

**Submission
No 169**

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

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Hon. R. Borsak, MLC,
Inquiry into Museums and Galleries,
Parliament House,
Macquarie Street,
SYDNEY. N.S.W. 2000

My response to the General Purpose Standing Committee No.4 will highlight some significant omissions in the Terms of Reference for the inquiry into Museums and Galleries. I, and the communities in and around Parramatta will be adversely affected by the proposed relocation of a downgraded Powerhouse Museum to the worst site in Parramatta, so my comments concern actual threats to the museum.

I have been curator of a Museum at the University of Sydney and use that period to highlight the first priorities and concerns affecting all museums or art galleries.

It is the contents. Every time. The integrity, provenance, cataloguing these records to the recognised international standard, research, maintenance of an institution's holdings are the ultimate priority and responsibility. It overrides all other matters in the Terms of Reference (see Page 6+). It is of concern those issues are omitted and seem of little import. At the interface with the public is education. Therefore, qualified staff in each of the disciplines represented in an institution must be sufficient to provide hours per week to answer questions that display items will have evoked. That is one of the functions of a technical/scientific museum such as the Powerhouse. The public face of the institution is to show the history, foster enquiry and encourage young people to explore their ideas and potential. That is the taxpayer and visitor expectation.

This educational role cannot interfere with core museum procedures of up-to-date cataloguing, maintenance and relationships with other institutions at a global scale.

Parramatta Riverbank proposal threatens Powerhouse collections and their integrity
I cannot comprehend that a government would contemplate relocation of a significant State asset to the worst and most intense part of Parramatta Floodplain. The great threat to any museum/art gallery is damp, humidity and flood. The higher standard of variable multiple temperature and humidity controls to protect individual collection types on unencumbered sites is essential to avoid damage to collections, will not counteract the flooding. Building insurance on a floodplain would be extreme whereas insurance costs for diverse, irreplaceable contents is beyond comprehension.

On the most seriously affected part of the Central Business District floodplain it will be exposed to more frequent occurrences of greater velocities, an ever increasing level of threat to unique, historic (working) specialist machinery, fine objects, fabrics and crafts. The Riverbank site is far too small and denies any potential to acquire further historic and/or unique, perhaps large, exhibits. That site also destroys the long-term plan for Parramatta, reserved as riverside public open space and which is the highest priority for large numbers of additional residents and businesses who will move into the many tall buildings currently under construction and in the development process. The Riverbank open space is also required for the daily workforce in Parramatta, shoppers, students from primary school to tertiary level as a relaxing lunch spot for all. Indeed I was under the impression this plan was secured under gazetted planning documents. The only safe option in Parramatta is the Old Golf Course site for which Council is currently considering other plans.



Would Inquiry members repeatedly park their car daily in such a harmful location?

The Inquiry must take the necessary steps to understand and elevate fundamentals of all museums and galleries to Issue No.1; the contents, world standard records and the environmental requirements of each group. These are not reflected in the Terms of Reference. All other activities of outreach, education, travelling/special exhibitions are nothing without the integrity and safety of the actual collections, much of which could never be replaced. Were it ever so, a new acquisition would be subject to the same detrimental conditions. And space must be provided for special exhibitions# and new acquisitions - not known in advance.

The uniqueness of an individual item, its source and provenance are the essentials and increase the value of any item, scientifically, educationally (similar to antiques). This is controlled by the internationally adopted cataloguing system that is the binding connection to the specimen or artefact. Museum contents are usually full of rare and one-off items --, that is why we have them in trust for the people.

Thus, any proposed move anywhere must acknowledge some significant past history:

- (a) collections which have gone missing;
- (b) collections which have been downgraded, split and/or reduced;
- (c) items which have been separated from their labels (b.c. [before computers]);
- (d) scientific or technically qualified staff not being in control.

The loss is irretrievable! For example, zoological and geological, specimens can no longer be collected from the areas where specimens were originally found due to vegetation loss and development. To have at least a baseline collection with locational data, one can determine an earlier species distribution. Then there are two geological collections about which I do not know their fate. A current specialist scientist is quite unimpressed this latter information is no longer available for study as particular sites are no longer accessible.*

Moving a museum - the backbone of the international standard catalogue

I have just returned from Western Australia and managed to visit their museum the day before its closure for renovation and part rebuilding.

It took four years (4 years) to move the contents for this work to take place. On completion of the work the contents then have to be returned - as below! All complying with the international cataloguing procedure.

