

MayDay! MayDay! MayDay!

During the month of May, Blue Shield Australia, with the support of ALIA, is encouraging archives, galleries, libraries, museums, cultural heritage sites and organisations across the country to participate in MayDay - a national campaign for the protection of cultural heritage from disaster.

MayDay aims to raise awareness about disaster preparedness, encouraging people to perform at least one disaster-preparedness task during the month.

What is the Blue Shield?

The Blue Shield is the cultural equivalent of the Red Cross, recognised by a symbol specified in the 1954 Hague Convention for marking cultural sites, giving protection from attack in the event of armed conflict. It is also the name of an international committee working to protect the world's cultural heritage threatened by wars and natural disasters.

Blue Shield Committees around the globe comprise four international cultural heritage 'pillar' bodies including the International Council on Archives (ICA); the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS); the International Council of Museums (ICOM); and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). In Australia, these pillar bodies are represented by the Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities (CAARA); Australia ICOMOS; ICOM Australia; Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA).

MayDay Australia 2008

Last year Blue Shield Australia distributed fliers outlining contingency plans in the event of an emergency. In 2008, they are going one step further arranging a series of workshops, to be delivered through ALIA in partnership with CAVAL. Entitled 'Disaster Planning for Cultural Collections', the workshops will be presented by esteemed Conservator, Mr Kim Morris, taking place between May and September 2008 across six cities. ALIA encourages practitioners from any field of cultural heritage to attend a workshop.

Details about the workshops are available on the ALIA, CAVAL and Blue Shield Australia websites <http://www.collectionscouncil.com.au>; <http://www.alia.org.au/events>; <http://www.caval.edu.au>

This year's flier also encourages organisations to check their 'business continuity' plan. Generally undertaken by medium to large organisations planning aims at minimising disruption to business by a surprise event. 'Business Continuity Awareness Week' runs from 28 April to 2 May 2008.

For more information <http://www.thebci.org.au/BCAW.htm> or contact Mr Les Whittet on 02 62927822.



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What should I do?

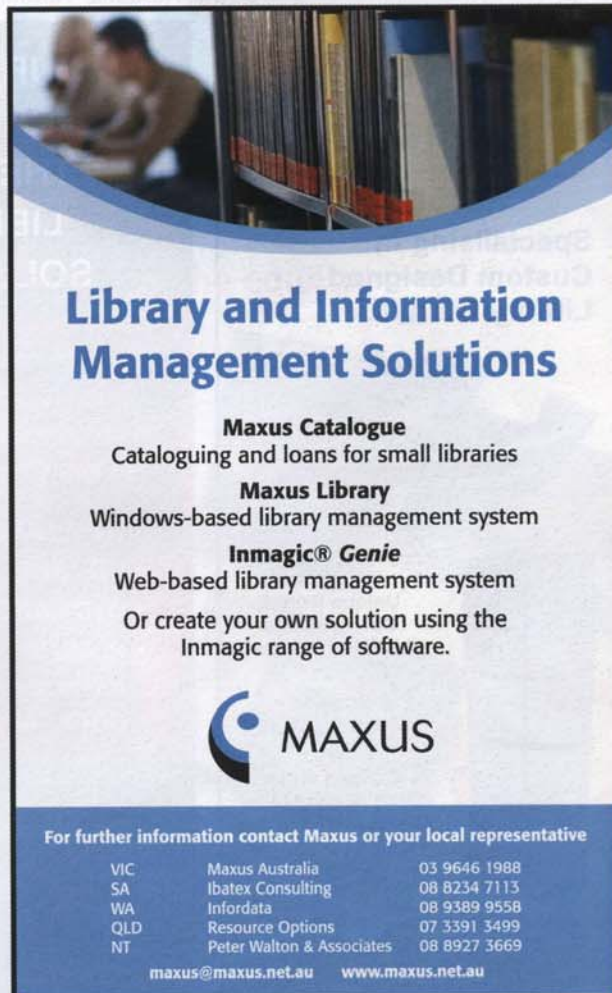
In 2008, people in cultural heritage organisations are once again encouraged to print the MayDay 2008 flier and post it on a notice board before 1 May.

The flier is available at
<http://www.collectionscouncil.com.au>

This year's fliers have a number of suggested activities for your organisation to participate in which include:

- Dust off your disaster plan and make sure it's up to date or make a timeline for developing one.
- Get to know your local firefighters and police, and invite them to tour your organisation and give you pointers on safety and preparedness.
- Identify the three biggest risks to your collection or heritage site.
- Meet with the people working in the other cultural organisations in your area and find out how you can share resources in the event of a disaster.
- Attend an ALIA/CAVAL 'Disaster Planning for Cultural Collections' workshop in your city between May and September.
- Participate in activities associated with 'Business Continuity Awareness Week' between 28 April and 2 May 2008.

For more information contact Veronica Bullock, Development Officer, Collections Council of Australia, at blueshield@collectionscouncil.com.au, (08) 8207 7287.




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