-theme)	• Conflict at whaling sites • Indigenous/non-Indigenous power relations • Gaoler and convict /prisoner power relations • Convict resistance • Power relations between convicts • Urban inhabitants and relationship with authorities • Authority structures and social organisation

Figure 2: Structure of the preliminary thematic framework developed from the publications survey (example of two sub-themes and related topics)

[1.] The large body of publications with maritime content in the survey sample can be attributed to a number of factors. This includes the existence of a dedicated publication for research in maritime archaeology, 'The Bulletin of the Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology' and the fact that a number of important wreck excavations and investigations were conducted during the period encompassed by the survey. These include studies of the shipwrecks Sydney Cove, Solway, Xantho, Clonmel, City of Launceston, and the Pandora. Another factor in the large amount of maritime publication is undoubtedly also the establishment in 1992 of the Australian National Centre of Excellence in Maritime Archaeology at the Western Australian Maritime Museum, which has since fostered much maritime archaeological research.

Table 3: Most common site types used to address principal themes in publication

Theme	Most common site types utilised	No. Publications#
Infrastructure and transport	Underwater sites	63
	Transport and infrastructure sites	29
Primary industries	Hunting and fishing sites	31
	Mining sites	24
	Pastoral sites	12
Cross-cultural encounters	Indigenous sites	18
	Pastoral sites	11
	Various sites*	8
Status and class	Urban settlement sites	19
	Pastoral sites	6
	Underwater sites	5
Trade and commerce	Underwater sites	23
	Urban settlement sites	3
Secondary industries	Various sites*	3
	Industrial sites	18
	Underwater sites	14
Demography, death and disease	Cemeteries and burial sites	7
	Underwater sites	5
	Other settlement sites	4
Consumption	Urban settlement sites	11
	Underwater sites	6
	Industrial sites	4
	Mining sites	4
Built environment	Pastoral sites	6
	Mining sites	5
	Other settlement sites	4
	Urban settlement sites	4
Ethnicity	Mining sites	10
	Other settlement sites	5
	Underwater sites	4
	Urban settlement sites	4
Immigration and settlement	Underwater sites	15
	Mining sites	4
	Industrial sites	3
	Other settlement sites	3
Defence	Underwater sites	18
	Military sites	7
Convicts and incarceration	Police and penal sites	12
	Hospitals and asylums	4
	Penal sites and asylums	4
Geology and geomorphology	Underwater sites	10
	Transport and infrastructure sites	4
Climate and landscape	Mining sites	4
	Pastoral sites	3
Flora and fauna	Underwater sites	4
	Various sites*	4

Does not represent total number of publications relevant to a theme, only those assigned to the site types listed
*Data from a number of site types was used

Artefacts as sources of information

Understanding the types of artefacts used as sources of information in research and the research themes they are used to address, contributes to ensuring research frameworks have relevance to the management and interpretation of artefact collections. Frameworks utilising such information can support management decisions relating to the significance assessment, acquisition and deaccession of artefact collections and can also inform their interpretation in public displays and exhibitions.

Analysis of the publications sample indicates that approximately 45 per cent of the publications discuss artefact data. Most individual publications referring to artefacts

discuss a variety of artefact types (see Table 4, listed as 'various'). Those that restrict discussion to a single artefact type mostly refer to ship remains, building material, ceramics or glass. Artefact types least discussed in publication include floral remains and aircraft remains.

The most common site types which are sources for the artefacts discussed in the publications surveyed are shown in Table 5. It is clear when comparing Table 2 with Table 5, that the most common site types discussed in publication are not always also the most likely source for artefact studies. For example, although 'urban settlement sites' and 'mining sites' are equally common as sites in publication overall, 'urban settlement sites' are three times as likely to be the source of artefact studies in publication. Similarly, Indigenous (historical) sites are much more likely to be the subject of artefact discussions than they are a subject for publication in general.