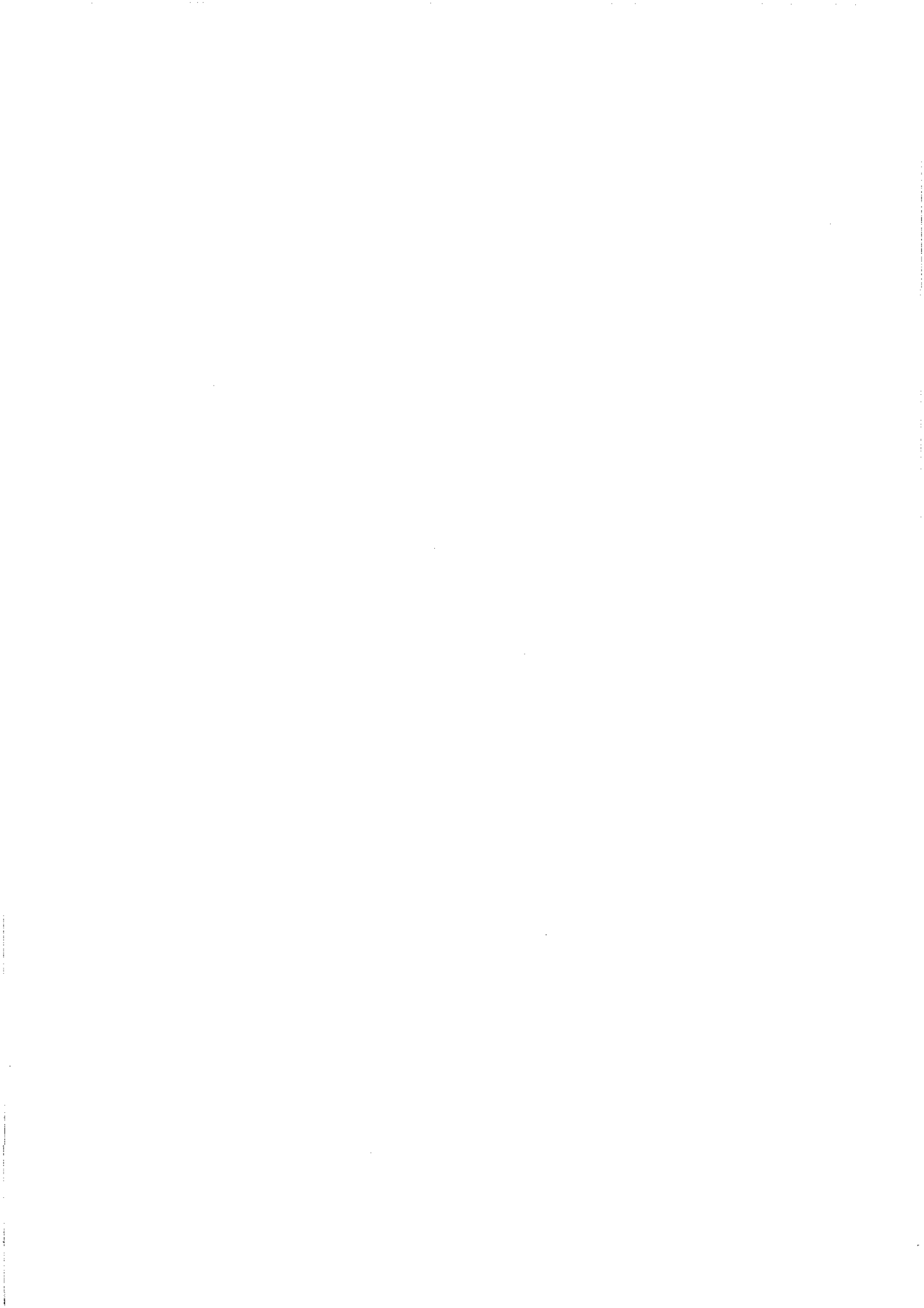
The Terms of Reference do not seem to factor in the incredible amount of time specialist staff need to plan and undertake a relocation, the actual moving costs of specialist vehicles, drivers of the calibre and status of the specialist Art Gallery removalists. Relocation of any museum requires each and every item to have the departure dates, item details and photographs on the removal day added to the catalogue AND the same at arrival into the pre-planned position/shelf/drawer/podium. Supervision of handling disassembled parts of the large machinery requires specialists so not one nut, bolt, cog wheel or screw is mislaid/bent/chipped/lost. Bunnings cannot replace those! A chipped cog wheel destroys a working model.

The design brief

Who will write the design brief? Again there is no alternative to the scientifically and technically qualified staff with the detailed knowledge of their collections and specific requirements for safe storage, maintenance, future acquisitions and displays. It is clear that it is the science and technology qualified staff fully familiar with their specialist collections who can be architectural advisors. A PRE-planned technical brief, must be put to any architect before a pen is put to paper or ideas to a

* Two locations near my home are now council land.

Would any overseas institution risk their special exhibitions to such conditions? No!



CAD computer. As a specialist technical and artisan collection, the Powerhouse uniquely charts the incremental human scientific/technical journey. And visitors love the big, old items which work! The magic of restoration and a maintenance regime.

Insurance for a long difficult move?

Astronomical! Costs will be beyond words. How is an irreplaceable object replaced? Does a cost have to be assigned to each collection item? First for the move and then *in situ*. Then what about inflation on what are irreplaceable or rare items? Insurance for multiple unique items being relocated and then ensuing years on a site which threatens all of them - stratospheric! Catastrophic!

PARRAMATTA

There is simply no room in Parramatta. A cursory look at the major problems arising out of current development in Parramatta (refer to the Local Environment Plan, the CBD Plan, Development Control Plans) and recent decisions which are decimating public land and our, and Australia's World Heritage.

