

Conference Abstract

Managers of Australasian Herbarium Collections (MAHC): A MARK of Curation Excellence

Peter Jobson[‡], Joanne Birch[§], Gillian Brown^{||}, Jeremy J. Bruhl[¶], Lyn Cave[#], Frank Hemmings[□], Sarah Hirst[«], Shelley James[»], Karina Knight[^], Antony Kusabs[˘], Pina Milne[˙], Ines Schonberger[?], Frank Zich[˚]

[‡] Northern Territory Herbarium, Alice Springs, NT, Australia

[§] University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

[|] Queensland Herbarium, Department of Environment & Science, Brisbane, Australia

[¶] N.C.W.Beadle Herbarium, University of New England, Armidale, Australia

[#] Tasmanian Herbarium, Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart, Australia

[□] John T. Waterhouse Herbarium, School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences, UNSW Sydney, Sydney, Australia

[«] Northern Territory Herbarium, Department of Environment & Natural Resources, Darwin, Australia

[»] Royal Botanic Garden Sydney, Sydney, Australia

[^] Western Australian Herbarium, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Perth, Australia

[˘] Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, New Zealand

[˙] Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Melbourne, Australia

[?] Allan Herbarium, Landcare Research, Lincoln, New Zealand

[˚] Australian Tropical Herbarium, Cairns, Australia

Corresponding author: Peter Jobson (peter.jobson@nt.gov.au), Gillian Brown (gillian.brown@des.qld.gov.au), Lyn Cave (lynette.cave@tmag.tas.gov.au), Frank Hemmings (f.hemmings@unsw.edu.au), Sarah Hirst (sarah.hirst@nt.gov.au), Shelley James (shelley.james@rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au), Karina Knight (karina.knight@dbca.wa.gov.au), Antony Kusabs (antony.kusabs@tepapa.govt.nz), Pina Milne (pina.milne@rbg.vic.gov.au), Ines Schonberger (schonbergeri@landcareresearch.co.nz), Frank Zich (frank.zich@csiro.au)

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Abstract

Managers of Australasian Herbarium Collections (MAHC) is a sub-committee of the Council of Heads of Australasian Herbaria (CHAH) and provides advice and recommendations pertaining to the management of herbarium collections. It was formed in 2009 based initially on Australian herbaria, and later incorporated New Zealand herbaria. MAHC currently has 18 member institutions representing both government funded, and university based herbaria, and includes both the largest (National Herbarium of Victoria -

MEL) and smallest collections (Macquarie University - MQU) in the region. The group meets in person annually, and holds regular conference phone calls throughout the year.

MAHC has proved itself to be a very cohesive committee, despite time, sizing, staffing, and funding differences. It prides itself in being inclusive, cooperative, collegiate, collaborative and supportive. It has a strong mentor approach toward early career collections managers or those new to collections management. The group has a healthy forward planning outlook, developing, promoting and implementing collections management policy, recommendations, guidelines and standards. This cohesion has resulted in a toolkit of resources that are freely available and strives for a unified world class best practice herbarium curation. Some of these universally agreed tools include templates, biosecurity documents, disaster mitigation and preparation for Nagoya Protocol implementation for Australia and New Zealand.

MAHC supports new international initiatives and manages the day to day running of programmes such as the Global Plants Initiative project imaging all vascular type specimens housed in Australasia. MAHC collaborates with CHAH and the data sub-committee, HISCOM (Herbarium Information Systems Committee), for continued improvements in sharing digital data and specimens via the Australasian Virtual Herbarium (AVH <https://avh.chah.org.au/>) and Atlas of Living Australia (ALA <https://www.ala.org.au/>) services.

This talk will use examples to highlight the effectiveness and success of a unified group in: developing standard practice in curation, incorporating improved curation procedures, and its ability to be agile, responding to incidents at an international level.

Keywords

Australia, New Zealand, herbarium, collections management, MAHC, talk

Presenting author

Peter Jobson