Table 4: Artefact types discussed in publication (by % of publications discussing artefacts)

Artefact type	%
Various	55
Ship machinery/remains	7
Building materials	6
Ceramic vessels	6
Glass/bottles	4
Clothing/textiles	3
Tools	3
Human remains	3
Faunal remains	3
Rock art/graffiti	3
Weapons	2
Aircraft machinery/remains	1
Floral remains	1

Table 5: Sites as sources for artefacts in publication (by % of publications discussing artefacts)

Site type	%
Underwater sites	30
Urban settlement sites	12
Pastoral sites	9
Indigenous (historical) sites	7
Hunting and fishing sites	6
Industrial sites	6
Mining sites	4
Transport and infrastructure sites	4
Various sites	4
Other settlement sites	4
Commercial sites	3
Military sites	2
Penal sites and asylums	2
Police and penal sites	2
Government buildings	1
Cemeteries and burial sites	1

Examining the research topics artefacts are used to address in publications shows that these most often relate to the themes:

- Status and class
- Infrastructure and transport
- Trade and commerce
- Primary industries
- Cross-cultural encounters
- Demography, death and disease
- Consumption
- Ethnicity

Table 6 shows these publications as a proportion of all publications assigned to a theme, and also identifies the principal artefact types that are used to discuss these themes.

Table 6: Themes and artefacts in publication

Theme	No. publications using artefacts	As % of all publications in theme	Principal artefact types discussed
Status and class	39	81	Various*
Infrastructure and transport	35	35	Various Ship machinery/ equipment
Trade and commerce	34	83	Various Ceramics
Primary industries	34	38	Various
Cross-cultural encounters	32	56	Various Rock art/graffiti Tools
Demography, death and disease	30	77	Animal remains Various Glass/bottles Human remains
Consumption	30	83	Various
Ethnicity	25	71	Various Ceramics
Built environment	19	54	Various Building materials
Immigration and settlement	15	44	Various
Defence	13	50	Various Aircraft machinery/ remains
Convicts and incarceration	11	44	Various Rock art/graffiti
Secondary industries	11	28	Various Ceramics

* 'Various' refers to the discussion of a variety of artefact types in a publication

Gaps in the research themes

Themes drawn from the publications analysis that had less than ten publications assigned to them were considered to have had little focus in publication and were labelled 'gaps' in the thematic framework developed. Table 7 lists the least-published themes in the publications surveyed.

Topics from the 'Australian Historic Themes' and the NSW Heritage Office thematic lists which are relevant to Australian historical archaeology but have received little or no attention in publications in the sample can be added to this list of 'gaps'. Also relevant are unexplored topics from the London Research Framework (Nixon et al. 2002) which have relevance to the Australian context and also topics identified by Australian authors as worthy of more attention (Casella 2006; Paterson and Wilson 2000). These additional topics are shown below in Table 8.

These 'gaps' in the thematic framework highlight areas of research that should be prioritised in state and national research frameworks and related research agendas. Artefact collections that can provide data for these rarely addressed areas of research should be considered to have greater research potential than those that provide data for more commonly published, and possibly exhausted, research topics. Similarly, site types that are least discussed in publication (see Table 2) may represent gaps in our knowledge about particular sites and the activities that occurred there; this too may guide the targeting (for research and management) of such sites in the research strategies of future state and national research frameworks.

There are, of course, also geographic gaps in the areas in Australia from which sites are selected for publication. Approximately 40 per cent of sites in the publications sample are located in New South Wales and Victoria (see Figure 3). The Northern Territory and Queensland received the least attention. Even less common are publications that have a wider focus across state borders or that make comparisons between Australian and overseas sites.

