

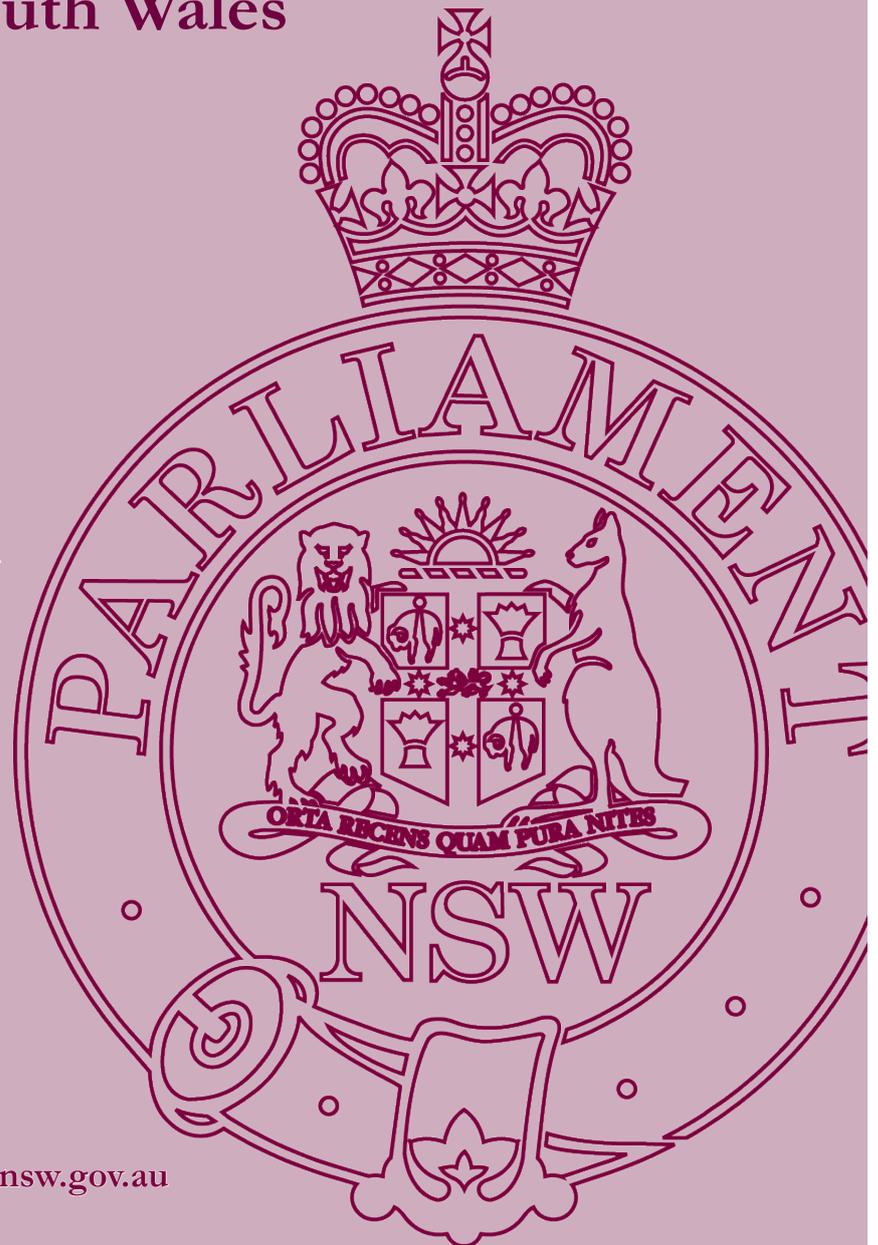


LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE GOVERNMENT'S MANAGEMENT OF THE POWERHOUSE MUSEUM AND OTHER MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL PROJECTS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

September 2022



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Select Committee on the Government's management of the
Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects
in New South Wales

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Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

“September 2022”.

Chair: Hon. Robert Borsak, MLC



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Terms of reference

1. That a select committee be established to inquire into and report on:
 - (a) the proposed move of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the Powerhouse Museum, from Ultimo to Parramatta, including:
 - (i) the core visions behind the move,
 - (ii) the governance of the project, including the effectiveness and adequacy of planning, business cases, design briefs, project management, public reporting, consultant selection and costs, project costing and cultural and demographic justifications,
 - (iii) the risks in the move, including damage to collections, cost overruns and the future cost of operations at Parramatta,
 - (iv) the consequences of flood at the site at Parramatta in light of the flood event in February 2020,
 - (v) the impact on the heritage status of the site at Ultimo and heritage items at Willow Grove and the Fleet Street precinct at Parramatta,
 - (vi) the use of the proceeds from the proposed sale of the site at Ultimo,
 - (vii) the Government's response to the previous recommendations of the Portfolio Committee No. 4 in Report 40 entitled 'Museums and Galleries in New South Wales',
 - (b) the Government's management of all museums and cultural projects in New South Wales, including
 - (i) current Government policy, funding and support for museums and galleries across regional New South Wales,
 - (ii) whether there is equitable access to collections across New South Wales, including at the Powerhouse Museum and the Australian Museum,
 - (iii) whether comprehensive consultation with communities and experts has informed cultural policy and projects across New South Wales, such as that applying to heritage arms and armour collections,
 - (iv) the continuing impact of the efficiency dividend on the budgets of museums and galleries over the last 10 years,
 - (v) funding levels for museums and galleries in New South Wales compared with other states,
 - (vi) whether there are other more cost effective strategies than the sale of the Powerhouse Museum site at Ultimo to support museum development across New South Wales, including consideration of the new Parramatta site and the proposed standalone Western Sydney Museum at the Cumberland Hospital site,
 - (c) any other related matter.

The terms of reference were referred to the committee by the Legislative Council on 27 February 2020.¹

¹ *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 27 February 2020, pp 802-805.

Committee details

Committee members

The Hon Robert Borsak MLC	Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party	<i>Chair</i>
Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC*	The Greens	<i>Deputy Chair</i>
The Hon Rose Jackson MLC	Australian Labor Party	
The Hon Taylor Martin MLC	Liberal Party	
The Hon Peter Poulos MLC**	Liberal Party	
The Hon Chris Rath MLC***	Liberal Party	
The Hon Walt Secord	Australian Labor Party	

* Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC replaced Mr David Shoebridge MLC as a substantive member of the committee from 30 March 2022.

** The Hon Peter Poulos MLC replaced the Hon Trevor Khan MLC as a substantive member of the committee from 20 May 2021.

*** The Hon Chris Rath MLC replaced the Hon Don Harwin MLC as a substantive member of the committee from 29 March 2022. The Hon Don Harwin MLC was a substantive member of the committee to 22 March 2022. The Hon Don Harwin MLC replaced the Hon Ben Franklin MLC as a substantive member of the committee from 25 January 2022.

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Chair's foreword

This select committee inquiry was established in response to Recommendation 6 of the 2019 Upper House inquiry into the State's museums and galleries sector. The 2019 inquiry raised serious concerns about the government's plans to relocate the Powerhouse Museum from its home in Ultimo to a flood prone site on the banks of the Parramatta River, including questions about the project's governance and the adequacy of the case for change. Such was the level of concern that a second inquiry was deemed necessary to maintain the spotlight of the Upper House on this problematic cultural infrastructure project.

A thorough testing of all the evidence across two Upper House inquiries has done little to allay suspicions that the original decision to relocate the Powerhouse Museum was a thought bubble that became official government policy without any real evidence base, and with retrospective attempts to justify the project through carefully crafted cost benefit analyses and business cases. Efficient and prudent investment of public monies – such that the benefits of any given government initiative are greater than the costs – is a touchstone of responsible government. Whether the government's relocation project meets this important bar, or falls short, was difficult to ascertain given the project's shifting parameters and the prevailing secrecy surrounding many of the more recent business cases.

Nevertheless, this inquiry brought to the fore so many compelling reasons why the government should have re-considered moving forward with this project. There has been a litany of issues that should give any government pause when embarking on an infrastructure project of the magnitude and cost of the one subject to this inquiry process.

The government did in fact revisit and modify some of its plans as this inquiry unfolded – partly owing to the public pressure generated by the inquiry and the well-organised community opposition to relocating the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta. As a committee, our focus shifted as the government's plans and proposals evolved. Some of these changes in direction raised more questions than they solved.

However, regrettably, the well-supported and well-researched project alternatives that were presented in evidence to our committee could not dent the government's steadfast resolve to build the Powerhouse 'facility' on a flood prone site in Parramatta and with significant impact on the site's heritage values. In fact, construction of the Powerhouse Parramatta was well underway at the time of writing. This followed the removal of Willow Grove from the site where it had stood with a commanding presence on Phillip Street from the late 19th Century – carried out in the face of vehement opposition from some community groups, First Nations peoples of the Parramatta area, and expert cultural heritage organisations. Remnants of Willow Grove now lie in storage in a western Sydney warehouse awaiting reconstruction at a yet-to-be-determined location. The irony of erasing an important part of Parramatta's history and heritage, to make way for a cultural institution that tells other stories about our past, was not lost on the committee. The committee has recommended that the memory of Willow Grove, at the very least, be honoured with a Blue Plaque on the site where it once stood.

Understanding the flood risks to the Parramatta site and the adequacy of the government's design responses exercised a good deal of the committee's deliberations. The committee is indebted to the Powerhouse Museum Alliance whose members used their own funds to commission the flood risk analyses that should have been commissioned by the government. The risks and deficiencies laid bare by these reports were part of a process that led to important design modifications to the Powerhouse Parramatta to address public safety hazards to visitors in and around the future facility. While this public

pressure led to considerable improvements to the facility's design, it is clear that further questions remain especially in relation to flood risks to the museum's objects and collections. It is troubling that it took three independently commissioned reports to prompt due consideration of the unique and precious nature of the future facility's contents. This is not just the usual furniture, devices and office equipment one might expect to find in a commercial or mix-used building. On the contrary, the Parramatta facility will be home to extremely rare, historically significant artefacts and objects that, if damaged or destroyed, can never be replaced. All angles must therefore be considered and there can be no room for doubt in ensuring appropriate flood immunity and protections for the new facility.

The government's plans for the museum's Ultimo site were similarly in flux throughout the inquiry. While the committee welcomed the 4 July decision to keep the Ultimo museum open – slated to operate from 'the Ultimo Power Station' alongside the new Parramatta facility once it is built – it was impossible to ignore concerns ventilated throughout the inquiry about the way the decision was carefully crafted and presented to the public, and the reality of what is actually being proposed for the Ultimo site. Clearly, there is no commitment to retain the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum *in its recognisable, internationally-renowned form*, and as it has been operating on that site for several decades. Where there is currently a thematically coherent science and technology museum with a clear and distinct identity, there will be, under the government's plans, a confused hotchpotch of fashion items displayed alongside a handful of large items of industrial and transport heritage devoid of their broader storytelling contexts and installations.

Similarly, the 4 July announcement gave no guarantee about the assembly of buildings that support the Ultimo museum's existing operations, including the historically and functionally important Harwood Building. It is unfortunate that the pursuit of commercial returns and revenue-generating opportunities has become such a key driver in the renewal of the Ultimo Powerhouse, arguably at the expense of the government's and the Trust's mandate as custodian of the very significant Powerhouse collection. In recognition of its importance to the Ultimo museum, the committee has recommended that the Harwood Building be retained in its current form, continuing in its existing museum-related functions and uses.

