

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — 14TH JULY, 2008

CALL FOR JOINT MANAGEMENT OF WILLANDRA LAKES WORLD HERITAGE AREA, AUSTRALIA

The World Archaeological Congress calls on all relevant agencies and stakeholders to affirm and ensure meaningful joint management of the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area in Australia with traditional Tribal Groups of the region.

This resolution was passed unanimously at the Plenary session of the Sixth World Archaeological Congress, held in Dublin, Ireland, over the last week.

“The World Archaeological Congress is committed to Indigenous control over Indigenous cultural heritage,” said Professor Claire Smith, President. “We support the development of the Willandra Lakes Keeping Place and Education and Research Centre in accordance with Traditional Owner direction and management”.

"Supporting the rights and responsibilities of Indigenous communities was fundamental to the establishment of the World Archaeological Congress," said Dorothy Lippert, the Indigenous representative on the WAC Executive. “We have developed a number of Codes of Ethics in relation to this.”

The World Archaeological Congress acknowledges and recognises Indigenous methodologies for interpreting, curating, managing and protecting Indigenous cultural heritage.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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BACKGROUND:

The World Archaeological Congress (WAC) is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization and is the only elected international body of practising archaeologists. WAC holds an international congress every four years to promote the exchange of the results of archaeological research; professional training and public education for disadvantaged nations, groups and communities; the empowerment and betterment of Indigenous groups and First Nations peoples; and the conservation of archaeological sites.

The World Archaeological Congress, by statute, has an Indigenous Council made up of Indigenous members. The current Indigenous Council has representatives from Australia, New Zealand, North America and South America.

The Sixth World Archaeological Congress (WAC-6) was held from 29th June—4th July at the University College Dublin. This was the first World Archaeological Congress to be held in Ireland. It was attended by over 1,800 archaeologists, native peoples and international scholars from 74 nations. Motions from the Plenary session of the Congress were considered by subsequent meetings of the World Archaeological Congress Council and Executive.

The Congress Patron for WAC-6 was President Mary McAleese. Previous Congress Patrons include Harriet Mayor Fulbright, Prince Charles and Nelson Mandela.