

**1.1 TRIP BY MGA DIRECTOR TO WASHINGTON DC
(ARTS12;SL)**

Responsible Director: Carolyn McClean

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approves the application for Dr Shaune Lakin to travel to the United States for the period and purposes outlined below.

INTRODUCTION

MGA's Gallery Director Dr Shaune Lakin has been invited to visit Washington in April to deliver the annual ANZAC Lecture at Georgetown University and to attend the opening of the MGA travelling exhibition *Still conflict: contemporary Australian photographers at war*.

BACKGROUND

The exhibition *Still conflict: contemporary Australian photographers at war* was curated by the MGA Gallery Director. The exhibition draws on the work of five photographers/artists who have photographed conflict and its effects in particular places: David Dare Parker in Indonesia; Stephen Dupont in Afghanistan; Ben Bohane in the Pacific; Ashley Gilbertson in Iraq; Lyndell Brown and Charles Brown in Iraq/Afghanistan. The exhibition opens 21 April 2009 in the Australian Embassy's gallery, Washington DC, and Dr Lakin has been invited to attend and speak at the opening. Dr Lakin has also been invited to give the 2009 Annual ANZAC Lecture at Georgetown University, on 20 April 2009. The ANZAC lecture will also focus on the issue of Australian war photography, which is Dr Lakin's area of expertise. The trip will be funded by the Australian Embassy in Washington DC.

DISCUSSION

Dr Lakin will travel to the United States between 18–28 April to give the annual ANZAC lecture, open the exhibition *Still conflict: contemporary Australian photographers at war*, meet with North American museum professionals, and attend other events organised by the Embassy associated with the ANZAC lecture and the launch of the exhibition.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The MGA travelling exhibition *Still conflict: contemporary Australian photographers at war* adds weight to MGA's claims to being a cultural institution of national significance. Dr Lakin's visit to Washington to attend the opening of the exhibition and to give the annual ANZAC lecture at Georgetown University will also draw attention to MGA and the City of Monash as places that are engaged with the world.

The travelling exhibition will be on display at the Australian Embassy in Washington DC for two months. In this time it will be seen by thousands of people and draw international attention to the gallery as a place that generates important exhibitions of Australian photography. The exhibition will be part of

the Australian Embassy's cultural program, and will thus be seen by Australian and international visitors to the Embassy as an exemplar of Australian curatorial and photographic practice. This will reflect well on MGA and the City of Monash.

FINANCIAL

The trip is to be funded by the Australian Embassy in Washington DC. There is no cost to Council.

CONCLUSION

During MGA's recent strategic planning day, key stakeholders (board members, trustees, councillors and staff) agreed that one of the strategic objectives of the organisation moving forward should be to expand its profile both locally, nationally and internationally. The exhibition *Still conflict: contemporary Australian photographers at war* is an ideal way of garnering national and international attention. Dr Lakin's attendance at the exhibition opening, advocacy of MGA and its work, and delivery of the annual ANZAC Lecture will augment this attention.