All told, the government's capital budget for the Powerhouse Parramatta, expansion of the Castle Hill Museums Discovery Centre and the renewal of the Ultimo Powerhouse is \$1.34 billion. This dwarfs the level of government funding for museums and galleries in regional New South Wales and underscores an unacceptable lack of parity and equity. The contrast could not be more stark. While the Powerhouse initiative is the beneficiary of this infrastructure cash splash, regional museums and galleries must survive on inadequate and piecemeal funding, often for one-off special projects or capital works, and with scant support for their ongoing operational and staffing expenses. The inquiry shone a light on the many challenges this sector continues to face, challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. It gave a very real sense of how regional museums and galleries survive from funding round to funding round, with little long term certainty and a dwindling pool of volunteers. The committee makes a number of sensible recommendations to address some of these issues. Notably, we recommend that the NSW Government reviews current funding arrangements for regional galleries and museums, and that it develops a statewide strategy for the sector.

Completion of the Powerhouse Parramatta is slated for 2024. For all our efforts and ruminations on this controversial project, time will be the true judge of whether this was a worthwhile project. I am sure many will look on with more than a passing interest to see if the project actually delivers on its publicly stated objectives, justifications and claims about public benefit.

The committee owes its sincere thanks to the many stakeholders who took up the fight to save the Ultimo Museum and Willow Grove. The Powerhouse Museum Alliance, Save the Powerhouse Campaign,

Pymont Action Incorporated and the North Parramatta Residents' Action Group deserve a special mention, but not to the exclusion of so many other individuals and organisations who contributed to this important inquiry. I also thank my committee colleagues for their thoughtful contributions – and the committee secretariat for their hard work and professionalism.

I commend the report to the House.



The Hon Robert Borsak MLC
Committee Chair

Findings

- Finding 1** **41**
That the NSW Government's removal of Willow Grove from its original site has had a significant and cumulative heritage impact.
- Finding 2** **41**
That, when or if the NSW Government reconstructs Willow Grove on its new site, the resulting structure will not be the same Willow Grove.
- Finding 3** **43**
That the NSW Government's current plans for Powerhouse Parramatta are more akin to an events centre than a museum.
- Finding 4** **63**
That the NSW Government's plan to break up the museum's collections and strip items of context will diminish their significance as collections and adversely impact their interpretation.

Recommendations

- Recommendation 1** **41**
That, given the removal of Willow Grove has already taken place despite widespread community opposition, the NSW Government commit to honouring the memory of Willow Grove by erecting a Blue Plaque on its former site.
- Recommendation 2** **41**
That the NSW Government, in retaining and adaptively reusing St George's Terrace as part of Powerhouse Parramatta, commit to retaining their original internal separations as terraces and restoring their original features.
- Recommendation 3** **42**
That, in implementing the flood-related conditions of consent issued as part of the State Significant Development Application determination, the NSW Government:
- address all outstanding flood-related issues and concerns highlighted by the detailed analyses submitted in evidence to this inquiry; and
 - re-test the flood immunity of the Powerhouse Parramatta (both riverine and overland flooding) using the new City of Parramatta Council Parramatta River flood study based on the 2019 Australian Rainfall and Runoff guidelines.
- Recommendation 4** **42**
That the NSW Government release the *Powerhouse Parramatta Final Business Case 2020* and the *Ultimo Creative Industries Precinct Final Business Case 2021*, as well as any other business cases, conservation management plans, and precinct master plans for any aspect of the project (Parramatta, Ultimo and Castle Hill) that are not already in the public domain.
- Recommendation 5** **43**
That the NSW Government publicly and specifically outline its strategy to minimise the risk of damage posed to large and fragile items by moving them from their existing location to Powerhouse Parramatta.
- Recommendation 6** **64**
That the NSW Government, as part of the renewal of the Ultimo museum, commit to:
- retaining the Harwood Building in its current form with museum-related, non-commercial uses, and
 - investigate the feasibility of adapting its storage spaces to better facilitate public access to collections in 'display storage' conditions.
- Recommendation 7** **64**
That the NSW Government progress, on a priority basis, the National Trust of Australia nomination to list the entire Ultimo site on the State Heritage Register and make representations to the Heritage Council of NSW to flag this as a government priority.

Recommendation 8

83

That the NSW Government review the current funding arrangements for regional museums and galleries, with consideration of:

- how to ensure greater certainty of funding for regional museums and galleries, and
- whether a library funding model would be an appropriate way to fund regional museums and galleries in New South Wales.

Recommendation 9

84

That the NSW Government develop a statewide museum and galleries strategy, which should include consideration of how to improve access to state collections by regional museums and galleries.

Conduct of inquiry

The terms of reference for the inquiry were referred to the committee by the Legislative Council on 27 February 2020.

The committee received 151 submissions and 28 supplementary submissions.

The committee also received 301 responses from individual participants to an online questionnaire.

The committee held six public hearings at Parliament House in Sydney.

The committee also conducted site visits to Willow Grove in Parramatta and the Harwood Building within the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum Precinct on 25 September 2020.

Inquiry related documents are available on the committee's website, including submissions, hearing transcripts, tabled documents, answers to questions on notice and the online questionnaire report.

Chapter 1 Context and background to the inquiry

Since the formal announcement in February 2015 to relocate the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta, the NSW Government's plans and policy proposals have significantly evolved, and even shifted on some issues. This introductory chapter sets out where the project is up to, and what the focus was for the current inquiry, given the issues canvassed in the previous inquiry into museums and galleries in the last Parliament.

Previous inquiry

- 1.1 The current inquiry follows a previous inquiry into museums and galleries which was held during the 56th Parliament by Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Legal Affairs. The focus of the previous inquiry was on the government's decision to relocate the Powerhouse Museum from Ultimo to Parramatta, including the government's business cases for the relocation decision.
- 1.2 Key concerns raised in that inquiry included the costs associated with relocating the museum, the logistics of moving such historic and large collections, and the challenges faced by regional museums and galleries, including funding constraints, and the need to preserve Aboriginal history, art and culture.²
- 1.3 Ultimately, there were two reports from that inquiry, the first containing 14 wide-ranging recommendations to the NSW Government, including a recommendation which called for the release of the full business case for relocation of the Powerhouse Museum.³
- 1.4 Following the first report, before the final report was released in February 2019, the committee was able to access the final business case for the Powerhouse Museum relocation project which was produced to the Legislative Council in accordance with an order for production of documents.⁴
- 1.5 Taking the business case into account, and other information the committee obtained through the course of the inquiry, the committee ultimately recommended in its final report that the NSW Government not proceed with the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum from Ultimo to Parramatta. It also called for the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo to be restored, and for the NSW Government to consider establishing, as an alternative option, a Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences satellite site in Western Sydney.⁵

² See, Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Legal Affairs, NSW Legislative Council, *Museums and galleries in New South Wales: First report* (2017); Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Legal Affairs, NSW Legislative Council, *Museums and galleries in New South Wales: Final report* (2019).

³ Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Legal Affairs, NSW Legislative Council, *Museums and galleries in New South Wales: First report* (2017), p viii – ix.

⁴ For more information about how the Final Business Case was obtained, see Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Legal Affairs, NSW Legislative Council, *Museums and galleries in New South Wales: Final report* (2019), p x-xii.

⁵ Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Legal Affairs, NSW Legislative Council, *Museums and galleries in New South Wales: Final report* (2019), p ix.

- 1.6 Owing to lingering questions about the government's plans, the final report also recommended that a new inquiry be established in the 57th Parliament to report on governance of the arts and culture sector in New South Wales, with particular reference to the governance and management of the Powerhouse Museum relocation project.⁶ The current inquiry was therefore established on 27 February 2020.⁷
- 1.7 The government's response to Portfolio Committee No. 4's recommendations, dated July 2019, confirmed that the NSW Government would proceed with its plan to relocate the Powerhouse Museum from Ultimo to Parramatta, to the site on the riverbank. The NSW Government also responded by stating that:
- it would retain a creative industries presence at Ultimo following the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta
 - the government was committed to growing the arts and cultural sector in Western Sydney.⁸

Powerhouse Parramatta – recent developments

- 1.8 This report focuses on recent developments in relation to the construction of Powerhouse Parramatta, which commenced in early 2022.
- 1.9 Powerhouse Parramatta is being built on a 2.5 hectare site on the northern edge of Parramatta's Central Business District. The site was previously occupied by a David Jones car park, two late-19th century buildings (Willow Grove and St George's Terrace, which we discuss in the next chapter), two retail and business buildings, and a substation.⁹
- 1.10 In 2017, a Heads of Agreement was signed for the NSW Government to purchase the site from Parramatta Council for \$140 million.¹⁰

⁶ Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Legal Affairs, NSW Legislative Council, *Museums and galleries in New South Wales: Final report* (2019), p 28.

⁷ *Minutes*, NSW Legislative Council, 27 February 2020, pp 814-817.

⁸ Correspondence from Hon Don Harwin MLC, Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, Special Minister for State and Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, and Vice-President of the Executive Council, to the Clerk of the Parliament, providing government response to the inquiry into museums and galleries in New South Wales, 17 July 2019.

⁹ Moreau Kusunoki with Genton, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix B: Architectural Plans and Design Report* (4 May 2020), p 8.

¹⁰ City of Parramatta, *Parramatta Powerhouse (MAAS)*, <https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/about-parramatta/powerhouse-parramatta#:~:text=The%20Riverbank%20site%20is%20being,negotiated%20agreement%20with%20a%20developer.>

- 1.11** The Powerhouse Parramatta is envisioned to be the Museum of Applied Arts and Science's flagship museum, predicted to attract 2 million visitors per year.¹¹ The corporate office and majority of staff will be located at the Parramatta complex.¹²

Design development, planning and early construction

- 1.12** An international competition was held to select the architects to design Powerhouse Parramatta. The first stage of the competition was an open expression of interest, which closed on 18 March 2019. In the second stage, finalists were invited to prepare a more detailed design in response to a design brief.¹³
- 1.13** As part of the stage two design brief, finalists were invited to consider the history of the site's development over time, including the possibility of retaining Willow Grove and St George's Terrace, two locally listed heritage items that occupy the site of the future museum. The brief also called on finalists to consider the City of Parramatta's aspirations for a pedestrianised civic link linking Parramatta Square with Parramatta River.¹⁴
- 1.14** In December 2019, a partnership of French architectural firm Moreau Kusunoki and Australian firm Genton was selected to design the Powerhouse Parramatta.¹⁵ According to the museum's Board of Trustees, the winning design embeds the NSW Government's endorsed vision and operational principles for Powerhouse Parramatta.¹⁶
- 1.15** The winning design of Moreau Kusunoki and Genton did not allow for the retention of the heritage items on the Powerhouse Parramatta site. Of the submissions received in response to the stage two design brief, only one included the retention of the subject heritage items.¹⁷
- 1.16** The NSW Government asserted it was not possible to achieve the vision of the design brief and the City of Parramatta's priorities while also retaining the subject heritage items:

The submissions received made clear that it was not possible to deliver on the design ambitions of the brief and council's aspirations for the civic link, while also retaining Willow Grove and St George's Terrace. While the retention of heritage was considered carefully during the judging process, the jury was unanimous, including Kim Crestani, the City of Parramatta Council's architect, a staff member of council. The jury was unanimous in its decision on the final chosen concept.¹⁸

¹¹ Evidence, Ms Lisa Havilah, Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, 8 October 2020, p 2.