Table 7: Themes represented by few (i.e. less than 10) publications in the survey sample

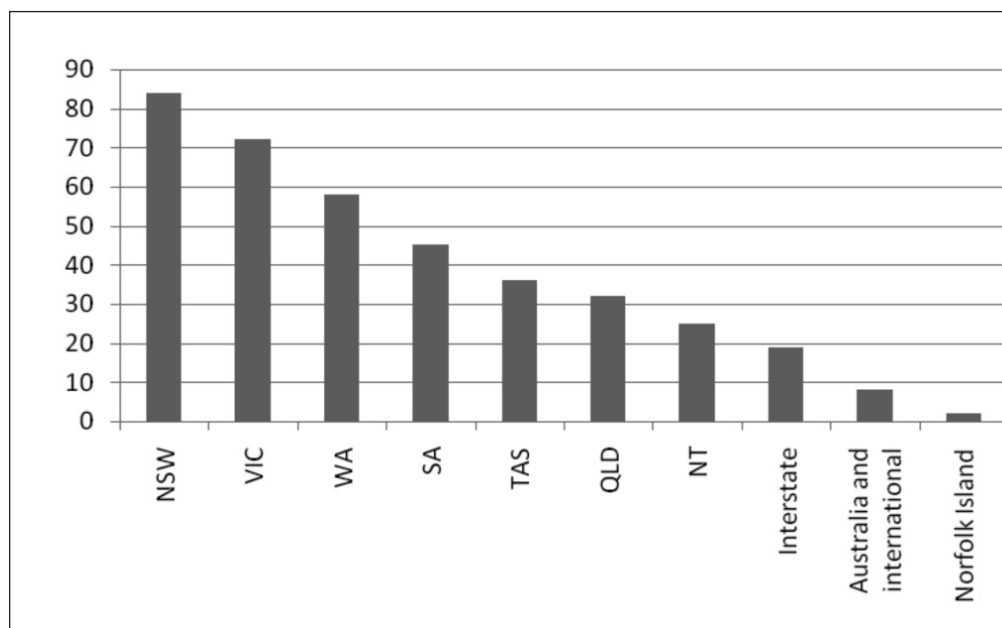| Themes	No. publications
Art and craft	9
Children	9
Urban history	8
Continuity and change	5
Ideology, cult and religion	5
Recreation	3
Colonialism	3
Discovery and exploration	2
National identity	2
Administration and law	1

Figure 3: Location of sites referred to in publication, by number of publications (n=381)

Table 8: Additional topics not well-represented in publication

Theme	Sub-theme	Topic
Discovery and exploration	European arrival	• Exploration routes • Landfalls • Scientific expeditions
Immigration and settlement	Settlers and immigrants	• Forced settlement and inter-colonial comparisons • Identifying ownership and occupancy of land and water
	Periphery and core	• Population movement within and between colonies • Impact of large settlements on periphery
Urban history	Urban development	• Development of urban settlements • Inter-colonial comparisons of urban development • Nature and extent of different neighbourhoods
Defence		• Soldier settlement schemes • Indigenous (historic) battle sites
Trade and commerce	Trade	• Relationship between core and periphery in supply and demand
Demography, death and disease	Diet and health	• Regional variations in health • Population density and character
Infrastructure and transport	Roads and tracks	• Inland waterways • Evolution of road systems
	Water supply	• Establishing urban water supplies
Ideology, cult and religion		• Religious artefacts and icons • Religious beliefs and practices • Material culture of religious minorities
The aged		• The experience of the aged
Art and craft		• Visual arts • Maritime crafts
Recreation		• Public and private recreation activities of urban and rural inhabitants • Social and economic implications of recreation activities
Secondary industries		• Industrialisation and poverty, deprivation, disease • Development of mass-production manufacturing industry
	Ceramics industry	• Local ceramic industries
	Glass industry	• Local glass industries
	Cottage industries	• Domestic cottage industries
Primary industries	Sheep and cattle industry	• Breeding programmes • Fellmongering and scouring
Consumption		• Relationship between core and periphery in supply and demand
Continuity and change		• Catastrophe and the development of Australia (fire, flood, disease, war, famine)

