

Introduction

Carolyn MacLulich, Head, Education Division, Australian Museum

Welcome everyone to the Australian Museums 'Musing on learning seminar'. I am Carolyn MacLulich, Head of Education here, and it is my great pleasure to welcome so many people here today. Before I introduce the day - a few house keeping matters. Everyone will have a folder with a detailed program, list of participants, etc, and also a guide map of the Museum to help you locate the venues for morning tea, lunch and afternoon drinks. The toilets are just outside the Theatre, down to the right. During the day can everyone please fill in the evaluation form in the folder and leave it in this box at the end of the day. Please remember that you are all invited to the launch of the Australian Museum Audience Research centre at 4.40pm this afternoon. The program is quite tight, as there are so many areas of interest, so I ask that you keep questions for the speakers till the breaks or for the 30 minuter session at the end

Well - by holding today's seminar we hope to create a venue, a place, for the exchange of ideas. There is a lot of expertise we can access in relation to museum learning, but it tends not to always be easily accessible or readily available, and often time is a big issue. So we wanted, today, to first of all create a dialogue between different groups interested in museum learning - academics, researchers and museum professionals. Secondly, we hope that through discussion during the day possibilities for new research directions or communication initiatives and approaches may emerge, and that there will be a chance to continue to work together on extending our existing approaches to learning in museums. One of the features of today will be the opportunity to extend our discussion about these differences and to clarify various ideas about museum based learning and how that can be effectively studied. Part of this may be to clarify differences of views or approaches - as, as with any other discipline, it is not necessary nor indeed useful to have ONE view - it is so much better for the profession to have clearly formulated differences of view rather than a muddled consensus

This is truly a post-modern conference - we have created our defining element as being 'difference' - we have specifically not tried to create one integrated theme - apart for the broad area of learning itself which is multifaceted - so we can discuss different theories, approaches, audience groups, settings,

We are very fortunate that our first speaker today, our key-note speaker is Dr Eileen Hooper Greenhill, Director of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester in the UK. Many of you will be familiar with Eileen's work in the last 2 decades or so. Eileen started in gallery education work in early 1970s working at Tate, and other London museums and galleries on a freelance basis - appointed full time education officer post at National Portrait Gallery in 1977 and to Leicester in 1980 - took over as director in 1996. She has written and edited Lots of books and articles on Museums, many will be familiar with her

most recent publication *The educational role of the museum*, and is now working on one called something like *communicating museums: the politics of visual culture*. Eilean is here in Australia as a guest speaker at the Museums Australia conference in Albury next month where she will be giving a different paper. Her paper today is entitled 'Museums and Interpretive Communities'.