

Blue Shield Australia and the protection of Cultural Property in the event of Armed Conflict and Natural Disasters

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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Convention for the Protection of
Cultural Property in the Event
of Armed Conflict





2010 view of the intact Temple of Bel in the historic city of Palmyra. The temple - Eastern and Greco-Roman architecture named for the Mesopotamian god Bel, dedicated in 32 AD

Islamic State members referred to the building as ‘pagan’ and detonated explosives within the interior and around exterior of the structure. Damage was extensive, with most stones shattered to pieces by the explosives.



لحظة تفجير معبد (بعلاشمين) الوثني في مدينة تدمر

The remains of the temple of Bel today



UNESCO aims to preserve cultural heritage, but also tries to promote better cultural understanding and diversity.

The number of cultural heritage assets [Tangible and Intangible] has rapidly increased alongside an increased vulnerability, leading to increased associated risks.



“The destruction of culture has become an instrument of terror, in a global strategy to undermine societies, propagate intolerance and erase memories”

Irina Bokova, Director General, UNESCO



International Criminal Court and UNESCO [Joint advocacy]

UN Security Council Resolutions [2100,2347,2345,2379] heritage protection in the event of armed conflict

Destruction of Timbuktu [2012] by Ahmad al-Mahdi, pleaded guilty and apologised to Mali and mankind for destroying religious monument in the ancient city of Timbuktu.



Cultural heritage
contributes to sustainable
recovery from disaster by
providing local residents
with identity, dignity, and
ultimately hope.



Resilient cultural
heritage is therefore
imperative.

Completion of the
rebuild in 2016
[UNESCO funded]



Many cultural heritage sites do not incorporate disaster preparedness measures, and on the other hand, disaster risk management (DRM) planning does not always specifically address cultural heritage assets.

The key is to connect DRM with CP and create resilience.





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1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict

- Adopted at The Hague in 1954 in the wake of massive destruction of cultural heritage during the Second World War.
- Immovable and movable cultural heritage, including monuments of architecture, art or history, historical or archaeological interest, regardless of origin or ownership



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Implementation:

- In peacetime safeguarding measures, such as preparation of inventories and planning of emergency measures.
- Respect for CP within own territory as well as within the territory of other State Parties.
- Establishment of special units within military forces responsible for CPP



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Protocol I [1954] Protocol II [1999]

1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict

- The **1999 Second Protocol** provides “*enhanced protection*”
- States have recourse to the “*Fund for the Protection of Cultural Property*”
- Funding for protection is requested via “*The Committee*” comprising of 12 individuals.

Australian Military Deployed

- Occupation of Japan (1946-51)
- Malayan Emergency (1948-1960)
- Korean War (1950-1953)
- Indonesian Confrontation (1963-1966)
- Vietnam War (1965-1973)
- Gulf War (1990-1991)
- Afghan War (2000-)
- Iraq War (2003-2009)
- East Timor (2006-2013)
- Syria, Iraq (2014-)



Australian Peacekeeping

- Kashmir
- Cyprus
- Lebanon
- Somalia
- Western Sahara
- Solomon Islands
- Bougainville



“The Military”

Personnel
Intelligence
Operations
Engineers
Planning
Communications
Training
Finance
Civilian/military co-operations





- Blue shield is the emblem identified in the 1954 Hague Convention to protect cultural property.
- Blue Shield works within the context of the 1954 Hague Convention. United Nations Security Council resolutions and UNESCO
- All cultural property, being Tangible, Intangible and Natural [not just defined in the 1954 convention]
- NGO, volunteer based, referred to as “cultural equivalent of Red Cross”.



“[The Blue Shield] is committed to the protection of the world’s cultural property and is concerned with the protection of cultural and natural heritage, tangible and intangible, in the event of armed conflict, natural - or human-made disaster”

[article 2.1 2016 Statutes].



Blue Shield Approach - Six areas of activity

1. Co-ordination (of Blue Shield and with other relevant organisations)
2. Policy Development (such as the 'Approach')
3. Proactive protection and risk preparedness
4. Education, training and capacity building
5. Emergency response
6. Post-disaster recovery and long-term support



The Blue Shield Approach *[2016 Statutes]*

Set within an international context, it provides a framework and common shared agenda for the international Board, any Blue Shield Staff, and all national committees.