A preliminary thematic framework for Australian historical archaeology

In summary, the preliminary thematic framework (Appendix 2) developed from the results discussed above, is constructed of:

• Themes and sub-themes drawn from the results of the survey of recent archaeological publications (1993–2009)

• Themes and sub-themes drawn from existing thematic lists that describe the research topics drawn from the publications survey

• Themes and sub-themes drawn from existing thematic lists that were *not* represented in the results of the publications survey but have relevance to Australian archaeological research

The framework which is set out in Appendix 2 currently consists of 27 themes, 63 sub-themes, and 389 topics, which can be considered to represent recent areas of (published) historical archaeological research interest, and also the gaps in this research. The publications survey from which the framework was drawn has also indicated the archaeological site and artefact types most often used for Australian historical archaeological research. Finally, it has highlighted the site and artefact types that have been less-studied and which may have the potential to provide new data for future research.

The way forward

The development of state and national level research frameworks for historical archaeology is a practical exercise well within the capabilities of the Australian historical archaeological community. Collectively, this group has the most informed understanding of Australia's historical archaeological resource and is therefore best placed to initiate the process. The strategy used by English Heritage and the Museum of London to develop the research framework for London archaeology (Nixon et al. 2002) serves as an excellent model for adaptation to the Australian context and consideration has already been given to the requisite steps in this process (New South Wales Heritage Branch 2009: 27-28; Schacht 2008: 48-46, 96-97; Iacono 2006: 81).

From these sources it is clear that building an effective research framework should represent the input of the entire archaeological community through a wide consultation process which:

1. Describes the current status of Australia's historical archaeological resource

2. Identifies state and national level research priorities and objectives for future research

3. Evaluates these and develops from them a prioritised framework of research themes and questions

4. Formulates a strategy for meeting the identified research objectives.

Interviews with Australian archaeologists (Schacht 2008: 51) and other sources (e.g. New South Wales Heritage Branch 2009: 28; Nixon et al. 2002: 2) suggest that any research framework developed should not constrain or restrict research but should be an organic reference that is regularly reviewed as new information is gathered and as our understanding of the archaeological resource changes. In practice, requiring the acknowledgement of research framework questions in the research designs of proposed excavation or collections-based research projects will assist in ensuring that the identified broader objectives of the research framework are met and that there is a meaningful return of information for the investment of resources in such projects.

CONCLUSION

This paper presents a preliminary thematic framework for Australian historical archaeology. It developed out of a need identified during significance assessments of historical archaeological collections to link data from the collections to the questions they may have the potential to answer. This framework is not an exhaustive record of recent historical archaeological research; it does not document our current understanding of Australia's historical archaeological resource, nor pose the full set of sophisticated questions necessary to define these. It does however, indicate many of the broader themes into which such information can be categorised, and as such it is the first step from which more comprehensive frameworks can be built.

State and national level research frameworks for Australian historical archaeology have great potential to become a common focus in defining and documenting our current understanding of Australia's archaeological resources and for identifying the important questions we have yet to address. Together, these can direct the formulation of targeted research strategies and management plans that will assist practitioners and researchers to make informed and realistic decisions about the recovery, interpretation and long term conservation of Australia's historical archaeological sites and collections.

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Appendix 1: Definitions of site types mentioned in the text