There is wholly inadequate open space for the people of Parramatta now. The council had made provision for Riverbank space for this purpose and even then I see that action as not meeting existing or future needs in any way. Other reasons for the open space here is that there is only a little land on either side of the CBD channel of Parramatta River to take floodwater but it has no effect in major storm events. With further development in the upper catchment taking out land there for absorbing more water, the situation at Lennox Bridge to the Charles Street *Rivercat* Wharf will not only have greater water volumes but at higher velocities. Most of the water from the catchments west of Parramatta has to squeeze through the narrow arch of the Lennox Bridge and the narrow channel at the proposed site below it. One has to wonder how it has coped so far when observing the volume of high water flows over the 'weir' at Marsden Street, below the Old Kings School.

It is no place ever for a gallery, museum of any kind and the mould/rust problems.

Our public gathering areas and passive open space are under threat as is our heritage. We are constantly called upon to protect our public assets and now it seems that our public swimming pool is to go. Currently that is on flat land so accessibility is good for all plus the new residents in our apartment towers with more to come. It seems the public need and the public good is not a priority.

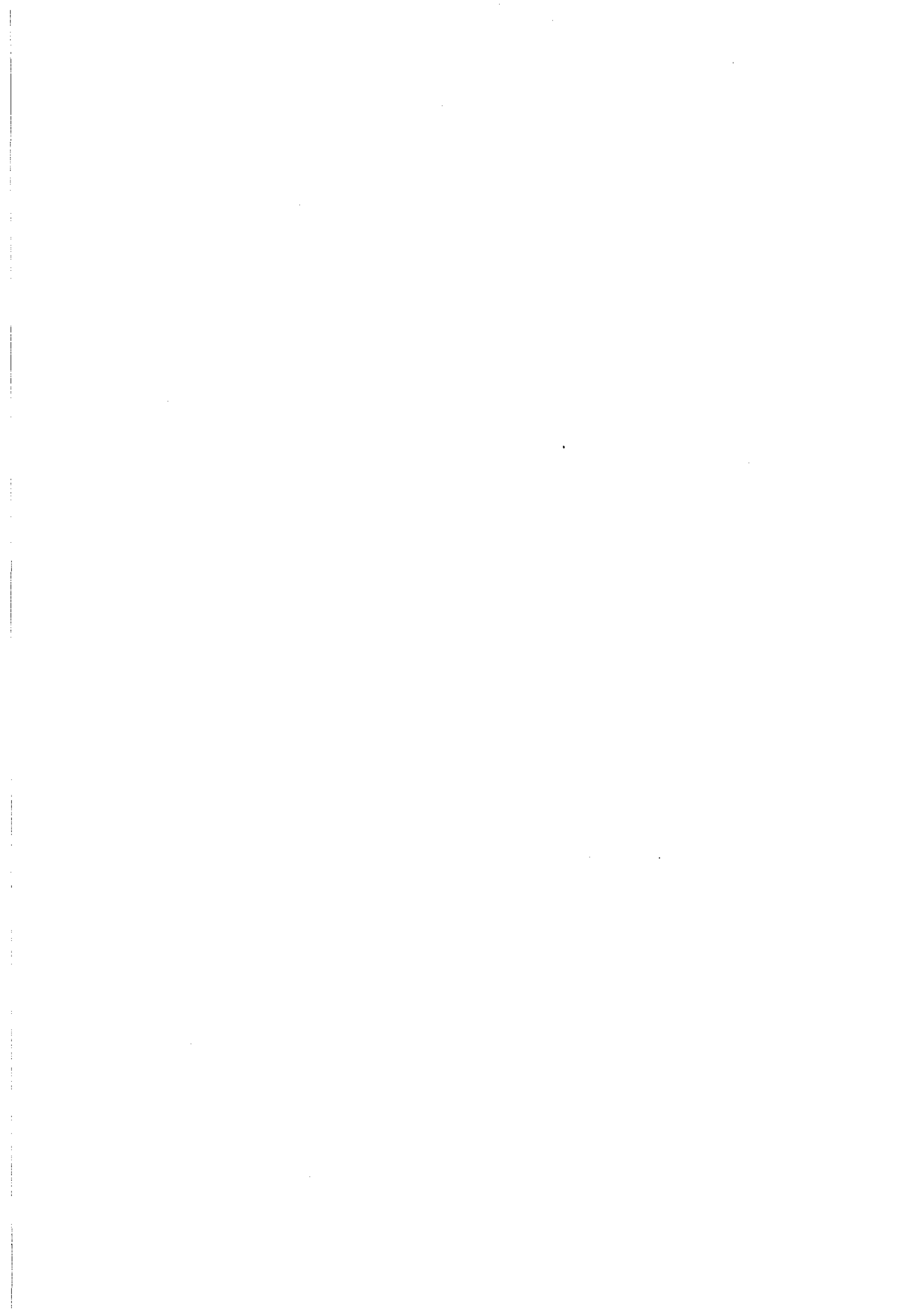
Not one more centimetre of open space land can be taken, or a centimetre of curtilage around and in our heritage areas. It stops here!

Powerhouse - a move diminishes its significance

Economic argument. Like institutions need to be in one major location and so 'feed' off each other. They form a loose cluster with a variety of options and encourage repeat visits. State significant museums and art galleries (and libraries) are State institutions and should be in the capital of the State. Unless the State Library, Australian Museum and the Art Gallery are also to be moved out west in the future. The value and status of these institutions demand they should be in the capital. When will the New South Wales Parliament be relocated to the west?