Drafted by sub-group of the international board,
circulated twice to national committees for comment and
passed from 2017 General Assembly to the International Board for
action

The International Committee of the Blue Shield, founded in 1996, comprises representatives of the five Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in this field:

International Council on Archives (www.ica.org)



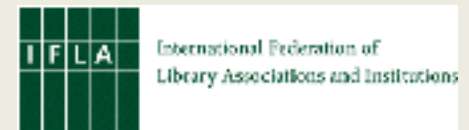
International Council of Museums (www.icom.museum)



International Council Monuments and Sites (www.icomos.org)



International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (www.ifla.org)



Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (www.ccaaa.org)





- Australia is a signatory to the *1954 Hague Convention* in 1984.
- Australia has yet to ratify both the first [1954] and second [1999] Protocols
- Australian Blue Shield [Formed in 2005]
- Australia Blue Shield places emphasis on natural/human-made disasters

Not all crisis are sudden onset

Slow onset crises and protracted/complex crises require different approaches:

- tracking vulnerabilities
- flexible and adaptable programming approaches
- Multi-Year planning and programming

Apart from conflict zones, significant threats to cultural heritage also exist due to climate change and associated sea level rise, increasing frequency of hurricanes and typhoons

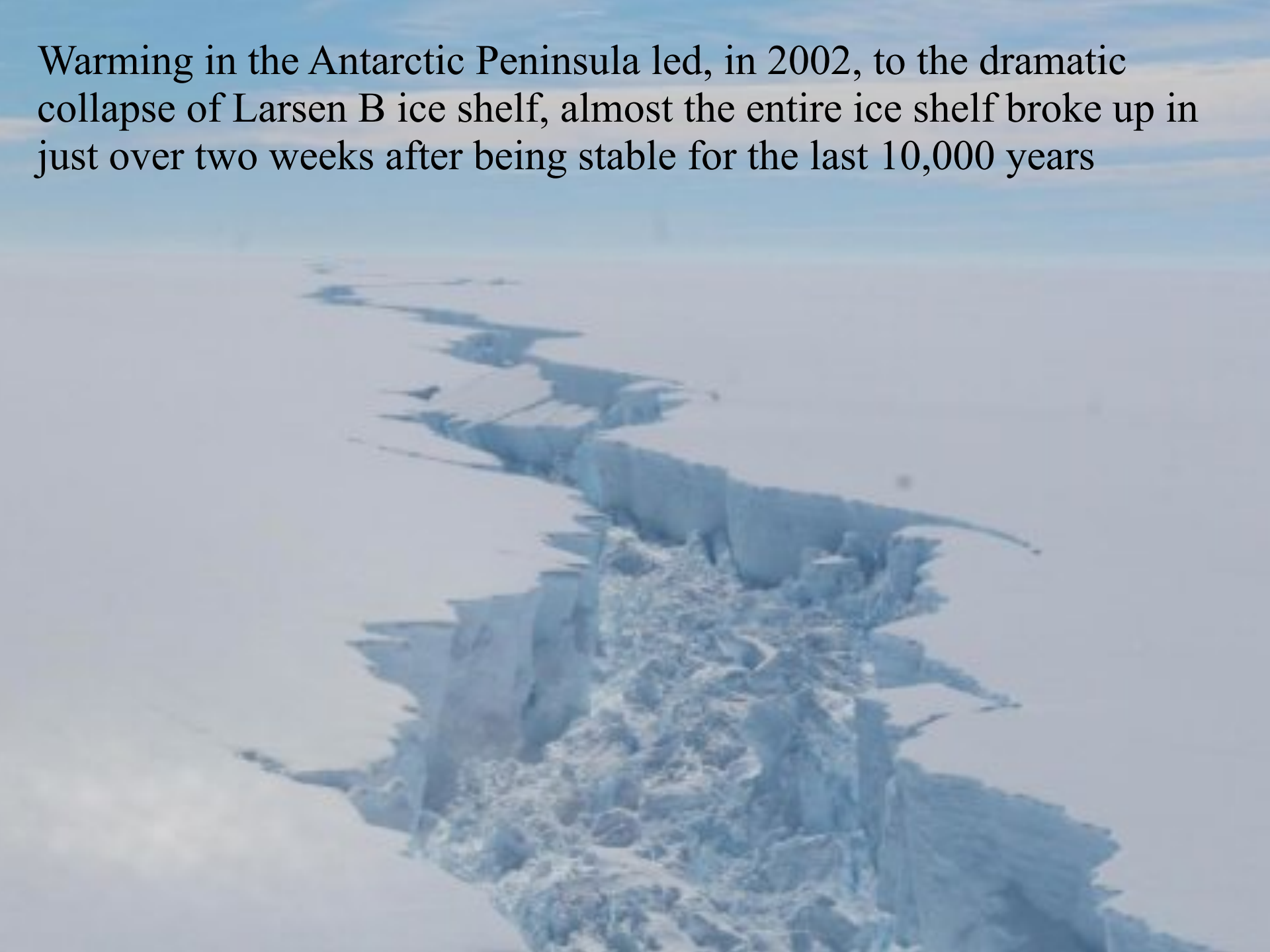


Approximately 40% of the world's population lives within 100 km of the coast and 145 million live less than 1m above sea level.