¹² Evidence, Ms Havilah, 29 July 2020, p 33.

¹³ Portfolio Committee No. 4, NSW Legislative Council, *Museums and galleries in New South Wales* (2019), pp 13-15.

¹⁴ Evidence, Hon Don Harwin, former Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts, 29 July 2020, p 13.

¹⁵ Submission 87, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Board of Trustees, p 4.

¹⁶ Submission 87, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Board of Trustees, p 4.

¹⁷ Evidence, Mr Bruce Dawbin, NSW State Representative, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Australia, 29 July 2020, p 54.

¹⁸ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 13.

Planning approval: State significant development application

- 1.17** In June 2020, the State Significant Development Application (SSDA) for Powerhouse Parramatta was lodged with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.¹⁹ An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared as part of the SSDA and was on public exhibition from 10 June to 21 July 2020.²⁰
- 1.18** Over 1,300 submissions were received to the EIS. Key matters raised in submissions to the EIS were the removal of local heritage items on the site, the design of public space including the building's undercroft, and flooding risks.²¹ In response to submissions, changes were made to the design.²²
- 1.19** The SSDA was approved by the NSW Minister for Planning on 11 February 2021.²³ In September 2021, Lendlease was awarded the main construction contract to build Powerhouse Parramatta following a competitive tender process.²⁴
- 1.20** Construction of Powerhouse Parramatta commenced in early 2022. At the committee's first hearing in July 2020, the then Minister for the Arts, Hon Don Harwin, nominated late 2024 as the expected completion date for the Powerhouse Parramatta subject to several 'unknowns'.²⁵

Design features of the Powerhouse Parramatta

- 1.21** Powerhouse Parramatta will be situated within an 'open public precinct'.²⁶ The existing Civic Link will be extended through the site, providing a continuous pedestrian path from the Parramatta CBD to the riverfront.²⁷ The site will also feature The Terrace, a northeast facing public space that extends from the internal presentation space; and the Public Domain, which includes the continuation of the riparian corridor and Riverfront Promenade.²⁸

¹⁹ Infrastructure NSW, *Powerhouse Parramatta: Planning presentation* (no date), <https://www.insw.com/media/2563/powerhouse-parramatta-eis-exhibition-presentation.pdf>, p 22.

²⁰ NSW Government, *Powerhouse Parramatta Factsheet: Project Update: Response to Submissions* (October 2020), p 2.

²¹ NSW Government, *Powerhouse Parramatta Factsheet: Project Update: Response to Submissions* (October 2020), p 2.

²² NSW Government, *Powerhouse Parramatta Factsheet: Project Update: Response to Submissions* (October 2020), p 2.

²³ Infrastructure NSW, *Planning Approval Granted for Powerhouse Parramatta*, <https://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/news/2021/february/15/planning-approval-granted-for-powerhouse-parramatta/>.

²⁴ Media release, NSW Government, 'Powerhouse Parramatta appoints construction partner', 17 September 2021.

²⁵ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 16.

²⁶ Submission 87, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Board of Trustees, p 5; Submission 142, NSW Government, p 2.

²⁷ Moreau Kusunoki with Genton, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix B: Architectural Plans and Design Report* (4 May 2020), p 10.

²⁸ Moreau Kusunoki with Genton, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix B: Architectural Plans and Design Report* (4 May 2020), p 10.

- 1.22 The exterior of Powerhouse Parramatta will be built using three types of steel lattices as an exoskeleton to the buildings. This is intended to be 'a celebrated architectural feature that is used to articulate the building facades'.²⁹ There will be multiple entry points to the museum, instead of a single front door.³⁰
- 1.23 The EIS provided that there are to be two loading docks in the south western corner on the ground floor of the western building.³¹ One loading dock will exclusively accommodate deliveries of the Powerhouse collection or exhibition items; the other will service the retail, catering and waste collection services.³²
- 1.24 Internally, Powerhouse Parramatta will contain: seven exhibition spaces; front and back-of-house spaces; the 'Powerlab', containing residential studios, dormitory-style accommodation places, co-working spaces, and community spaces; the Powerlab kitchen; film, photography, and post-production studios; a research library and archives, and retail spaces including food and drink tenancies.³³
- 1.25 Powerhouse Parramatta will have a three-dimensional layer of interstitial space, to 'provide transparent connecting spaces full of natural light'.³⁴

Focus of the current inquiry

- 1.26 Owing to the plans for Powerhouse Parramatta, a significant focus of the current inquiry was on the design and development proposal for the museum, including its exhibition spaces and intended programming. Like the previous inquiry, flooding risks associated with the site were a key concern for stakeholders, as were the heritage impacts associated with demolishing two buildings in Parramatta to make way for the museum's footprint. These issues are covered in Chapter 2.
- 1.27 The future of the Ultimo site was also a key issue. At the beginning of the current inquiry, the NSW Government had plans to sell the Ultimo site. However, on 4 July 2020, it was announced that the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo would remain open.³⁵

²⁹ Infrastructure NSW, *Powerhouse Parramatta* (2022), <https://www.infrastructure.nsw.gov.au/powerhouseparramatta>.

³⁰ Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, *Powerhouse Precinct Parramatta: International Design Competition: Stage 2 Design Brief*, p 56.

³¹ Ethos Urban, *Powerhouse Parramatta: Environmental Impact Statement* (May 2020), p 59.

³² Ethos Urban, *Powerhouse Parramatta: Environmental Impact Statement* (May 2020), p 59.

³³ Moreau Kusunoki with Genton, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix B: Architectural Plans and Design Report* (4 May 2020), p 9.

³⁴ Submission 87, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Board of Trustees, p 5.

³⁵ Media release, Hon Gladys Berejiklian, former NSW Premier, and Hon Dominic Perrottet MP, former NSW Treasurer, 'More Powerhouse for the people – NSW Government to retain Ultimo museum', 4 July 2020. See also: Evidence, Prof Barney Glover, former President, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, 29 July 2020, p 21.

- 1.28** This policy shift raised questions from stakeholders, with the former Arts Minister, the Hon Don Harwin, explaining that the Ultimo site would be a museum of design and innovation, incorporating a focus on fashion.³⁶ This shift will be explored in Chapter 3, as will the future and intended use of the Harwood Building at Ultimo, and plans for the Castle Hill Museums Discovery Centre.
- 1.29** The committee also took further evidence in relation to the support regional museums and galleries require, particularly in the context of diminishing funding and the challenges associated with COVID-19 and recent natural disasters. The final chapter of this report focuses on these issues.

³⁶ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, pp 2 and 4.

Chapter 2 Powerhouse Parramatta

This chapter sets out key concerns related to the site selection, design and vision for Powerhouse Parramatta. In particular, it explores the heritage impacts associated with the original plans to demolish Willow Grove and St George's Terrace, along with the flood risks to the Powerhouse Parramatta site. This chapter also examines concerns about the curation, interpretation and display of collections at the new museum, focusing on whether the new museum's and its exhibition space will be fit for purpose.

Heritage impacts

2.1 This inquiry explored the heritage impacts associated with the build for Powerhouse Parramatta, given the winning design for the development originally involved the demolition of both Willow Grove and St George's Terrace, two locally listed heritage items that occupy the site of the future museum. While this proposal went on to be revised, as will be explained later in this chapter, much of the inquiry centred on stakeholders' concern about the heritage impacts to these two sites.

The original proposal to demolish Willow Grove and St George's Terrace

2.2 Willow Grove is a Victorian Italianate villa located at 34 Phillip St, Parramatta. St George's Terrace is a Victorian terrace of seven two-story houses, located at 44 Phillip Street, Parramatta. While both buildings are not listed on the State Heritage Register under the *Heritage Act 1977*, they are identified as local heritage items on the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2011, and inscribed on the National Trust Register as buildings of cultural significance.³⁷

2.3 Noting the interest to which stakeholders and the community were expressing about the proposed demolition of Willow Grove, in particular, the committee visited the site on 25 September 2020. Members received on-site briefings from: Ms Kylie Winkworth, heritage consultant, former staff member and former museum Trustee; Ms Julie Jones and Ms Michelle Locke of the Dharug Strategic Management Group; Ms Suzette Meade of the North Parramatta Residents' Action Group; and other stakeholders.

The history and significance of the sites

2.4 Throughout the inquiry, many stakeholders expressed concern about the proposed demolition of Willow Grove and St George's Terrace, pointing to their historical and community significance.

2.5 The National Trust of Australia (New South Wales) provided evidence about the history and significance of St George's Terrace, being constructed in 1881 and a landmark of Victorian era development in Parramatta.³⁸

³⁷ Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2011, Sch 5; Submission 35, National Trust of Australia (New South Wales), p 1.

³⁸ Submission 35, The National Trust of Australia (New South Wales), p 3.

- 2.6** The significance of Willow Grove was also outlined to the committee, mainly by the North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, who traced its connection back to Annie Josephine Gallagher, a historical figure in Parramatta who operated a drapery business in the mid 1880s.³⁹ Annie purchased the land where Willow Grove stood, and according to the National Trust of Australia (New South Wales), the building was built circa late 1880s – early 1890s.⁴⁰
- 2.7** In 1919, after the property had to be transferred due to debts held by Annie, the committee was told that Willow Grove became a private hospital, continuing in that use until 1953. As outlined by the North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, records show that – during that time – the property was mortgaged to a succession of women, with a string of female figures being granted licences to operate private hospitals from the premises.⁴¹
- 2.8** In the context of this history, the North Parramatta Residents' Action Group explained that Willow Grove sits within a broader sequence of women's heritage places in Parramatta, with 'Willow Grove's history of women in business, and nurses, matrons and midwives caring for mothers and babies... an important part of this story'.⁴²
- 2.9** The North Parramatta Residents' Action Group also pointed to Willow Grove's significance in showing the pattern of development and subdivision along the Parramatta River foreshore, where villas and estates within garden settings were occupied by businessman and professionals in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As the group explained, these villas – particularly those near the river – have been all but lost over time.⁴³
- 2.10** The National Trust of Australia (New South Wales) referred to its significance as 'a rare survivor of high Victorian residential development in Parramatta' and a representative example of a Victorian Italianate two storey villa.⁴⁴ Referring to the substantial grounds and landscape setting of Willow Grove, the Trust highlighted the significant streetscape value it adds to Phillip Street, providing a green expanse in an otherwise urban setting.⁴⁵
- 2.11** In addition to its historical and aesthetic significance, several stakeholders noted that Willow Grove holds social significance for the families and individuals who used it as a maternity hospital.⁴⁶

³⁹ Submission 35, National Trust of Australia (New South Wales), p 3.

⁴⁰ Submission 35, National Trust of Australia (New South Wales), p 3.

⁴¹ Submission 135a, North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, p 24-27.

