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CONFERENCE PAPER ABSTRACT

NAME OF PRESENTER:	Dr Wayne Johnson
TITLE OF PAPER:	Traders, Pirates and Blackbirds: Maritime connections between Colonial Sydney and the Pacific, 1788-1888.
THEME:	<i>Theme 3: Diverse Communities - Intangible Heritage</i>
<p>PAPER ABSTRACT:</p> <p>This paper examines the theme of maritime development in the colony on New South Wales, specifically the mercantile and shipbuilding industries in The Rocks and Darling Harbour, and the exploitation of trade in the Pacific.</p> <p>Early Sydney merchants quickly occupied themselves with trade in sandalwood, whale oil, tortoiseshell, <i>beche de mer</i> and other commodities within the first years of European settlement, transshipping between Europe, China and Australia. Escaped convicts set up operations on islands such as Nauru by the 1830s and preyed on visiting vessels.</p> <p>Pacific islanders were often recruited on whaling ships and for other ventures and were a common sight among the peoples of The Rocks, leading to localities such as “Maori Lane”, due to a colony of New Zealanders, and pubs with evocative names such as “The Whale Fishery” and “Whaler’s Arms”.</p> <p>By the 1870s Pacific islanders were being enticed into agricultural labour in South America and Australia, known colloquially as “blackbirding”. While in many cases this form of indentured labour was successful, with Pacific Islanders being returned to their homes, the scheme was widely open to exploitation and slave labour. To combat the rampant process of kidnapping labour in the Pacific, the shipyards in Darling Harbour turned to building warships for the British navy to help stamp out the practice.</p> <p>In Australia there remain descendants of the indentured labourers transported from their homes in the Pacific; living alongside the descendants of labourers who were forcibly transported from their homes as British and Irish convicts.</p> <p>Successes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlighting stories of community development and shared heritage in early Sydney and the Pacific. • Identifying sites of maritime heritage in what are now the urban centres of The Rocks and Darling Harbour 	



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Challenges

- Examining the opportunities to promote multicultural identity in what is generally accepted as “white” - Anglo heritage in colonial Australia
- Addressing the sometimes-unsavoury aspects of colonial history

BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRESENTER:

Wayne Johnson is Senior Archaeologist with Place Management NSW, a division of Property NSW which owns and manages the former colonial “old-town” of Sydney, known as The Rocks. During his 25 years in that position he has overseen archaeological projects recovering evidence of early European settlement, and interpretation installations and procedures to present the evidence to visitors. Wayne formerly worked as archaeologist to the NSW Heritage Branch of the Department of Planning, and prior to that developed industrial exhibitions as part of the Museum of Applied Arts and Science’s Power House Museum project. He is author or co-author of a number of publications on early colonial Sydney, including A History of Sydney’s Darling Harbour in 2008. As well as work on heritage conservation in Sydney he is field director of the University of Sydney’s archaeological program at the World Heritage site of Angkor in Cambodia.