Site type	Sites included (as represented in survey sample)
Cemeteries and burial sites	Cemeteries, individual graves
Commercial sites	Hotels, inns, boarding houses, shops, markets
Hunting and fishing sites	Sealing and whaling stations and camps, tryworks, trepanging sites, land-based fishing and guano sites, pearling sites, oyster harvesting sites, hunting sheds (skinning and snaring huts)
Indigenous (historical) sites	Indigenous sites, Indigenous sites at European sites, rock art sites
Industrial sites	Cattle and sheep farms, dairy farms, cane-sugar farms, female factories, flour mills, eucalyptus distillery, timber milling camps, lime kilns, charcoal kilns, tobacco kilns, blacksmith shops, brickworks, iron smelters, copper smelters, lead smelters, shale oil distilleries, textile mills, beverage factories, gas works.
Military sites	Forts, batteries.
Mining sites	Gold mining sites, copper-mining sites, oil-shale mining sites, gold mining settlements, gold mining camps, slate and other quarries.
Municipal sites	Government houses, mints, customs houses, observatories, government schools, repatriation hospitals, Royal Australian College of Surgeons.
Other settlement sites	Early settler camps, shipwreck survivor camps, explorers' camps, town rubbish dumps, Chinese oven sites.
Pastoral sites	Rural homesteads, farms, Indigenous encampments on pastoral properties, rural missions.
Penal sites and asylums	Convict prisons (male and female), asylums, military prisons, cottage prisons.
Transport and infrastructure sites	Ports, wharves and jetties, other port-related structures, roads and tracks, road and river crossings, stock routes, overland telegraph line, drainage and sewerage systems, dam and railway construction camps.
Urban settlement sites	Urban towns, urban neighbourhoods (especially 'slums'), urban houses and estates.
Underwater sites	Naval (including convict) vessels, sealing/whaling vessels, cargo ships, merchant vessels, passenger vessels, steamships, submarines, flying boats, ships' graveyards.

Appendix 2: A preliminary thematic framework for Australian historical archaeology

Subject/Theme	Sub-theme	Topics
SETTLEMENT **Discovery and exploration**	European arrival	• Earliest European activity in Australia • Indigenous contact with European explorers • Exploration routes • Landfalls • Scientific expeditions
Immigration and settlement	Settlers and immigrants	• Forced settlement and inter-colonial comparisons • Settlement patterns • Identifying ownership and occupancy of land and water • Role of Indigenous knowledge in early settlement • Factors in the placement of coastal ports • Emigrant transport to Australia • Cross-cultural encounters of settlers with others • Defensive strategies of frontier settlers • Settler fear and Indigenous resistance • Evolution of free settlements from convict landscapes
	Shipwreck survivors	• Shipwreck survivor camps • Shipwreck survivor crisis response • Health, diet, individual identification of shipwreck survivors • Indigenous contact with shipwreck survivors
	Periphery and core	• Relationship between settlement and local context • Impact of large settlements on periphery • Population movement within and between colonies • Rural settlements • Regional production for consumption by core
	Isolation	• Strategies for overcoming physical isolation • Identifying isolation in material culture
Cross-cultural encounters	Cross-cultural contact and site use	• European interactions with Macassans • Indigenous interactions with Afghanis • Interactions and co-existence of Europeans and Chinese • Indigenous contact with shipwreck survivors • Indigenous contact with sealers/whalers • Indigenous histories of historic sites • Co-existence of Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures • Identifying Indigenous use of historic sites • Continuity of Indigenous cultural places into historic period
	Cross-cultural exchange	• Nature and extent of cross-cultural exchange practices • Role of exchange in conflict resolution
	Conflict and power relations	• Indigenous/non-Indigenous conflict and conflict resolution