⁴² Submission 135a, North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, p 2; Evidence, Ms Suzette Meade, North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, 21 August 2020, p 46.

⁴³ Submission 135a, North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, p 29.

⁴⁴ Submission 35, National Trust of Australia (New South Wales), p 3.

⁴⁵ Evidence, Mr David Burdon, Chair, Built Heritage Conservation Committee, National Trust of Australia National Trust (New South Wales), 29 July 2020, p 60.

⁴⁶ Submission 135a, North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, p 29; Evidence, Mr Burdon, 29 July 2020, p 60. See also: Submission 73, Ms Julie Owens MP, pp 2 and 3.

2.12 The significance of the Willow Grove site to First Nations people was also outlined in evidence to the inquiry. Ms Julie Jones, Chair, Dharug Strategic Management Group, said that Dharug people have a 'very strong connection' to Willow Grove, as 'it is one of the rare places in Parramatta that has no negative connotations or history with the Dharug people'.⁴⁷ Ms Jones told the committee that 'our oral history states that it was one of the places that still allowed our people to have free access to the river'.⁴⁸ She explained:

Throughout our oral history and throughout written research, we have no negative history or interaction with anybody who owned, built or lived in Willow Grove. Our oral history states that Annie Gallagher actually allowed our people to still maintain access to the river so that we could continue some cultural practices. There was no oral history or written history of any wars or murders or massacres on that site, which is very rare for a new colonial settlement.⁴⁹

2.13 First Nations peoples have a very long history of continuous occupation on the Willow Grove site – in Ms Jones' estimation, at least 35,000 years by documented evidence.⁵⁰ In a statement to the committee, the Dharug Strategic Management Group highlighted the layered and intertwined values Willow Grove has for the Dharug people:

[The site] holds great significance for the Dharug people. It is simultaneously woven into Dharug, colonial and current urban cultural landscapes. It is a rare sight in the district's colonial and later history because it embodies a shared history free of violence, rejection and denial. The site of Willow Grove and the adjacent river remains a place of relative peace in a landscape that has rarely known genuine peace since its colonial occupation.⁵¹

2.14 The Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation also submitted to the committee that there is a tree of significance to local and surrounding First Nations people at the Willow Grove site.⁵²

2.15 Not all inquiry participants, however, were as convinced of Willow Grove's heritage significance. For instance, Mr David Borger, Representative, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, commented that Willow Grove was 'not a particularly significant or unique building; in fact, it is a pattern-book Victorian Italianate house that has had significant and substantial change'.⁵³ Mr Borger further questioned Willow Grove's social significance as an argument for its retention and preservation as heritage. He observed that, while its former use as a maternity hospital gives it a rich history, '[w]e are all born in a hospital somewhere. We are not saving every hospital for heritage listing'.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ Evidence, Ms Julie Jones, Chair, Dharug Strategic Management Group, 8 October 2020, p 15.

⁴⁸ Evidence, Ms Jones, 8 October 2020, p 15.

⁴⁹ Evidence, Ms Jones, 8 October 2020, p 17.

⁵⁰ Evidence, Ms Jones, 8 October 2020, p 17.

⁵¹ Tabled document, Dharug Strategic Management Group, *Submission to the NSW parliamentary select committee on the government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in NSW*, October 2020, p 2.

⁵² Submission 68, Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation, p 2.

⁵³ Evidence, Mr David Borger, Representative, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, 8 October 2020, p 4

⁵⁴ Evidence, Mr Borger, 8 October 2020, p 5.

2.16 Mr Borger formed the view that the significance of Willow Grove is 'actually relatively low' and unlikely to warrant preservation. In advancing this view, he referred to the Heritage Council of NSW and the 'heritage community' to give it the imprimatur of expert opinion:

I think the most important heritage consultant is the Heritage Council of NSW. My understanding is that the level of significance on this building is actually relatively low. It is a locally listed building and there are many people in the heritage community who, I think, would say that it is not a building that you would necessarily preserve.⁵⁵

2.17 Despite this conclusion, Mr Borger noted his respect for alternative views within the community seeking to save Willow Grove from destruction.⁵⁶

2.18 Mr Borger's assessment of Willow Grove as being of relatively low significance was repeated in evidence from the Hon Don Harwin, who gave evidence to the committee while he was Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts. Mr Harwin told the committee that Willow Grove 'has over many years had many additions and alterations' and 'does not reflect its original State'.⁵⁷

2.19 Reflecting on the subsequent 'modern' additions to Willow Grove that were never part of the original fabric, Mr Harwin stated that the property itself is not particularly significant, although he accepted the local community considers the site important, mainly as a result of its use as a maternity hospital.⁵⁸

The Environmental Impact Statement's heritage impact findings

2.20 At the commencement of the committee's inquiry in February 2020, the government's intention was to demolish Willow Grove and St George's Terrace. Only one of the shortlisted designs provided for the retention of these items and that design was judged to be 'suboptimal' by the design jury.⁵⁹

2.21 The Environmental Impact Statement therefore originally sought approval to demolish Willow Grove and St George's Terrace. The proponent, Infrastructure NSW, commissioned three reports to assess the cultural heritage of the site – both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – and the potential heritage impacts of the Powerhouse Parramatta development. These were comprised of an Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment conducted by Curio Projects, a draft archaeological research design also prepared by Curio Projects and a statement of heritage impact prepared by Advisian.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Evidence, Mr Borger, 8 October 2020, p 5.

⁵⁶ Evidence, Mr Borger, 8 October 2020, p 5.

⁵⁷ Evidence, the Hon Don Harwin, former Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, 15 February 2021, p 2.

⁵⁸ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 15 February 2021, p 17.

⁵⁹ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 14.

⁶⁰ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 13.

- 2.22** Advisian's statement of heritage impact for Willow Grove is particularly noteworthy for the findings and the conclusions it draws about the demolition of the locally listed heritage item. It found that its demolition would have a major physical and visual impact on its heritage significance, resulting in 'the total irreversible loss of the conservation values that constitute heritage significance, including significant fabric and the visual setting'.⁶¹
- 2.23** Furthermore, it found that Willow Grove is the only example of its type located in the core of the Parramatta Central Business District and that:
- The demolition of [both Willow Grove and St George's Terrace] would have a major impact on the representation of these respective architectural styles in the Phillip Street streetscape and Parramatta [Central Business District] townscape.⁶²
- 2.24** However, despite these findings, Advisian considered the cumulative heritage impact of the project to be minor. It stated '[t]he proposal is considered to have a minor cumulative impact on the loss of heritage in the Parramatta area in consideration of other nearby current and future developments'.⁶³
- 2.25** Advisian's assessment also identified some of the existing trees on the site as contributing to heritage significance, while noting no mature trees within the landscape of Willow Grove will be retained.⁶⁴
- 2.26** In relation to St George's Terrace, Advisian noted that this row of terraces is of significance for the Parramatta Local Government Area for historical and aesthetic reasons and is an example of modest Victorian period terraces constructed during an early wave of development in the area. It noted that the terraces have a relatively high degree of integrity when viewed from the street, contributing to the Phillip Street streetscape and the character of the Parramatta townscape, in unison with other historic buildings nearby.⁶⁵
- 2.27** Advisian recommended a range of measures to mitigate potential impacts on both Willow Gove and St George's Terrace, including (but not limited to) the development of an Interpretation Plan by the Powerhouse Museum to interpret the heritage values of the items slated for demolition; the preparation of an archival recording to maintain a record of changes to the items; and the salvaging of significant fabric from the building.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Advisian, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix G: Statement of Heritage Impact* (17 April 2020), p 9.

⁶² Advisian, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix G: Statement of Heritage Impact* (17 April 2020), p 10.

⁶³ Advisian, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix G: Statement of Heritage Impact* (17 April 2020), p 10.

⁶⁴ Advisian, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix G: Statement of Heritage Impact* (17 April 2020), p 10.

⁶⁵ Advisian, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix G: Statement of Heritage Impact* (17 April 2020), p 52.

⁶⁶ Advisian, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix G: Statement of Heritage Impact* (17 April 2020), pp 96-98.

2.28 Citing the conclusions of the final Environmental Impact Statement prepared by Ethos Urban,⁶⁷ Mr Harwin stressed that the loss of heritage resulting from the destruction of both items would be mitigated through interpretation measures and would be outweighed by the cultural benefits that will be delivered by the Powerhouse Parramatta. He submitted:

The cultural impact of demolishing the local heritage items will be mitigated through the implementation of heritage interpretation measures and on balance is outweighed by the significant positive cultural impact associated with the delivery of a world leading cultural institution that will make its own unique and important contribution to the cultural heritage of Parramatta, particularly through a major focus on highlighting First Nations culture, art, science and technology.⁶⁸

Opposition to the demolition of Willow Grove

2.29 Throughout the inquiry, opposition to the intended demolition of Willow Grove was both vehement and widespread:

- The International Council of Museums Australia expressed its opposition, saying its membership 'does not believe that one history ... should be replacing another' and that the demolition of historical sites of importance is 'something we do not advocate for'.⁶⁹
- Australia ICOMOS, a non-government professional organisation that exists to promote best practice in the conservation of cultural heritage, expressed concerns about the loss of Willow Grove (and St George's Terrace), stating their demolition would be a loss to 'the dwindling heritage fabric of Parramatta'.⁷⁰
- The Australian Institute of Conservation of Cultural Materials (NSW Division) did not support the demolition of Willow Grove (and St George's Terrace), arguing it was not justified and that destroying built heritage goes against the spirit of the Powerhouse at Ultimo, where heritage items were successfully integrated into the 1988 design.⁷¹
- The Federation of Australian Historical Societies objected to the Powerhouse Parramatta development on several grounds, with the loss of significant heritage items being one of them.⁷²

2.30 Other stakeholders that did not support the intended demolition of Willow Grove included the Dharug Strategic Management Group; Mr Chris Betteridge – a museum and heritage conservation practitioner with over 40 years' experience who was born in Willow Grove; Engineers Australia (Sydney Division); Mr Lionel Glendenning, Principal Government Architect for the Sulman Award winning 1988 Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo; Save the Powerhouse, a community-led campaign; and other members of the community.⁷³

⁶⁷ Ethos Urban, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement* (4 May 2020), p 141.

⁶⁸ Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 14; Ethos Urban, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement* (4 May 2020), p 141.

⁶⁹ Evidence, Ms Cherie McNair, Secretary, International Council of Museums Australia, 29 July 2020, p 52.

⁷⁰ Submission 139, Australia ICOMOS, p 2.

⁷¹ Submission 77, Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials (NSW Division), p 3.

⁷² Submission 84, Federation of Australian Historical Societies, p 2.