Staff

Insufficient? On a visit to the Powerhouse recently I was appalled to see that the Salzburg Clock only had one operable movement, whereas as a child, I saw the complexities of the clock through the whole story which took quite a while. I stayed on especially to witness the 'display' and to see the amazement on the children's faces. So, it was shattering to myself and that the children did not get to see the whole mechanism as I recall it, function. I heard each part of the story needed to be wound up separately. Is that right? Insufficient staff/funds?



On the same visit I had a couple of questions and the only 'staff' I could find were two security guards standing close together at one end of the floor. So questions, a desired object of the displays, cannot be answered.

Additionally - acquisitions to collections and resources

A museum or art gallery is NOT static. Where is the provision for future offers of special exhibitions or indeed acquisitions? Should some unique pieces come available on the market for a short time (with competition from elsewhere) what funds are there at any one time to acquire, store and display (space) the item(s)? Additions to the building? The issue - a significant, unique item should not be lost to the public. Then there is the cost of having special exhibitions, some being exciting and from overseas? Do funds need to be taken from the necessary and basic operations, maintenance and specialist staff so as to interface with the public? Communication with the public can come only after the essential basics for prescribed care of the collections. Do acquisitions have a call on State Government when opportunities arise? Is there a museum charter from establishment date?

Poor knowledge of collections stored off-site

These need to be brought back to the main Ultimo centre. Is Castle Hill used mainly for restoration or/and overflow storage? Which is it?

Downgrading - maintenance of machinery

The Parramatta Riverbank is detrimental to all collections as previously stated. Are parts of the exhibited collections undergoing preparation for a move already?

Downgrading - What about the locomotive collection?

With the new wind-tunnel pedestrian route from the Powerhouse at Ultimo to Central Station the monthly display of a locomotive with a Powerhouse staff member available at Central to answer questions is becoming a dim memory and removal of an interface with the public. The goods rail line to the Powerhouse also allowed some minor repairs at Ultimo rather than a special trip by staff to Thirlmere. None of this can now be done at Ultimo or Parramatta. A great loss to the public!

I hear that the locomotive collection at Thirlmere is now in the hands of volunteers. The holdings at Thirlmere have long been part of the Powerhouse which has highly qualified staff in this area. So passing off such enormous assets to volunteers, all very keen otherwise they would not be volunteers, is quite concerning for the operability of the steam stock and maintenance. The locomotives are often the key objects which bring out the people in the first place.

Who actually owns the locomotives? Who is responsible for the standard of maintenance, making of replacement parts no longer available? Mainline driver qualifications and insurance?

The Powerhouse staff previously maintained this collection. A special licence was required for which only about one person (elsewhere) is qualified to test and give. And to drive them and enthuse the public to come to see more of the museum.

I am not satisfied the proper level of maintenance and repair can be maintained by volunteers, keen as they are, and that the steam giants will ever run again.

Unease

I have a very bad feeling the purpose of proposing relocation of the Powerhouse Museum is to rid the State Government eventually of its responsibility as it considers the Powerhouse to be of least importance and not of equal value to other scientific, research and cultural institutions.

I recollect hearing on the 'news' quite some time ago that many staff at the Powerhouse had been 'let go'.

Accessibility - public transport

The Powerhouse Museum, the Australian Museum, Art Gallery, State & Mitchell Libraries are the most significant repositories of our natural history, technical and cultural history. They belong to the State! The people! But also to the country.

Moving the Powerhouse to Parramatta removes visitation options to this treasure for many residents and taxpayers who live and work beyond the Cumberland Plain - throughout New South Wales and beyond. The last time I looked, long-distance and inter-urban trains and planes appear to arrive at Sydney Central Station and Kingsford Smith Airport.

Parramatta Visitors

Transport is terrible. Proposals for the future are not focussed on workers, tourists, etc. Only loss of time by having to change often. The major State collections should be available for visitors from anywhere and in the State capital. And there is already hostel accommodation in and around inner Sydney.

The Powerhouse is no longer an icon if downgraded in qualified staff, space, funds for its holdings and so putting in danger long-term preservation for that contract with the public, in trust for the people of this State.

'Questacon'

The Powerhouse requires a whole extra area or mezzanine in Ultimo for Questacon-like activities. These fun activities are designed to trigger "a light bulb" moment for players of all ages, as to how 'things' (physics) work. In Perth, their whole technical 'museum' Sci-Tech, is so based. I did not see any 'collection' as such.

Coach interchange at Parramatta in Fitzgerald Street

As one of two delegates for Parramatta City Council to consecutive Backpackers' Conferences - mainly business, councils, coach industry, hostel operatives and other suppliers. We were probably about the only representatives of the travelling public. But there is still no sign of a coach terminal and it is embarrassing. (My plan is a cantilever building in the triangle of land in Fitzwilliam Street. Please contact me!

High-quality hostel in Parramatta

We thought we could get the P.H. Jeffery building in Marsden Road. That went to the nurses. Then there was the Old Kings School Dormitory on O'Connell Street opposite the City Swimming Pool in O'Connell Street - submissions called for a use for that building and the then Crown Lands Department thought it a very good idea. That site is roughly equidistant between our superb world heritage strip at Fleet Street, Parramatta, the CBD and the significant heritage homes a little to its East; Elizabeth Farm, Experiment Cottage and Hambledon Cottage - all on flat land.

