

Flinders Archaeological Society Five Year Strategic Plan 2016-2020

History and profile

The Flinders Archaeological Society (ArchSoc) is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to enhancing the experience of Flinders' archaeology students and to broadening the understanding of archaeology and heritage among the student body. As we know, to succeed in archaeology you need to be proficient in volunteering, networking and team work. ArchSoc strives to facilitate the development of these skills through a range of social networking and professional development events. We have pub crawls, pub nights, monthly BBQs, an annual quiz night, training days, community days, seminars and subsidised volunteer opportunities. Being part of ArchSoc will certainly benefit you and make your time at university much more pleasant and rewarding. ArchSoc is one of the largest archaeology student groups in Australia, with a standard membership of around 120-180 members per year over the last four years.

As stated in our constitution, the objectives of the Society are:

1. Hosting social and academic events throughout the academic year;
2. Facilitate student networking amongst other students and professionals;
3. Promoting student attendance at conferences;
4. Promoting the Flinders University Archaeology Department (FUAD), its staff, students and associates;
5. Promoting ethical approaches and best practice procedures in archaeology; and
6. Engaging the wider community in archaeology in interactive and informative ways.

Our vision for the next five years

The Flinders Archaeological Society aims to be the organisation of choice for South Australian students with an interest in archaeology, and those who want to connect with students (i.e. potential employers, history groups, museums, community groups, etc.). In an effort to provide members with more value for their membership through professional development opportunities, we aim to develop fieldwork-oriented partnerships with other organisations and individuals. The Society aims to have a minimum of 85% of Flinders University archaeology students as members of the Society. Central to each of these aims, the Society wishes to address the loss of operational knowledge from one committee to the next.

Key issues

In consultation with members on the 04/11/2014, the following key issues were identified as areas of future development:

1. Leadership retention and the conferral of operational knowledge
2. Communication (intra-committee communication, intra-Society communication and communication with external parties)
3. Stability of membership rates
4. Lack of procedures around the Society's finances, equipment, events and communication (i.e. documents that govern how committee members act in relation to these issues)
5. Broader revenue streams
6. Review of honorary life membership criteria and investigate the prospect of alumni memberships

SWOT analysis

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large, diverse member base (>100-150 per year for the last four years) • <i>Dig It: Journal of the Flinders Archaeological Society</i> • Support from Flinders University Archaeology Department (FUAD) • Support from external organisations, such as the Australian Archaeological Association • Cheap membership price, compared to other organisations who offer fewer opportunities than ArchSoc • Support network of previous committee members • Positive national and international reputation • Ability to offer extracurricular field opportunities/volunteer work through our network of past members 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of operational knowledge when more experienced committee members resign • Year by year committee members try to 'reinvent the wheel' when it comes to procedures (i.e. lack of communication about how to do something, what works and what doesn't) • Volunteers for events and event preparation/logistics are predominantly committee members • Insufficient communication and advertising of upcoming events and opportunities (i.e. lack of communication strategy)
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create field-oriented partnerships with other organisations (e.g. National Trust (SA)) • Create a handover strategy between outgoing and incoming committees • Offer field method workshops to members, as it is likely that FUAD will reduce the number of field schools from next year (provided they are run by qualified people) • Grow membership through <i>Dig It</i> 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of record keeping (especially <i>detailed</i> financial records) • Reliance on people who regularly volunteer, lack of volunteer support from others • Neglect of website and social media presence • Committee occasionally seen as a 'clique', therefore, exclusive—despite outreach efforts for new committee members

Strategies to overcome the key issues:

Issue 1: Leadership retention and the conferral of operational knowledge

- i. Expectation management for prospective committee members.
- ii. Handover meeting between incoming and outgoing committee members.
- iii. Making committee members accountable for their duties by requiring each member to submit a report to each committee meeting, including those they cannot attend.

Issue 2: Communication (intra-committee communication, intra-Society communication and communication with external parties)

- i. Improve communication between committee members by requiring each member to submit a report to each committee meeting, including those they cannot attend.
- ii. Improve communication between committee and Society members by ensuring that all events and initiatives are publicised in a timely manner (usually at least one month before a deadline). Explore options for creating a monthly newsletter, for example, using Mail Chimp.
- iii. Improve communication with external individuals and organisations by ensuring the archsoc@flinders.edu.au mailing list is kept open to non-members and publish regular updates and articles to the Society's website. Ensure a Society representative responds to all incoming correspondence within 2-3 business days.

Issue 3: Stability of membership rates

- i. Host peer support events, particularly at the beginning of the year.
- ii. Investigate the potential of holding a first year retreat at the beginning of the year.
- iii. Explore options for career talks/events (ensure professional archaeologists are involved).

Issue 4: Lack of procedures

- i. Develop a procedure about the handling of the Society's finances, including record keeping standards and the limit of the executive and general committee's approval power for various expenses.
- ii. Develop a procedure around how the Society's equipment (including the Garmin Rino GPS units) can be borrowed and used by members so this asset is being utilised for the benefit of members.
- iii. Develop a procedure around event management, coordination and feedback.
- iv. Investigate the need to develop a communications procedure to assist with the strategies highlighted in Issue 2.
- v. Ensure that all new procedures are broad and inclusive rather than specific and prescriptive.

Issue 5: Broader revenue streams

- i. Investigate potential revenue streams to build on our current ones. At present, our revenue comes from membership fees, sponsorship from various organisations, grants from FUSA and monies raised through social events, merchandise and fundraising.

Issue 6: Review of honorary life membership criteria and investigate the prospect of alumni memberships

- i. Develop a stricter criteria for honorary life memberships
- ii. Conduct a risk-benefit analysis for creating a new membership category for alumni members—this could be a one-off payment of a certain amount, which lasts for a number of years. If alumni memberships go ahead, they should be cost-effective and members should have the same rights as fee-paying members. We must bear in mind that 66% of the Society's members should be students.