⁷³ Tabled document, Dharug Strategic Management Group, *Submission to the NSW parliamentary select committee on the government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in*

2.31 The National Trust of Australia (New South Wales) also objected to the intended demolition of Willow Grove. Reflecting on local community priorities conveyed to the City of Parramatta Council, the Trust was of the opinion that the destruction of Willow Grove and St George's Terrace did not respect Parramatta's identity and was at odds with community aspirations. The Trust submitted:

Destroying Parramatta's local heritage by demolishing Willow Grove and St George's Terrace is not respecting the history and identity of Parramatta, nor is it facilitating the community want for heritage to be the cornerstone of future development. The authentic character of a place comes with managing change over time. The new responds to and respects the context of the old. Parramatta is a historic place, not a greenfield site.⁷⁴

2.32 Under questioning by the committee, Mr David Burdon, then Chair of the Built Heritage Conservation Committee, National Trust of Australia (New South Wales), suggested the committee should consider the heritage impacts not in terms of the loss of individual, isolated items of significance, but as a broader implication on the landscape or Local Government Area level over time.⁷⁵

2.33 Mr Burdon drew the committee's attention to the consequences of losing individual items which, taken alone and considered in isolation, may not seem to be a significant loss but accumulate over time to irreparably 'deplete' an entire urban area:

I think the cumulative impact is the biggest aspect of any of these proposals. I think there are numerous examples—and we do not have to look to Parramatta: We could look at Burwood or Hurstville, or any other Sydney suburban area—where you look at those then-and-now photographs and you can see a fully intact Victorian streetscape in the middle of one of our suburbs, which is now sadly depleted in many cases. I think that the National Trust has long argued for conservation areas in addition to listing of individual items because the actual area is important itself.⁷⁶

2.34 The North Parramatta Residents' Action Group was also very vocal in its opposition to the proposed demolition of Willow Grove. The group ran an online petition calling for the Premier to retain Willow Grove and St George's Terrace, receiving over 13,000 signatures in just over a week.⁷⁷

2.35 The group's spokesperson, Ms Suzette Meade, told the committee that, while Parramatta deserves a world-class museum, this should not come at the expense of Parramatta's cherished heritage. Ms Meade dismissed suggestions that Willow Grove is common, with many surviving buildings just like it, observing instead that in Parramatta there remains just one. She stated: 'Willow Grove is the only Victorian Italianate villa in the Parramatta [Central Business District]'

NSW, October 2020, p 2; Submission 18, Mr Chris Betteridge, p 1; Submission 36, Engineers Australia (Sydney Division), p 2; Submission 66b, Mr Lionel Glendenning, p 2; Submission 53, Save the Powerhouse, p 12.

⁷⁴ Submission 35, National Trust of Australia (New South Wales), p 3.

⁷⁵ Evidence, Mr Burdon, 29 July 2020, p 59.

⁷⁶ Evidence, Mr Burdon, 29 July 2020, p 60.

⁷⁷ Submission 135, North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, p 8.

and both Willow Grove and St George's Terrace are important to Parramatta's streetscape, are socially significant and are important architecturally.⁷⁸

2.36 Ms Meade impressed upon the committee the breadth and depth of community support for Willow Grove, indicating that the campaign to save the site had gained traction far beyond Parramatta.⁷⁹

2.37 Noting the evidence put forward about the significance of the site, and the objections to demolition, the committee explored the feasibility of retaining Willow Grove and integrating it into the new built elements of the Powerhouse Parramatta.

2.38 To this end, the International Council of Museums Australia referred the committee to examples of other collecting and cultural institutions in Australia and around the world that have successfully combined contemporary and historical architecture, including the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.⁸⁰

2.39 When referred to new museums elsewhere that have successfully integrated heritage items into modern buildings, Mr Borger of the museum's Board of Trustees asserted that a similar integration of old and new at Parramatta would be effectively precluded by the siting and placement of Willow Grove in relation to the new museum's footprint, and that retention of Willow Grove would mean shrinking the size of the new museum's exhibition spaces:

One of the challenges of this site is that Willow Grove sits in the very centre of where the two buildings are going to be located. If you are going to put buildings adjacent to Willow Grove, they would need to be set back to provide context and space and room to breathe and all of that. If you did that, you would shrink the footprints of these vast museums spaces to be so small that actually you would not be looking at the same business case. It would be a very different museum. It would be a quarter of the size. That is one of the challenges. It is in such a challenging location. It is not sitting on the very edge of the site.⁸¹

2.40 Expressing a different view, the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (NSW) contended that both Willow Grove and St George's Terrace could in fact be retained and should become part of the new museum.⁸²

2.41 Following representations from the North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (NSW) placed a green ban on the construction site on 30 June 2020, the purpose of which was to retain the two extant heritage items and make them part of the new museum. The green ban was unanimously endorsed by the Union's management committee and entire delegate structure.⁸³

⁷⁸ Evidence, Ms Meade, 21 August 2020, pp 46 and 48.

⁷⁹ Evidence, Ms Meade, 21 August 2020, p 48.

⁸⁰ Evidence, Ms McNair, 29 July 2020, p 53. See also: Evidence, Ms Rita Mallia, President, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (NSW), 8 October 2020, p 37.

⁸¹ Evidence, Mr Borger, 8 October 2020, p 9.

⁸² Evidence, Mr Darren Greenfield, Secretary, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union NSW, 8 October 2020, p 37.

⁸³ Evidence, Mr Greenfield, 8 October 2020, p 36.

- 2.42 The green ban was also supported by the National Trust of Australia, the Historic Houses Association and the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association.⁸⁴
- 2.43 The ban remained in place until 24 August 2021, when it was lifted following consultation with the community regarding how the heritage items could be retained.⁸⁵ This signalled a shift in the government's plan for the build, as will be discussed below.

The revised proposal - relocation of Willow Grove and incorporation of St George's Terrace

- 2.44 At the committee's fifth public hearing on 15 February 2021, the Hon Don Harwin, then Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, announced a change in direction from the original proposal to demolish Willow Grove and St George's Terrace.⁸⁶
- 2.45 In response to community concerns, the government announced that Willow Grove would be dismantled and relocated to another site within the Parramatta Local Government Area, and St George's Terrace would be retained and incorporated within the Powerhouse Parramatta site.⁸⁷ The former Minister advised that the cost of dismantling and relocating Willow Grove would come from the overall budget for Powerhouse Parramatta.⁸⁸
- 2.46 In describing the decision to dismantle and relocate Willow Grove, Mr Harwin presented the decision as a compromise that would return Willow Grove to the local community and make it more accessible, while still delivering a world-class cultural institution for western Sydney:

While it cannot be retained on site, we will retain Willow Grove and return it to the community and protect it for future generations. This decision is about getting the best possible outcome for the western Sydney community. It is a balance between delivering western Sydney a world-class cultural institution and retaining much-loved heritage items. Relocation will allow the building to be more accessible to the local community to use it, and it will allow western Sydney to realise its long-awaited cultural institution with a high quality design, one that western Sydney deserves.⁸⁹

- 2.47 Mr Borger of the museum's Board of Trustees backed the proposal to dismantle Willow Grove and relocate it to another site in Parramatta, with one option floated being the Cumberland Hospital site in North Parramatta. He told the committee that, as a concept, relocating heritage items is not a novel idea or 'uncommon thing' in the Parramatta area and cited Linden House and the Kings School as examples of sandstone heritage items that have been 'picked up', stone by stone, and relocated.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ Evidence, Ms Meade, 21 August 2020, p 46.

⁸⁵ Media release, NSW Government, 'Green ban on Willow Grove lifted', 24 August 2021.

⁸⁶ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 15 February 2021, p 2.

⁸⁷ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 15 February 2021, p 2.

⁸⁸ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 15 February 2021, p 5.

⁸⁹ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 15 February 2021, p 2.

⁹⁰ Evidence, Mr Borger, 8 October 2020, p 6.

- 2.48** According to Mr Borger, the proposal enjoyed support from a number of community and business groups in western Sydney including the Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council, Multicultural NSW, the Western Sydney Business Chamber and the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta among others.⁹¹ His evidence was that '[t]here are many groups that actually support it'.⁹²
- 2.49** Roughly coinciding with government's decision to move Willow Grove, a new alliance of business, arts and community groups from across western Sydney emerged to support the government's plans for the Powerhouse Parramatta.⁹³ The Western Sydney Powerhouse Museum Community Alliance expressed its support for moving Willow Grove, with its Chair, Mr Christopher Brown, telling the committee 'if it can be saved and moved, then that would be good'.⁹⁴
- 2.50** Repeating suggestions that Willow Grove is not of particularly high heritage significance, Mr Brown expressed the view that moving it is indeed feasible and the cultural imperative of the new museum in Parramatta overrides the cultural imperative of Willow Grove.⁹⁵
- 2.51** This change in direction by the NSW Government did not, however, gain support from all inquiry participants. The North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, for instance, labelled plans to relocate Willow Grove as 'ludicrous' and contrary to the tenets of good heritage practice:

Moving heritage items is contrary to all the tenets of good heritage practice since the history and significance of the building is indivisible from the place and its setting. Moving buildings is a discredited 70s concept that is rejected by heritage practitioners and by the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter. The aim of conservation is to protect the significance of the place. The significance of Willow Grove is indivisible from the place. Moving the Willow Grove building would destroy its integrity and sense of place.⁹⁶

- 2.52** The Burra Charter is the foundation of heritage conservation and practice in Australia, informing public policy and heritage legislation. Article 9.1 of the charter provides:

The physical location of a place is part of its cultural significance. A building, work or other component of a place should remain in its historical location. Relocation is generally unacceptable unless this is the sole practical means of ensuring its survival... Options that allow the retention at the place should always be fully investigated beforehand.⁹⁷

⁹¹ Evidence, Mr Borger, 8 October 2020, p 6.

⁹² Evidence, Mr Borger, 8 October 2020, p 6.

⁹³ For a list of members of this alliance, see: Evidence, Mr Christopher Brown, Chair, Western Sydney Powerhouse Museum Community Alliance, 15 February 2021, p 41.

⁹⁴ Evidence, Mr Brown, 15 February 2021, p 41.

⁹⁵ Evidence, Mr Brown, 15 February 2021, p 41.

⁹⁶ Submission 135a, North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, p ii.

⁹⁷ Australia ICOMOS, *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS charter for places of cultural significance (2013)* cited in Submission 135a, North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, p ii.

- 2.53** Consistent with this view, Mr Frank Howarth, Chair of the Heritage Council of New South Wales, advised the committee that '[t]o move a building from its original site diminishes its heritage significance'.⁹⁸
- 2.54** Asked whether they support the proposal to move Willow Grove to North Parramatta, Ms Julie Jones of the Dharug Strategic Management Group re-iterated that they are not in favour of the destruction of the site, stressing that the site and its significance must be considered in its entirety, being 'the house, the land and everything that encompasses it'.⁹⁹
- 2.55** The committee also heard that none of the Heritage Council of NSW, Heritage NSW, or Create NSW had been approached for advice on the heritage impact of moving Willow Grove.¹⁰⁰
- 2.56** Adding to these concerns, the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (NSW) questioned the feasibility of the proposal, casting significant doubt on whether Willow Grove could actually be re-assembled or rebuilt in the way government intended:
- There are skills in the making and construction of Willow Grove that you could not even—I actually don't know how you could rebuild some of it because I don't know that we have got the skills to replicate the kind of work that it took to build that building, and the same with St George's Terrace. For construction workers, it is actually part of their lived history.¹⁰¹
- 2.57** Reflecting on the practicalities of such an undertaking, the Union was not convinced that the resulting building would actually be the same building as before it was moved, especially considering Willow Grove is a rendered building, unlike the sandstone block construction examples that were referred to as evidence of heritage items being successfully relocated in Parramatta in the past.¹⁰²
- 2.58** Despite these objections, the Hon Peter Collins, President, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, confirmed that Willow Grove had been 'meticulously dismantled,' by March 2022.¹⁰³ The committee was advised by Ms Lisa Havilah, Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, that the items were being stored in Western Sydney.¹⁰⁴ Ms Annette Pitman, Acting Chief Executive, Create NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet, also advised, at that time, that no decision had been made on when or where it is to be reassembled, or the future use of the building.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ Evidence, Mr Frank Howarth AM PSM, Chair, Heritage Council of NSW, 8 October 2020, p 34.