People who travel widely and rely on good quality hostels are the very best 'grapevine' for tourism on the planet. Without such infrastructure as above, any significant tourism will not happen.

Drawcard of heritage for future tourism

Our Fleet Street heritage is unique matched by nothing else in Australia, it is our built heritage which is THE Parramatta tourist attraction which is the only hope that will encourage a constant, reliable flow of tourists. Many of us can envisage the detriment of plans now underway to fully downgrade this area. Proceeding along these lines will strangle any major tourist industry. Any tourist would despair! I am certain their recommendations to other travellers would be unfavourable. If tourism is desirable why would so much effort and funding go into persistently downgrading one of the biggest total areas of earliest colonial history in the country. No visitor recommendations can come from that.

Transport, connections and storage

How many of the objects currently stored at Castle Hill should be on permanent public display? And ease of transport?

The heavy-rail Carlingford Line taken to its original plan through to Castle Hill but curved into Granville, not Clyde and benefits everyone. It would be a mechanism for moving exhibits for specific topical exhibitions without a road trip. Through Granville it would open access to Thirlmere or Parramatta. An occasional rail transport would still go through Clyde to Central as occasional transfer of display items from Castle Hill to Ultimo.

It appears to me that the cost of moving the collections from Ultimo will far exceed any possible funds from the sale of the Powerhouse land. Then a cost to remove the present quite unique building. Rather, a further Ultimo building could be purchased where it is close to the University of Technology, Sydney and also hold a Questacon component.

Scientifically, Economically and Practically

It therefore makes absolutely no sense at all and especially as (a) a move (b) threatens all of the collections (c) regardless of site (d) with the added threat of a Parramatta site at the point of the worst part of its affected floodplain (e) cannot be justified on any grounds.

Savings for Fleet Street

Parramatta should be able to benefit by the savings of not moving the Powerhouse Museum and most of the funding (the design, move, insurance of that and the inappropriate location and on-going impossible insurance + inflation) be applied to specialist staff for all collection types, a Questacon-type area with the balance to --

Tourism

The only attraction for tourism is our unique Fleet Street colonial heritage which is nowhere else in Australia. Its preservation of existing buildings without apartment towers is Parramatta's tourist future with the existing Hambledon Cottage, Elizabeth and Experiment Farms. And of course, our harbour (it is salt). To do otherwise with this jewel of a collection will circumvent future tourism and visitors will not leave with recommendations as they travel further and go back home.

Terms of Reference

(a) *State government policy, funding and support for museum and galleries, museum and gallery buildings and heritage collections, including volunteer managed museums and museums managed by councils*

The core business of State Government is to provide for public access to a State collection, maintain the highest scientific standards of cataloguing and specifically qualified staff for maintenance of the holdings and public education.

The core business of Local Government is the local area, processing a multiplicity of responsibilities such as regularly preparing plans, development control plans, processing development applications, applying for special purpose grants, maintenance and embellishment to community needs of open space, bushland, sports fields, controlling noxious weeds, registration of dogs (and cats?), fox eradication, naming streets, lanes, parks then the legal issues at the Geographical Names Board, appointing legal representation in development cases in the Land and Environment Court, consultation with the public at on-site meetings, statutory submissions from the public on development, creeks and waterways, drainage, heritage items and registration in Local Environment Plans, accounts, budgets, investments, loans to aid with required works of roads, footpaths, playgrounds, encouraging subject specific Advisory Committees drawn from the public but which

must be attended by a council officer - and the preparation and formalities of council and other meetings, negotiations with government, developers and constituents affected by any such matter. Those responsibilities are intense.

It has no skills to assist in maintenance and management of any State collection.

(b) *potential funding impacts on museums and galleries affected by council amalgamations*

The City of Parramatta Council has a good Heritage Centre for research and some exhibitions. Since amalgamations I can only guess that the additional areas to our city will impose some serious workloads. The breadth of data available for research on these additional areas could be considerable. The reasons being the Parramatta Harbour (it is salt not a freshwater river) was the vehicle for the first explorations from Sydney Town then up to Rosehill/Parramatta. The first Crown Grants were along the Harbour on both sides, then Parramatta (Rose Hill) and on either side of the Harbour. The Ponds and North Rocks areas were where many early settlers moved so that area and the additions through to Newington/Olympic Park also has very important and early settlement history. I have prepared a brochure which dealt with the First Crown Grants from a street or two north of Pennant Hills Road to Parramatta Harbour bounded roughly to the east by what is now Marsden Road and to the West, Adderton Road. There are quite a few from about July 1791 and are listed in Watkin Tench's book on his visit on 6th December, 1791.

I can only imagine there will be quite some work to have all this additional information to hand and integrated for our newer constituents.