Sea level is rising 50 % faster than it was 20 years ago.

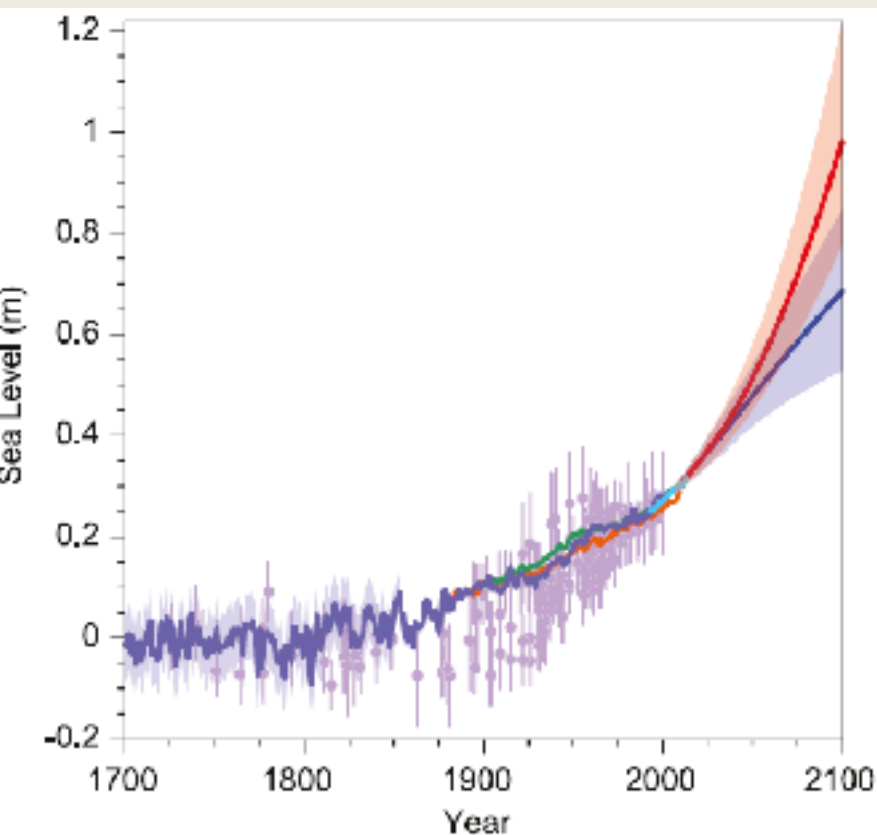


Warming in the Antarctic Peninsula led, in 2002, to the dramatic collapse of Larsen B ice shelf, almost the entire ice shelf broke up in just over two weeks after being stable for the last 10,000 years



Collapse of Larsen C would add up to 2.5 mm to sea level by 2100
and 4.2 mm by 2300





Sea level rise projections – safe to assume > 50 cm more by 2100. What about 2150?

The Pacific Island of Kiribati sits 2m above sea level. The 100,000 residents who live in Kiribati will, in the foreseeable future, have to relocate, essentially becoming climate change refugees.



However, the UN does not recognise climate change as grounds for refugee status. New Zealand, late in 2017 created a special refugee class visa for Pacific Islanders affected by climate change



Three Phases for Cultural Property Protection: Before, During and After an event

Before: Preparedness Mitigation and Prevention

- Cultural Property risk assessment considers multiple hazards, vulnerability and potential impacts
- Preparedness and Prevention should be the establishment of a disaster risk management system specific to the cultural heritage site



Three Phases for Cultural Property Protection: Before, During and After an event

During: Emergency First Responders and First Aid

- First responders focus on saving lives
- First aid, shelter, food and other supplies are provided to the people servicing or resident at the Cultural Property sites
- Saving and quickly restoring the arts and artefacts, remains of the site and other elements is key



Three Phases for Cultural Property Protection: Before, During and After an event

After: Recovery and Reconstruction

- Cultural Property reconstruction with culturally appropriate approach
- Reconstruction work and advice should involve cultural heritage professionals, utilising ‘build back better’
- Capacity building should be across national, regional and local levels
- Recovery and reconstruction plans for cultural property should accommodate local conditions and assimilate information seismic and associated climate change risks.