⁹⁹ Evidence, Ms Jones, 8 October 2020, p 16.

¹⁰⁰ Evidence, Mr Tim Smith OAM, Director, Heritage Operations, Heritage NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 8 October 2020, p 35.

¹⁰¹ Evidence, Ms Mallia, 8 October 2020, p 39.

¹⁰² Evidence, Mr Greenfield, 15 February 2021, p 46.

¹⁰³ Evidence, the Hon Peter Collins AM QC, President, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, 17 March 2022, p 24.

¹⁰⁴ Evidence, Ms Lisa Havilah, Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, 17 March 2022, p 24.

¹⁰⁵ Evidence, Ms Annette Pitman, Acting Chief Executive, Create NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 17 March 2022, p 12.

- 2.59** Ms Pitman noted that there is currently a community reference group to provide feedback and advice on the future use and site of Willow Grove.¹⁰⁶ Ms Meade told the committee that the North Parramatta Residents' Action Group declined to join that committee, as 'it would set too dangerous a precedent for us and all the other beautiful heritage in Parramatta to support the relocation'.¹⁰⁷
- 2.60** While the cost of relocating Willow Grove was not disclosed in evidence from the government, it was a concern raised by the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union. Mr Darren Greenfield, Secretary, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (NSW) informed the committee that the ballpark figures being put forward at the time (of around \$5 million) were not realistic given the magnitude and complexity of the undertaking.¹⁰⁸ Mr Greenfield speculated it could cost anywhere up to \$25 million.¹⁰⁹
- 2.61** As mentioned above, the government also announced on 15 February 2021 that St George's Terrace would be retained and adaptatively reused as part of the Phillip Street frontage of Powerhouse Parramatta.¹¹⁰ The design modification to retain St George's Terrace proposed the removal of contemporary additions to the terraces and preservation of (primarily) the façade and its architectural detailing as 'the remaining highly significant feature of this heritage item'.¹¹¹
- 2.62** A Modification Development Application for St George's Terrace as part of the overall State Significant Development Application for Powerhouse Parramatta was on exhibition from 17 February to 2 March 2022.¹¹² The modification included fit-out and adaptive re-use and partial demolition of the internal fabric of St George's Terrace.¹¹³
- 2.63** The City of Parramatta Council made a submission to this modification.¹¹⁴ While noting its support for the revitalisation of St George's Terrace, the Council expressed concerns about the original elements and configuration of terraces being lost if the terraces were to be 'guttled' for open exhibition space:

... we have asked Infrastructure NSW to reflect on more of the original elements of these buildings. Our city does not oppose the removal of more recent additions, as this would allow for the retention, conservation and integration of the remaining original brick structure. Whilst it is understood that the removal of the internal walls allows for

¹⁰⁶ Evidence, Ms Pitman, 17 March 2022, p 11.

¹⁰⁷ Evidence, Ms Meade, 17 March 2022, p 44.

¹⁰⁸ Evidence, Mr Greenfield, 8 October 2020, p 38.

¹⁰⁹ Evidence, Mr Greenfield, 15 February 2021, p 46.

¹¹⁰ Ethos Urban, *Response to submissions and amended proposal report: Powerhouse Parramatta* (8 October 2020), p 4.

¹¹¹ Ethos Urban, *Response to submissions and amended proposal report: Powerhouse Parramatta* (8 October 2020), p 30.

¹¹² NSW Department of Planning and Environment, *MOD 1 – St George's Terrace and Eastern Roof Area*, NSW Planning Portal, <https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/mod-1-st-georges-terrace-and-eastern-roof-area>.

¹¹³ NSW Department of Planning and Environment, *MOD 1 – St George's Terrace and Eastern Roof Area*, NSW Planning Portal, <https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/mod-1-st-georges-terrace-and-eastern-roof-area>.

¹¹⁴ City of Parramatta, *Council Submission: Notice of Exhibition of Modification Report No. 1 for the Parramatta Powerhouse (30B Philip St, Parramatta)* (1 March 2022).

greater flexibility, from a heritage perspective it would be sensible to conserve and restore those existing and visible features that are typical of its architectural style.¹¹⁵

- 2.64** Cr Donna Davis, Lord Mayor, City of Parramatta, told the committee that Council had advocated for the retention of the chimneys, reinstatement of the verandah floor, balcony floors, roof and balustrades, and installation of doors and windows to match the original proportions.¹¹⁶ Cr Davis remarked:

[W]e really feel that it is important to respect those terraces, because they are the only terraces remaining in the City of Parramatta. They talk to a particular period in time. They are actually older than Willow Grove. ... it would be a very missed opportunity if we do not try to restore that building. Definitely, incorporate it in with the Parramatta Powerhouse, but reinstate those features that I mentioned ... all of those features of the building that speak to that point in time.¹¹⁷

Flooding risks

- 2.65** One of the key areas of focus during this inquiry was the extent to which the Powerhouse Parramatta will be at risk of flooding. This issue was also canvassed in the 2017 inquiry.¹¹⁸
- 2.66** The Powerhouse Parramatta site is subject to two separate types of flooding: Parramatta River flooding and overland flow flooding from Phillip Street. Overland flow flooding results from short duration rainfall events and is exacerbated by the limited capacity of the existing local stormwater network.¹¹⁹
- 2.67** While several participants again expressed concern about building Powerhouse Parramatta on a flood-prone site, the committee focused in this inquiry on whether adequate consideration had been given to the identified flood risks through the Environmental Impact Statement and State Significant Development Application process.
- 2.68** The committee explored whether appropriate mitigations have been factored into the design development process for the Powerhouse Parramatta to prevent damage to or loss of some of the State's most valuable collections and artefacts, as well as any potential public safety hazards for the museum's visitors. In doing this, it considered a number of flood reports discussed in evidence.

The first Arup report

- 2.69** The first Arup report, dated September 2020, was prepared as part of the Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement, in response to the Secretary's Environmental

¹¹⁵ Evidence, Cr Donna Davis, Lord Mayor, City of Parramatta, 17 March 2022, p 43.

¹¹⁶ Evidence, Cr Davis, 17 March 2022, p 43.

¹¹⁷ Evidence, Cr Davis, 17 March 2022, p 43.

¹¹⁸ Portfolio Committee No. 4, NSW Legislative Council, *Museums and galleries in New South Wales* (2017), pp 23-24.

¹¹⁹ Arup, *Powerhouse Parramatta Response to Submissions Report: Appendix J: Flood Risk and Stormwater Management Addendum* (16 September 2020), p 10.

Assessment Requirements (SEARs).¹²⁰ Requirement No. 12 of the SEARs related to flooding, drainage and stormwater, and made it a requirement for the proponent to assess a range of considerations relating to flood risks.¹²¹

- 2.70** As part of its assessment methodology, Arup reviewed a number of existing studies and flood models for simulating the behaviour of the Upper Parramatta River. The intention of the review was to determine whether such flood simulation models were suitable for assessing the Powerhouse Parramatta. It concluded that the models available to Arup at the time were not adequate for assessing flood risk to the Powerhouse Parramatta development.¹²²
- 2.71** As such, Arup developed its own 'bespoke' flood simulation model for the project site which it considered a 'more robust and reliable simulation of the flood behaviour for the development site, utilising up-to-date information and following [Australian Rainfall and Runoff] guidelines'.¹²³
- 2.72** In relation to flood risk management, the report noted that, in accordance with the Parramatta Development Control Plan 2011, the Powerhouse Parramatta had been designed to provide passive flood protection up to the 1 per cent Annual Exceedance Probability (equivalent to an 1 in 100 year average recurrence interval) plus a 0.5 metre freeboard.¹²⁴
- 2.73** A 'freeboard' refers to an additional vertical clearance above the maximum flood level – in the case of the Powerhouse Parramatta, this would essentially be a safety buffer or clearance of 0.5 metres between the maximum flood level in an 1 in 100 year event and the Finished Floor Level of the new museum.
- 2.74** The minimum Finished Floor Levels for a museum development, as prescribed by the Council's Development Control Plan, are designed to minimise the risk of surface flooding entering the building where it can cause damage and present risk to occupants.¹²⁵
- 2.75** Examining the proposed architectural design of the new museum, and using Arup's flood modelling, Arup found that both the East and West buildings of the proposed museum would sit at an elevation above the peak river flood level and considered this to offer a good level of mainstream flood protection:

¹²⁰ Arup, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix O: Flood Risk and Stormwater Management Report* (22 April 2020).

¹²¹ Arup, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix O: Flood Risk and Stormwater Management Report* (22 April 2020), p 12.

¹²² Arup, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix O: Flood Risk and Stormwater Management Report* (22 April 2020), pp 6, 34-36.

¹²³ Arup, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix O: Flood Risk and Stormwater Management Report* (22 April 2020), p 36.

¹²⁴ Arup, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix O: Flood Risk and Stormwater Management Report* (22 April 2020), pp 28 and 41.

¹²⁵ Arup, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix O: Flood Risk and Stormwater Management Report* (22 April 2020), pp 28 and 41.

This assessment demonstrates the proposed museum buildings will be established at an elevation more than 1.0 metre and as much as 1.5 metres higher (with freeboard) than the peak river flood level. This design approach is considered to offer a good level of protection to the development to guard against the risk of mainstream flooding.¹²⁶

2.76 Access points to both the East and West buildings were also noted to be located above the 1 per cent Annual Exceedance Probability level.¹²⁷

2.77 Beyond the 'passive' flood protection through compliance with the Council's flood controls, Arup's proposed flood management strategies placed significant emphasis on the undercroft space to provide mainstream flood storage and also new conveyance infrastructure to manage displaced overland flow flooding.¹²⁸

2.78 Although the undercroft was considered as a key element in managing flood storage, Arup also recognised several public safety considerations associated with this design feature. In particular, Arup proposed that detailed consideration be given to the evacuation of the undercroft, saying the most likely event to require evacuation would come from local catchment flooding, not riverine flooding:

[T]he inclusion of the undercroft does require an assessment for the evacuation of this open space which is within the modelled flood extents. The development, including the undercroft, is inundated in both local catchment and Parramatta River mainstream flooding events. The time of inundation for local catchment flooding is less than an hour This is significantly less than the time of inundation from Parramatta River flood events, which although much larger, take longer to pass through the catchment and inundate the site. For this reason, the most likely event to require an unplanned evacuation of the undercroft area is a local storm flood from the stormwater network.¹²⁹

2.79 To address this issue, Arup envisaged the use of an early warning system to determine whether the undercroft should be open for use or not. This would consist of 'a daily procedure undertaken prior to the daily opening of the undercroft and managed within the building operations. This daily review would be supported by on site observations and permanent warning signage within the undercroft area'.¹³⁰

2.80 Analysing the distance from various points within the undercroft to indicative exit points, Arup formed the view that 'it is feasible to evacuate people from this area in a matter of minutes and long before the peak of the storm arrives in approximately 30 minutes'.¹³¹

¹²⁶ Arup, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix O: Flood Risk and Stormwater Management Report* (22 April 2020), p 44.