Subject/Theme	Sub-theme	Topics
		• Conflict at whaling sites • Removal and segregation of Indigenous people • Indigenous territoriality
	Cultural change and transfer	• Indigenous responses to cross-cultural contact • Gender specific responses to cross-cultural contact • Role of Indigenous knowledge in non-Indigenous settlement • Cultural transfer resulting from cross-cultural contact • Impact of culture contact on Indigenous art • Cultural change in Chinese communities • Transfer of Chinese working practices to the Australian context
	Other studies of culture contact	• Negotiating cross-cultural interaction • Conditions for continuity and change of Indigenous culture • Changes in cross-cultural interaction in response to environmental and technological changes
Colonialism		• Comparative studies of colonial societies • Material culture of British colonisation and imperialism
Convicts and incarceration	Penal system and philosophy	• Society integrated convictism • Convict households • Philosophy and practice of the penal system
	Prisons	• Male convict prisons • Female convict factories • Military prisons • Convict ships • Boys' prisons • Convict material culture studies • Convict exchange practices • Convict life • Architectural interpretations of prisons • Identity and self-expression of prison inmates • Institutional life • Prison authority structures • Convict resistance • Power relations between convicts
	Asylums	• Asylum philosophy • Lunatic asylums • Destitute asylums • Institutional life • Identity and self-expression of asylum inmates
	Slavery	• Technology, construction, and operation of slave ships
Urban history	Urban development	• Development of Australian urban settlements • Urban rural fringe • Inter-colonial comparisons of urban development • Nature and extent of different neighbourhoods • Development of urban housing • Nature of the urban 'slum' • Urban 'slum' minorities
ENVIRONMENT **Climate and landscape**		• Climatic conditions, air and water quality • Influence of climate on human behaviour • Role of landscape in determining national identity • Cultural perceptions of space • Environmental factors affecting placement of historic sites • Environmental impacts on human settlement • Environmental impacts on industrial processes • Environmental impacts on pastoral industry • Environmental impacts on mining activities • Environmental impact of mining • Environmental impact of agriculture
Geology and geomorphology		• Sedimentary analysis and dating historic sites • Soil analysis and interpreting site use • Taphonomic processes in site formation • Sedimentary processes in site formation • Petrographic analysis and site identification • Ore chemical structures and interpreting mining technology • Hydrodynamic processes in site formation
Flora and fauna		• Environmental impact of agriculture • Clearing the native environment • Indigenous (historic) fire management • Marine organisms, organic residues, and site degradation • The role of native and introduced flora at historic sites • Shell midden formation on historic sites

Subject/Theme	Sub-theme	Topics
DEVELOPMENT **Administration and law**		• Relationship of urban inhabitants with authorities • Role of military/navy in bringing stability
Defence		• Civilian use of firearms • Soldier settlement schemes • Indigenous battle sites
	Military vessels	• Convict transport vessels • Submarine sites • Role and activities of naval personnel
	Military aircraft	• WWII aircraft sites • Aircraft site location and identification
	Fortifications and defences	• Military forts • Military prisons • Convict labour at military sites • Chronology and function of defences • Cultural and symbolic role of defences • Strategic role of military defence sites • Defensive structures and strategies of frontier settlers
Infrastructure and transport	Roads and tracks	• Sustainability of public and civic infrastructure • Indigenous tracks • Non-Indigenous tracks • Goldfields routes • Stock routes • Inland waterways • Rail transport • Evolution of road systems
	Ships	• Wreck identification • Ship technology • Ship fittings • Ship navigation • Wreck site formation • Wreck site degradation • Wreck conservation • Ship abandonment sites
	Water supply and sanitation	• Establishing urban water supplies • Rural water management • Drainage and sewerage systems • Impact on environment of introduced water technologies
	Communication	• Role of ships in communication • Overland telegraph line
	Ports and jetties	• Placement of coastal ports and infrastructure • Infrastructure of coastal ports • Lighthouses • Development of port towns • Economic and social role of wharves and jetties • Lifestyle of port inhabitants
	Labour	• Convict labour system • Islander labour trade
Built environment		• Structure and layout of built environment • Structural development of built environment • Availability and supply of building materials • Building to suit Australian conditions • Building using Australian materials • Procurement and supply of building materials • Building materials as economic indicators • Structures and social identity and hierarchy • Naval architecture • Government buildings • Construction and use of Chinese temples • Civilian defensive structures • Architecture of confinement • Religious structures • Shipwreck survivor structures and shelters • Hunting sheds and huts • Meanings and values of domestic and public gardens • Functional analysis of the interior spaces of structures • Gender analysis of space • Ethnicity in building styles • Fabric analysis of structure • Ruination processes • Management of woodlands and quarries