(c) *opportunities to revitalise the structure, reach, and impact of museums and galleries and their research and collecting priorities*

Qualified staff, qualified staff, qualified staff, qualified staff, and more qualified staff in areas of expertise represented in (c) above and in the full range of disciplines in each of the scientific, cultural, historic collections in each of the institutions, museums and galleries. No one else could possibly propose, or carry through revitalisation of the structure as staff still there recall and have experience of the base, could assess the value of possible acquisitions which might add to the reach and impact of their institution, its research and acquisitions. That base informs the potential and future initiatives which are the drivers for the scientific rigour required to assess structure, the breadth of outreach which will determine areas of future research and collecting priorities. The latter must be responsive to items which come to market, here or overseas but funds must be made available, often at short notice to compete for unique acquisitions. None of the core international documentation, maintenance regimes, educational programmes and outreach can be diminished or discarded. That will only downgrade any collection and remove the integrity of the institution. Graduates from any place with majors or experience in other areas should not be decision-makers. It is the charter of the museum/gallery, the types of content and the public which are the drivers.

And, as I am repeatedly told, the Government trusts the museum staff??

(d) *access to the collections of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the Australian Museum and any other state collections held in trust for the people of New South Wales and programmes that promote physical and on-line access*

Access to the physical collection displays at Ultimo is readily available to any person who can reach Central Station.

Access to a greater variety of displays and travelling exhibitions or on loan from overseas is entirely dependent upon the proper staff and sufficient funding. Trust in the hands-on staff from external institutions offers more opportunities for high quality loans of items and exhibitions for the public of New South Wales. On-line access



to permanent and occasional external exhibitions on loan could be arranged to suit parts of syllabus' in our schools and indeed School of the Air.

Access to a wider range of displays can be had also from Castle Hill.

It is important that the State Government looks at building acquisitions in the vicinity of Ultimo. The Powerhouse Museum is next door to the University of Technology, the very best fit for the type of museum it is. Very much cheaper than any move anywhere, let alone robbing Parramattarians of very limited open space on its planned multi-purpose Rivebank - lunch time and weekend relaxation and floodplain.

Acquisition of another building at Ultimo could be the Powerhouse Questacon.

(e) *the sale of the Powerhouse Museum site in Ultimo and its proposed move to Parramatta, and whether there are alternative strategies to support museum development*

There are no alternatives other than purchasing an adjacent building in Ultimo and curtail any plans to proceed with a move to Parramatta. The cost of the move is far above what sale of the land will achieve, let alone the actual complex move and almost impossible level of insurance. Then the cost to the buyer of demolition of a significant building and waste of materials.

(f) *the development and transparency of advice to the government on priorities for New South Wales museums and galleries*

The only advice to government about museums and galleries needs to come from the experts in each specific area of collection type so the basic preservation and needs of that collection is understood, an outline of where the technical staff would like to take it into the future, but never downgrading the regular programmed maintenance of catalogue and object, leading to education programmes of great value and understanding for the public. To strive to inspire or awaken a real thirst for knowledge in the young can only benefit the individual, their family, school, the institution, the State and country. We can never have enough enquiring minds and that can only be imparted by highly qualified staff in the specialist fields of the holdings. It is the specialist who most has the intrinsic value of the items at heart.

Disposal of hard won collection items and exhibit material is not to be, EVER, contemplated.

(g) *the impact of the efficiency dividend on the budgets of museums and galleries over the last 10 years, and funding levels compared to other states*

The ONLY efficiency dividend is the absolute integrity of the cataloguing system for world-wide information exchange, the highest maintenance standards of the actual individual items by the in-house technical specialists. An ability to carry out the core museum/gallery business of display, specific and themed, actual exchange of exhibitions (\$\$\$\$), upgrade of technical staff through courses at other institutions here and overseas and public education. There have to be enough qualified people to maintain the integrity of the collection in pursuit of further research.

Unfortunately for the question, this cannot be measured in dollars. Something like trying to put a monetary value on a sunset. If one cannot offer the public what they want and variation by loans and exhibitions, people may not come!

I, nor the enquiry, can comment on funding comparison with other states. It also a false premise. If a museum/gallery is the largest, most representative, the most diverse representation of items within its charter, it needs the funds to care for catalogues, maintenance, education programmes and exhibitions in all their guises according to the items in the total collection. For example, the Powerhouse may have a rare piece of Honiton Lace, a very rare locomotive, a very rare electric car,

a miniature as a piece of jewellery, vases, candlesticks, industrial working models. Another technical museum may have none of the above. A maintenance regime for each type of item will be different in time, procedure and the regularity required. That is all differing amounts of time, but there has to be tools, brushes, chemicals or things I know nothing about such as oiled machinery. The amount of money to maintain these objects will be completely different. The regularity of inspections, repair, fumigation, on different materials and different sizes. This is not a job for a bureaucrat. Increasing an annual budget may not reflect the different maintenance regimes which also vary for each collection type, the variations within that group and numbers held. Monthly, annually, every five years?

Another museum with a different range of collection types, fewer items will not need the same budget as an institution with more collection types and numbers of items within those groups. It is not, can never be, a one-size-fits all equation - anywhere.

Similarly, with irregular offers of acquisitions, item exchange, importing material and overseas exhibitions. What cost that piece of Honiton lace, a steam-driven machine from some farm in the 1850s? Buying and transport costs, restoration, cataloguing and all the other things requisite to on-going procedure I have mentioned. There are no short cuts. How would you care for a Renior in your home?