¹²⁷ Arup, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix O: Flood Risk and Stormwater Management Report* (22 April 2020), p 45.

¹²⁸ Arup, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix O: Flood Risk and Stormwater Management Report* (22 April 2020), p 44.

¹²⁹ Arup, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix O: Flood Risk and Stormwater Management Report* (22 April 2020), p 45.

¹³⁰ Arup, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix O: Flood Risk and Stormwater Management Report* (22 April 2020), p 46.

¹³¹ Arup, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix O: Flood Risk and Stormwater Management Report* (22 April 2020), p 47.

- 2.81 The Arup report also noted the strategy of 'shelter in place', stating that any staff or visitors 'trapped' by a flood event would be directed in the Powerhouse Parramatta.¹³²

An alternative flood risk analysis of the Powerhouse Parramatta – the first two Molino Stewart reports

- 2.82 Ms Kylie Winkworth from the Powerhouse Museum Alliance commissioned consultants Molino Stewart to conduct a flood risk and review assessment of the Powerhouse Parramatta primarily using studies from the 2018 Extended Final Business Case for the Powerhouse Parramatta but also certain architectural and design plans associated with the Request for SEARs.¹³³
- 2.83 Molino Stewart were described in evidence as the 'leading consultants in flood plain risk management and planning, with particular experience advising on flood planning issues in the Parramatta Central Business District and the Parramatta River catchment'.¹³⁴
- 2.84 The first of three reports, dated May 2020, called into question some of the underlying assumptions of the early design responses to flood risks and detailed what, in its view, were certain failures in the design development process.¹³⁵
- 2.85 In particular, Molino Stewart was not convinced that the design level of 1 in 100 year Annual Recurrence Interval was an appropriate basis for the design approach to managing the project's flood risks. They asserted instead that the site is at risk of floods more frequent than the 20 Annual Recurrence Interval design flood in the Parramatta River and flooding as frequent as the 1 year Annual Recurrence Interval for overland flows.¹³⁶
- 2.86 When appearing before the committee, Mr Steven Molino, Managing Director of Molino Stewart, described this as an almost complete failure in the design of the museum:

Fundamentally, there has been an almost complete failure in the design to consider the impacts of floods, which exceed the level of a flood with a one in 100 chance per year. While such floods are rare, they can and do occur. In 2011 and 2010 there were numerous floods in Victoria and Queensland with probabilities as low as one in 200 chance and even less. The Lockyer Valley flood, which you probably remember destroyed Grantham, has some estimates saying it was a one in 2,000 chance per year event.¹³⁷

¹³² Arup, *Powerhouse Parramatta Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix O: Flood Risk and Stormwater Management Report* (22 April 2020), p 48.

¹³³ Submission 137a, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Stage 1 assessment for the proposed new Parramatta Powerhouse museum: Flood risk and review assessment* (May 2020).

¹³⁴ Submission 137a, Ms Kylie Winkworth, p 2; Evidence, Ms Kylie Winkworth, museum and heritage consultant, 21 August 2020, p 31.

¹³⁵ Submission 137a, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Stage 1 assessment for the proposed new Parramatta Powerhouse museum: Flood risk and review assessment* (May 2020), p 28.

¹³⁶ Submission 137a, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Stage 1 assessment for the proposed new Parramatta Powerhouse museum: Flood risk and review assessment* (May 2020), p 28.

¹³⁷ Evidence, Mr Steven Molino, Managing Director, Molino Stewart Environmental and Natural Hazards Consultants, 21 August 2020, p 54.

- 2.87** The report identified flaws in the design of the undercroft, submitting that while it may preserve the overall site flood storage, it would contain a non-floodproof area below the 1 in 100 year Annual Recurrence Interval level which can be occupied by members of the public. That this space was designed for human use was seen to be inconsistent with the development controls and flood management requirements that apply to the project.¹³⁸
- 2.88** The shelter in place strategy was another issue identified by Molino Stewart as needing more detailed consideration. According to the consultant, the NSW State Emergency Service's first preference is to evacuate people in flood prone areas to safety outside the affected areas. This is considered preferable because it reduces risk to evacuees and the burden on first responders.¹³⁹
- 2.89** In Molino Stewart's opinion, however, this 'horizontal evacuation' was not a safe option for visitors and staff of the new museum due to the known behaviour of floodwaters in the Parramatta Central Business District and how much warning can be given:
- In most of Parramatta [Central Business District], the floodwater's rate of rise in a [Probable Maximum Flood] ... is such that the available notice provided by Council's flood warning system is relatively short, ranging between 45 minutes and 2 hours. By the time an evacuation order is issued and communicated to the population, most roads would already be cut by local flooding. Molino Stewart (2017) has undertaken a detailed analysis of flood emergency response strategies for the [Central Business District] on behalf of the City of Parramatta Council, and this work indicated [Shelter in Place] is the safest option, because most roads would be cut by local flooding before evacuation can commence.¹⁴⁰
- 2.90** This led Molino Stewart to the conclusion that 'horizontal evacuation is not a safe option for any of the people within the premises' and 'all the people in the premises would need to take shelter within the museum buildings, in a designated refuge above the reach of the [Probable Maximum Flood]'.¹⁴¹
- 2.91** The report also raised concerns about the evacuation of people in the museum's outdoor areas. It explained that, in order for people in the museum's outdoor areas to evacuate, they would have to walk through overland flow paths or along the river's edge, presenting 'excessive' risks to their safety.¹⁴² For Molino Stewart, ensuring safe evacuation of people in outdoor areas required design changes to create access routes which avoid overland flow paths:

¹³⁸ Submission 137a, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Stage 1 assessment for the proposed new Parramatta Powerhouse museum: Flood risk and review assessment* (May 2020), p 12.

¹³⁹ Submission 137a, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Stage 1 assessment for the proposed new Parramatta Powerhouse museum: Flood risk and review assessment* (May 2020), p 13.

¹⁴⁰ Submission 137a, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Stage 1 assessment for the proposed new Parramatta Powerhouse museum: Flood risk and review assessment* (May 2020), pp 13-14.

¹⁴¹ Submission 137a, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Stage 1 assessment for the proposed new Parramatta Powerhouse museum: Flood risk and review assessment* (May 2020), p 26.

¹⁴² Submission 137a, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Stage 1 assessment for the proposed new Parramatta Powerhouse museum: Flood risk and review assessment* (May 2020), pp 26-27.

The outdoor areas should be designed to have continuously rising access routes to the flood refuge within the building and to Phillip Street which avoid overland flow paths so that people can evacuate away from a rising river flood without getting trapped by floodwaters. This was one of the principle design criteria for any outdoor developments along the river frontage.¹⁴³

- 2.92** In a statement to the committee, Mr Molino levelled criticism at the perceived lack of consideration of the risks posed by flooding events greater than the design level used as the basis for the planning of the Powerhouse Parramatta (that is, the 1 in 100 year design level), especially the lack of safe evacuation routes for people in the museum's outdoor spaces:

In the case of the museum design, there is virtually no consideration of what happens in these larger events. This means that with the design as it currently stands, people in the Riverside precinct and proposed undercrofts have no reliable means of safely escaping rising floodwaters and may be forced to enter hazardous floodwaters to reach high ground, people inside the museum with mobility challenges will have no means of escaping from rapidly rising floodwaters, which could rise up to four metres inside the building.¹⁴⁴

- 2.93** Mr Molino also went on to detail the grave risks to collections which, in his view, the design of the new museum treats as 'no more than common office furniture'.¹⁴⁵ Mr Molino maintained that the collections on the ground floor will have no protection from flooding, and those on other floors will be exposed to unacceptable levels of humidity:

[T]he collections on the ground floor have no protection from the direct impacts of flooding which exceeds the ground floor level and the unique collections on other floors, which rely upon maintenance of double-A class climate control for their preservation, will be exposed to unacceptable humidity levels for days, if not weeks. In short, the design as it currently stands considers people and the museum's unique collections to be worth no more than common office furniture.¹⁴⁶

- 2.94** The Alliance went on to commission a second Molino Stewart report, dated July 2020, based on more detailed plans and drawings that formed part of the Environmental Impact Statement, as exhibited on the government's Major Projects Portal.¹⁴⁷

- 2.95** This report also detailed certain limitations and omissions from Arup's first report. One such limitation was seen to be the 'bespoke' flood simulation model that Arup developed in lieu of any other publicly available, accurate flood simulation models for the project site (as outlined in paragraph 2.70). In Molino Stewart's estimation, a major limitation of Arup's model was that it had to be calibrated against flood levels adopted by the City of Parramatta Council and therefore had to use the Australian Rainfall and Runoff guidelines from 1987.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴³ Submission 137a, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Stage 1 assessment for the proposed new Parramatta Powerhouse museum: Flood risk and review assessment* (May 2020), pp 26-27.

¹⁴⁴ Evidence, Mr Molino, 21 August 2021, p 54.

¹⁴⁵ Evidence, Mr Molino, 21 August 2021, p 54.

¹⁴⁶ Evidence, Mr Molino, 21 August 2021, p 54.

¹⁴⁷ Submission 137b, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Parramatta Powerhouse EIS: Flood risk review* (June 2020), p 1.

¹⁴⁸ Submission 137b, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Parramatta Powerhouse EIS: Flood risk review* (June 2020), p 2.

- 2.96** The report proposed that Arup's bespoke model and its results should only be used as an interim tool for providing indicative flood information in relation to riverine flooding – that is, until the Council's new Parramatta River flood study based on the 2019 Australian Rainfall and Runoff guideline is available.¹⁴⁹
- 2.97** The second report also highlighted other reasons why the design responses to the site's known flood risks may be inadequate. For instance, part of the strategy to manage overland flows is to provide additional and larger capacity underground pipes to convey water from Phillip Street, where flood waters pond, down to the river and to provide better defined overland paths.¹⁵⁰
- 2.98** This design response was considered by Molino Stewart to have two problems. Firstly, it relies on the pipe inlets remaining unblocked and, although Arup had modelled a certain degree of blockage, it was not clear what that precise degree was. Secondly, it channels overland flows along designated pedestrian thoroughfares between Phillip Street and the river, with potentially life-threatening consequences:

This means that should people by the riverside need to evacuate to escape a rising river, they may be confronted by a torrent cascade cascading down each of their possible escape routes. This is an unacceptable design solution, particularly when considering that some of the evacuees may be children, people with walking aids (e.g. wheelchairs), and families with prams... children and elderly people are at risk of life when exposed to floodwaters as shallow as 0.5m, or even lower depths if flow velocity is in excess of about 1m/s (which is common along overland flow paths).¹⁵¹

- 2.99** For Molino Stewart, uncertainty surrounding the degree of blockage assumed by Arup's analysis casts doubt on their overland flow modelling and the design responses based on that modelling. If the degree of blockage was assumed to be less than what was required, Arup's simulation would have resulted in lower flood water levels on site:

The Arup model does not clarify the assumptions that were used in terms of stormwater system blockage, when simulating overland flood behaviour and peak levels on site. It is my understanding that Council uses a 100 per cent blockage assumption when assessing overland flood behaviour. Arup used a different, unspecified, blockage percentage, this would have resulted in lower flood levels on site, particularly in the more frequent flood events (up to the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability event), which are those used to inform the design of the building.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Submission 137b, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Parramatta Powerhouse EIS: Flood risk review* (June 2020), p 2.