Subject/Theme	Sub-theme	Topics
Continuity and change		• Post-abandonment site-use • Continuity of Indigenous cultural places into historic period • Catastrophe and the development of Australia (fire, flood, disease, war, famine)
	Social continuity and change	• Social continuity in Australia of overseas cultures
	Technological continuity and change	• Importing overseas technologies to Australia • Establishing local (Australian) industries and technologies • Technological adaptations to local (Australian) conditions • Influence of ethnicity in technological innovation
PEOPLE AND SOCIETY **National identity**		• Development of Australian identity • Role of landscape in determining national identity
Status and class	Social identity	• Socio-economic differences between site occupants • Establishing and maintaining socio-economic status • Social structure of mining communities • Social hierarchies at mill sites • Chinese social structures • 'Gentility' in the archaeological record • 'Slum' image and conceptions about lives of the poor • Social identity reflected in architecture • Urban social values • Rural social values • Tracing individual lives in the archaeological record • Identify and self-expression of the incarcerated
	Power relationships and status	• Conflict at whaling sites • Indigenous/non-Indigenous power relations • Gaoler and prisoner power relations • Convict resistance • Power relations between convicts • Urban inhabitants and relationship with authorities • Authority structures and social organisation
	Gender roles and status	• Identifying gender organisation in material culture • Identifying female presence at historic sites • Female domestic roles • Female subordination • Power relations at female convict factories • Role of women in service industry
Ethnicity	Indigenous culture	• Indigenous exchange routes • Indigenous territoriality • Indigenous relationship with historic sites • Indigenous (historic) cemeteries
	British culture	• Identifying 'Britishness' • Identifying British regional cultures (e.g. Cornish)
	Pacific Islander culture	• Tahitian costume • Tongan weapons • Polynesian fishing • South Sea Islander cultural identity • South Sea Islander labour trade
	Welsh culture	• Welsh miners and landscape adaptation
	Afghan culture	• Lives of Afghanis in rural Australia
	Chinese culture	• Cultural life of Chinese settlers • Chinese dietary preferences • Chinese communication with Europeans • Experience of Chinese women • Experience of Chinese men • Cultural change in Chinese communities • Chinese social structures and diversity • Chinese economic systems • Chinese mining activities • Chinese fishing industry
	German culture	• Cultural life of German settlers • German pottery industry
Demography, death and disease	Diet and health	• Population density and character • Colonial diets and preferences • Availability, production, and distribution of foodstuffs • Patterns in butchery • Adaptive evolution in Chinese cooking practices • Water filtration • Medical care • Indigenous disease

Subject/Theme	Sub-theme	Topics
		• Illnesses of early settlers • Role of pharmacies in community health • Sanitation and hygiene • Regional variations in health
	Cemeteries and burial	• Grave site identification • Indigenous (historic) cemeteries • European attitudes to death • Funerary industry • Perinatal death practices
Ideology, cult and religion		• Cultural meaning of Indigenous and non-Indigenous historic sites • Communicating ideology with built structures • Religious artefacts and icons • Religious beliefs and practices • Material culture of religious minorities • Religious sites and buildings • Importance of religion in quarry settlements • Adapting religious life to the Australian landscape
Children		• The experience of children • Children in the penal system • Educating children
The aged		• The experience of the aged
Art and craft		• Visual arts • Sewing – commercial and domestic • Maritime crafts • Impact of culture contact on Indigenous art
Recreation		• Public and private recreation activities of urban and rural inhabitants • Social and economic implications of recreation activities • Role of social gatherings in development of communities • Smoking habits
ECONOMY **Primary industries**	Sealing and whaling	• Identifying whaling and sealing sites • Living and working conditions at whaling stations • Behavioural impact of whaling on whalers • Lifestyle of sealers • Contact between sealers/whalers and Indigenous people • Comparisons between whaling and sealing industry • Tryworks technology and methods • Diet and food sources at whaling stations • Environmental impact of whaling • Inter-colonial comparisons of sealing and whaling industries
	Fishing and hunting	• Wildlife management and marine and riverine exploitation • Terrestrial fishing • Fishing technology • Trepang fishing • Fur trade and fellmongering • Mutton bird hunting • Oyster harvesting
	Quarrying	• Quarrying industry • Slate industry
	Pearling	• Pearling industry and infrastructure
	Guano industry	• Guano mining
	Mining	• Mining technology and extraction techniques • Impact of landscape on mining activities • Impact of mining on landscape • Imported (foreign) mining technology and techniques • Lives of mining community inhabitants • Social structure of mining communities • Chinese mining experience • Welsh mining experience • Female mining experience
	Forestry	• Timber mill camps • Clearing the landscape
	Sheep and cattle industry	• Indigenous and European history of pastoral sites • Operation of pastoral estates • Rural technology • Fellmongering and scouring • Social and economic status of homestead occupants • Indigenous pastoral workers and encampments • Pastoral diets • Breeding programmes • Water management