The question is really irrelevant if a museum/gallery charter is supported in all its permutations as it must be. Comparison with other states which have very different collections and perhaps quantities of items, both large and small, all with differing demands and maintenance regularity, is just not possible. Each collection, each item must be treasured as it was originally entrusted (TRUST) to the institution.

(h) *the economic impact of museums and galleries on cultural tourism, and their role in supporting the visitor economy in Sydney and regional New South Wales*

As above, museums and galleries as they affect cultural tourism cannot ever be the main goal. The item, the specimen, the object and the top-of-the-tree care and knowledge which must go with each is paramount. If it is so, with its education programme it should attract visitation for whatever purpose. It must all be there!

Unless the museum or gallery is at the top of its class, travel books like as *Lonely Planet, Rough Guide* or *Let's Go*, etc. will certainly say so. So it is funding . . . AND . . . location . . . location . . . location . . . location ULTIMO. Tourists will only come if the reviews are the very best.

Interstate, intrastate tourists are not likely to come to Parramatta when they can visit a couple of other institutions in one day in Sydney. Overseas tourists would be rare having very limited time on cruises or pre-paid wider national tours.

Relocation of the Powerhouse to Parramatta will only devalue the potential for tourists. As proposed for decades and being actually sent to two consecutive annual conferences about tourism and backpackers by Parramatta City Council, a good quality hostel (perhaps YHA) is needed here in Parramatta in any case to spur on the tourist industry; as those travellers are the best free grapevine in the world. The other thing required in Parramatta is a respectable coach terminal (I have a plan and identified a land plot), an on-going frustration with coach drivers and an embarrassment when compared with the stop in Penrith.

(i) *any other related matters*

In recent times I have written to Letters to the Editor of the *Parramatta Advertiser* about the proposed move of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta. One of these was declared 'letter of the week' (date March, 2016, p.68, copy attached at back of enclosures; note also letter from Graham Eames).

At the first meeting of the City of Parramatta Council I presented a statement in the Public Forum on the matter of the proposed relocation to Parramatta of the Powerhouse Museum (date March, 2016, copy attached)

During the Council adjournment, as usual the public gallery was cleared and I was amazed that almost all attending that meeting came forward to congratulate me on my presentation, that they agreed with me, shook my hand and gave me a pat on the back.

In general conversation, most recently with a medico, when asked what I was up to, was horrified in disbelief that such a move could ever be contemplated.

I have also corresponded with the previous council, all councillors and the State Government. (Copies attached.)

RURAL NEW SOUTH WALES

It was my pleasure last year to attend a Waratah Festival at Robertson at which there was a very interesting display of veteran cars, waratahs and working small farm machinery.

Membership of this group is State-wide and they possess some quite amazing items. With great enthusiasm they turn up to such festivals and to show their restorations, working models and history of their machinery. I was told that it is only the small items which come to these events because of the difficulty of moving the very large 'stuff' they have at home in their sheds.

Speaking to one office-bearer we discussed the usefulness of these one-off items and their history, not only that provenance aforementioned, former owners, which farm it serviced or on which it was found. Would it be a good idea to have all this material catalogued through their organisation?

I suggested they could find out if there was an off-the-shelf database which would show what information was prized/necessary. The name of the object only would be all that would appear on the database for a non-member searcher, the database would lock and make inaccessible, the name of the holder of the item, that person's address, the location of the item and the provenance. The details behind the lock would only be available to *bona fide* members of the organisation and institutions which held like items, such as the Powerhouse.

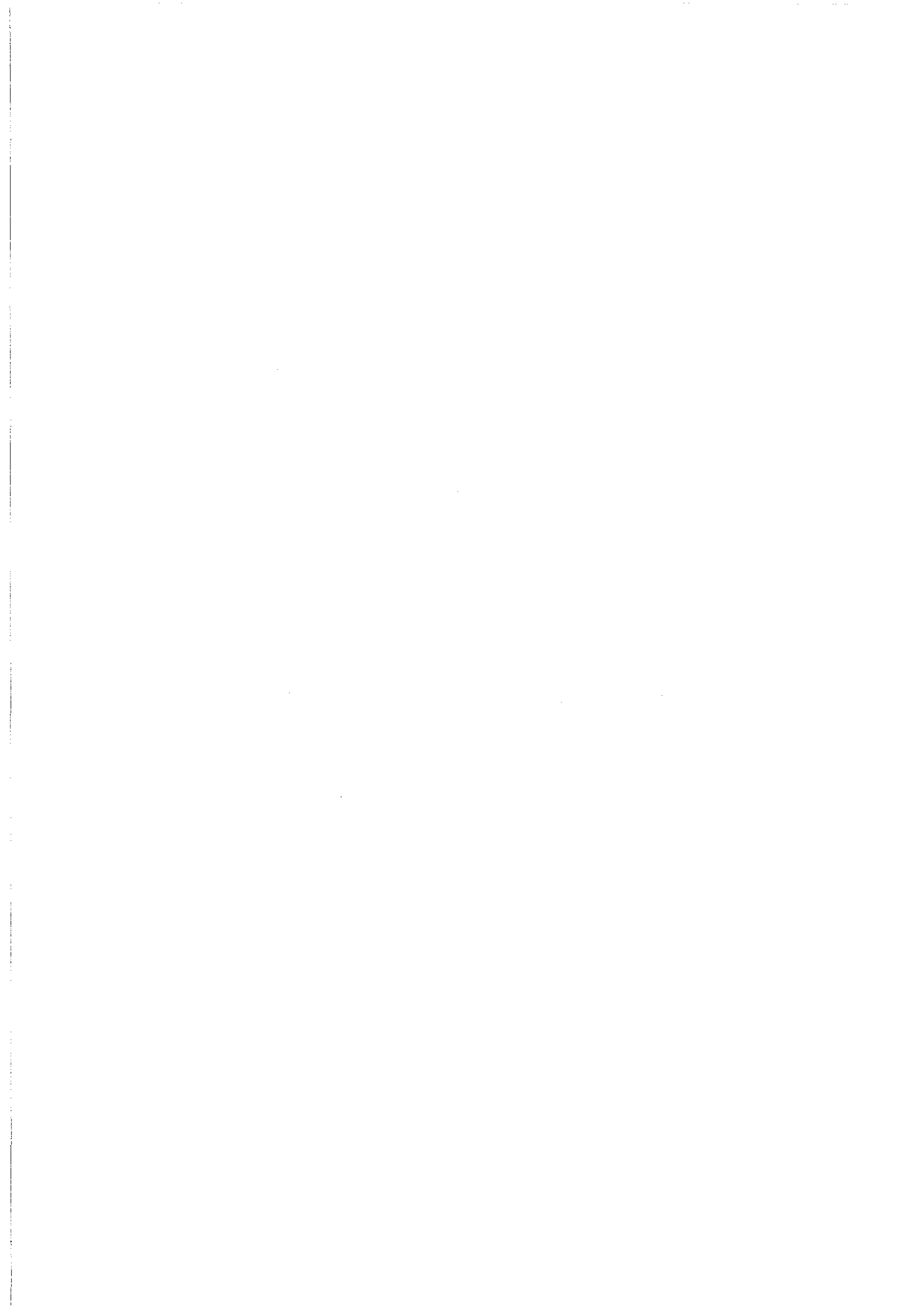
Not that the Powerhouse would acquire any of their collections but that such an institution and the organisation's members would know what was 'out there'. The beginnings of an Australian Catalogue. Some of these items would be very interesting as individual farmers in the past, adapted them for slightly different purposes and it would be a fascinating representation of farming history which could be called upon should anyone decide to mount a Farm Exhibition 1890-1960 or some such in an urban location for us city slickers.

The professionals would know immediately what and where an item was available, if the owner was prepared to loan it on a short-term basis to a specialist institution such as the Powerhouse, especially here among us city slickers. Can the Powerhouse prepare an exhibition one year using some of this material for the Royal Easter Show if the owners were willing? And there would need to be around the clock supervision. Another cost but another interface with the public.

... ..oOo.. ...

Further, I need to draw your attention to

THE BUILDING OF THE POWERHOUSE COLLECTIONS - TWICE. Building up of early collections were proudly displayed at the 1879 Garden Palace International



Exhibition. The tragic fire in the early morning of 22nd September 1882, decimated the contents of all the exhibits including the basis of the early Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. It was the then Board, which had the unenviable task of writing to multiple institutions and other bodies all over the world pleading for assistance to build up yet again, the technical and artisan items for the collection post-1882 fire. More detailed information is in the Minutes of the Board of Directors and the Annual Reports.

There has already been upheaval enough. Enough is enough!

I seek your earnest consideration of all the issues raised above and would hope to receive a detailed reply addressing all those matters raised. I care very much about the integrity of all our museums and galleries holding unique and valuable material in trust for the people of New South Wales and need assurance that the highest international standards are the operational creed in perpetuity and so preserve the credibility of all collections. In some institutions of the State an integral component of their work which eventually feeds into the public arena is research. This all takes time and thus funding.

The emphasis is on the Powerhouse at this time as it is only this museum which is being considered for a major move and upheaval which has serious threats to the safety and integrity of the contents.

I have no actual interest, nor any possible benefit from writing this response to the Legislative Council's Terms of Reference, other than what is best, upholding the underlying standards as must all museums and galleries, proper funding for the skills required and challenging loans and exhibitions. A good economic outcome is ideal but it has two sides, sufficient funding for the levels of qualified staff required for the high standards required but with careful budgeting by those staff. It is then that there is improved interface with the public so questions can be answered about exhibits, their working and maintaining all the collections for that purpose. That connection with the public requires time but is more likely to encourage further visits. I still strongly recommend that an additional Ultimo building be purchased for a Sci-Tech/Questacon component added and an association with the University of Technology, Sydney continued even if only through its geography and earlier life as the Sydney Technical College. However, students and staff may be interested in contributing to working exhibits in the Ultimate Questacon! Or just Ultimo Questacon.

(Mrs.) E. Boesel

Enclosed: Newspaper articles and correspondence in 2016

N.B. I have dealings behind the scenes at the Australian Museum and used the Mitchell Library, Land Titles Office, State Archives and the Historic Houses Trust (Sydney Museums is not definitive enough, is confusing because of the different locations), as well as other resources such as the Archives of the City of Sydney Council*. This submission has occupied time which might have been spent at these institutions.

(There is an opportunity locally I will have to take up in September which I hope, will progress some of this research further.)