Subject/Theme	Sub-theme	Topics
	Agriculture	• Agricultural practices • Sugar industry • Environmental impact of agricultural practices • Cultivation of edible plants by early settlers
	Dairy farming	• Colonial dairy practices
Secondary industries	Energy supply	• Industrialisation and poverty, deprivation, disease • Development of mass-production manufacturing industry • Gasworks
	Processing	Design, technology and operation of: • Lead smelters • Copper smelters • Iron ore smelters • Quartz roasting pits • Lime burning • Shale-oil distilleries • Eucalyptus-oil distilleries • Tobacco kilns • Charcoal kilns
	Shipbuilding	• Ship construction techniques • Development and decline of shipbuilding industry • Availability and supply of shipbuilding materials
	Flour milling	• Water-powered mills – technology and design
	Textile industry	• Textile mills – technology and equipment
	Brick industry	• Brickworks – technology, process, working conditions • Adaptation in local roofing tile production
	Ceramics industry	• European ceramics industry • German pottery traditions • International comparative analysis of industrial period ceramics • Local ceramic industries
	Glass industry	• Local glass industries
	Foundries	• Blacksmith shops
	Cottage industries	• Domestic cottage industries
	Food and beverage production	• Beverage factories
Trade and commerce	Trade	• Trade specialisation • Patterns in global and intercolonial trade • Role of ships and cargo in colonisation and economic development of Australian colonies • Australia's role in international trade • Intercolonial trade with Canada • Trade with China • Macassan trade networks • Social and cultural roles of ships and cargo • Riverine trade • Trade in ethnographic material by ships' crews • Nature and extent of Indigenous/non-Indigenous trade • Convict black-market exchange • Relationship between core and periphery in supply and demand
	Trade goods	• Life trajectories of consumer goods • Goods used in Indigenous/non-Indigenous trade • Salvage of wrecked ships and cargo • Trade in European ceramics • Trade in Chinese porcelain • Trade in clay pipes • Trade in wines • Trade in timber • Trade in ethnographic material
	Markets	• Growth of market for Australian made goods and services • Colonial market networks and access • Convict black markets
	Service industry	• Role of inns in maritime trade • Boarding houses • Role of women in service industry
Consumption		• Role of consumerism in colonisation and imperialism • Relationship between core and periphery in supply and demand • Sources and availability of consumer goods • Consumption at urban sites • Consumption at rural sites • Consumption at whaling/sealing sites • Consumption at milling camps • Consumption at mining sites

Subject/Theme	Sub-theme	Topics
		• Consumer goods as an expression of gentility and status
		• Recycling and functional changes in consumer goods
		• Shopping and markets
		• Clothing
		• Economy of entertainment and recreation
		• Consumption of medical goods