¹⁵⁰ Submission 137b, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Parramatta Powerhouse EIS: Flood risk review* (June 2020), p 13.

¹⁵¹ Submission 137b, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Parramatta Powerhouse EIS: Flood risk review* (June 2020), p 14.

¹⁵² Submission 137b, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Parramatta Powerhouse EIS: Flood risk review* (June 2020), p 27.

- 2.100** If the modelling instead assumed a 100 per cent blockage of underground pipes and a requirement of a 0.5 metre freeboard, as recommended by City of Parramatta Council, 'the flood immunity is probably not even a 1 in 20 AEP'.¹⁵³ For Molino Stewart, this highlights that the flood immunity provided is 'very sensitive to these assumptions'.¹⁵⁴
- 2.101** Having the benefit of more detailed plans and drawings, Molino Stewart raised further questions about the safety of the undercroft area. They gave evidence that members of the public taking shelter in the undercroft could potentially jeopardise their safety or, worse still, threaten their life:

[T]he undercroft spaces ... may present a serious flood risk to life. It is quite reasonable to expect that during inclement weather, museum patrons, or more likely, members of the public could take shelter in the undercroft areas. However, ... there are two problems in leaving these shelters once flooding commences. The first is that it is necessary to walk down towards the river before being able to walk up to flood free ground. The second is that the routes up are designed as overland flow paths. People sheltering within these spaces may not appreciate just how high and how quickly the river can rise and they become entrapments in which people drown or they drown trying to leave them.¹⁵⁵

Design modifications in response to EIS submissions and the second Arup report

- 2.102** As outlined in chapter 1, the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Powerhouse Parramatta was on public exhibition from 10 June to 21 July 2020.¹⁵⁶ Of the total number of submissions received in response to the Environmental Impact Statement, 17 per cent raised flooding as an issue.¹⁵⁷ According to the proponent's Response to Submissions report, by Ethos Urban, these issues fell within three broad areas of concern:

- that constructing a significant public building on flood liable land is inappropriate and unacceptable, with recent flooding in the area affirming the dangerous location chosen to position the building
- the proposed use of the site as an entertainment venue, residential units and school dormitory creates an unacceptable risk to life and property given the very short emergency warning time for this section of the Parramatta River and the lack of flood free access
- the site puts at risk exhibitions and artefacts.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Submission 137c, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1, p 14.

¹⁵⁴ Submission 137c, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1, p 14.

¹⁵⁵ Submission 137b, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Parramatta Powerhouse EIS: Flood risk review* (June 2020), p 14.

¹⁵⁶ NSW Government, *Powerhouse Parramatta Factsheet: Project Update: Response to Submissions* (October 2020), p 2.

¹⁵⁷ Ethos Urban, *Response to submissions and amended proposal report: Powerhouse Parramatta* (8 October 2020), p 12.

¹⁵⁸ Ethos Urban, *Response to submissions and amended proposal report: Powerhouse Parramatta* (8 October 2020), p 12.

- 2.103** After further testing and analysis, this report reinforced the need for the undercroft area as a key pillar in the design response to managing riverine flooding of the project site, labelling it the 'best and only outcome for the site to mitigate and appropriately manage riverine flooding'.¹⁵⁹
- 2.104** However, in response to the EIS submissions, a number of amendments were made to the design of the Powerhouse Parramatta, including the following flood-related design modifications.
- The landscape design was amended to include a new sloped embankment which was said to provide a concealment to the undercroft area.¹⁶⁰
 - The design of the undercroft was modified to include moveable and lockable metal mesh screens for the openings on its eastern and western ends. This feature 'integrates the undercroft area with the built and landscaped environments and enables it to be closed to the public except for managed Powerhouse programming'.¹⁶¹
- 2.105** The updated design shows three points of evacuation from the undercroft, one along the east, one on the west, and another centred along the northern frontage. There is also a lift servicing the undercroft. This is intended for universal access, not evacuation. It is rated as a flood lift and can withstand exposure to water.¹⁶²
- 2.106** Evacuation of the new museum, as per the amended designs, formed a key focus of the second Arup report, prepared in support of the proponent's response to submissions to the Environmental Impact Statement. The strategy set out in the second Arup report consists of a number of actions, including keeping the undercroft closed except for particular events, ensuring paths from the river and undercroft floor have a rising gradient to the public lift and stairs, sheltering within the building if flooding isolates or threatens the building and providing diesel generator as an emergency power supply, placed above the Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) level.¹⁶³
- 2.107** The second Arup report also addresses risk management strategies for the museum's collections in a flood event greater than the 1 in 100 year Annual Exceedance Probability. It recognised that the museum will house valuable collections and asserted that the updated design reflects the value of those collections by:

¹⁵⁹ Ethos Urban, *Response to submissions and amended proposal report: Powerhouse Parramatta* (8 October 2020), p 39.

¹⁶⁰ Ethos Urban, *Response to submissions and amended proposal report: Powerhouse Parramatta* (8 October 2020), p 39.

¹⁶¹ Ethos Urban, *Response to submissions and amended proposal report: Powerhouse Parramatta* (8 October 2020), p 39.

¹⁶² Moreau Kusunoki and Genton, *Response to submissions and amended proposal report: Powerhouse Parramatta: Appendix B: Revised architectural plans and design report* (8 October 2020), p 21.

¹⁶³ Arup, *Response to submissions and amended proposal report: Powerhouse Parramatta: Appendix J: Flood risk and stormwater addendum* (8 October 2020), cited in Submission 137c, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Parramatta Powerhouse: Response-to-submissions review – flood* (November 2020), p 6.

... creating a ground floor level that would have an immunity of approximately 1 in 800 AEP (or 0.12%) including an allowance for freeboard. Only Presentation Space 1 will be located on this ground floor. All other presentation spaces within museum will be located on floors that sit above the PMF level.¹⁶⁴

- 2.108** The second Arup report therefore concluded that the likelihood of flood damage to the collections housed in the museum would be low.¹⁶⁵ Mr Tom Gellibrand, Head of Projects NSW, Infrastructure NSW, told the committee:

... it would take a flood event in excess of one that could occur one in every 1,000 years to enter into the ground floor of the finished museum, which of course would have far-reaching impacts on other parts of Parramatta as well as western Sydney ... It is also important to note that the majority of the museum's collection, let us say 80 per cent, will be located on floors above all possible flood levels, along with the emergency power supply.¹⁶⁶

- 2.109** Responding to questions about the assumptions they adopted for the overland flood modelling, Arup conducted further sensitivity analyses for its second report to consider a scenario of 100 per cent pit and pipe blockage. According to Arup, this demonstrated that the ground floor of the proposed development would still achieve 0.3 metre of freeboard in the 1 per cent Annual Exceedance Probability event with all pits and pipes blocked.¹⁶⁷

The third and final Molino Stewart report

- 2.110** The third and final Molino Stewart report, dated November 2020, responded to the further design detail and design modifications made in response to submissions to the EIS. The report commended some of these as improvements that reduce or address the risks identified by Molino Stewart in their earlier reports, while raising several questions they considered unanswered and pointing to further work required to enhance flood protections.¹⁶⁸

- 2.111** Notably, Molino Stewart were satisfied that the redesign of the undercroft and its connections to the podium had reduced the safety risks for people in the museum's outdoor areas. In their view, this had been achieved by:

- using screening to exclude people from the undercroft area, reducing the likelihood of people sleeping or sheltering from the rain in this area
- making changes to paths, stairs and the undercroft floor grading, to ensure there is a reduced risk of people having to walk towards rising floodwaters to reach safety

¹⁶⁴ Arup, *Response to submissions and amended proposal report: Powerhouse Parramatta: Appendix J: Flood risk and stormwater addendum* (8 October 2020), p 58.

¹⁶⁵ Arup, *Response to submissions and amended proposal report: Powerhouse Parramatta: Appendix J: Flood risk and stormwater addendum* (8 October 2020), p 58.

¹⁶⁶ Evidence, Mr Tom Gellibrand, Head of Projects NSW, Infrastructure NSW, 17 March 2022, p 32.

¹⁶⁷ Arup, *Response to submissions and amended proposal report: Powerhouse Parramatta: Appendix J: Flood risk and stormwater addendum* (8 October 2020), p 70.

¹⁶⁸ Submission 137c, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Parramatta Powerhouse: Response-to-submissions review – flood* (November 2020), p 18.

- providing a lift between the undercroft and podium (which can operate by a generator if power is lost), providing an access route for mobility impaired evacuees
- detailing the stairs leading to the podium level keeps overland flows separate from pedestrian routes, meaning that people fleeing rising river levels do not have to negotiate walking against overland flows.¹⁶⁹

2.112 Taken together, these were considered by Molino Stewart as acceptable means for managing flood risks to people.¹⁷⁰

2.113 Molino Stewart still had some reservations about flood protections for the museum's collections, stating they are still at risk from both direct contact with flood waters and exposure to humidity conditions.¹⁷¹

2.114 Responding to Arup's assertion that the only presentation space located at the finished floor level would have an immunity of approximately 1 in 800 Annual Exceedance Probability (paragraph 2.107), Molino Stewart submitted this is only the case if it is assumed there is no blockage of the underground pipe network and a 0.3 metre freeboard is applied. More conservative assumptions, such as those required by the City of Parramatta Council, would result in a different outcome and diminished flood immunity for the presentation space on the ground floor.¹⁷²

2.115 To explain where the remaining risks lie, Molino Stewart referred to the greater risks from overland flooding and the difficulty of moving items likely to be displayed on the museum's ground floor:

[T]he building is more likely to be flooded by overland flows than riverine flooding and there will be virtually no warning that overland flows are likely to enter the building. Additionally, some of the items on display in the P1 space will be large items which would not be able to be moved in a short space of time. Finally, the rapid flooding of the building from overland flows means that the focus of staff is likely to be on the quick and safe evacuation of people to the upper floors rather than the relocation of exhibits. Therefore, should water enter the building it is likely that many items on display on the ground floor will suffer some direct flood damage.¹⁷³

2.116 In response to Molino Stewart's modelling, Mr Simon Draper, Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure NSW, reassured the committee that all of Mr Molino's comments have been considered and dealt with by the project team. He stated that 'the design that we have come up with is acceptable and does not increase the flood risk in Parramatta'.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁹ Submission 137c, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Parramatta Powerhouse: Response-to-submissions review – flood* (November 2020), p 16.

¹⁷⁰ Submission 137c, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Parramatta Powerhouse: Response-to-submissions review – flood* (November 2020), p 18.

¹⁷¹ Submission 137c, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Parramatta Powerhouse: Response-to-submissions review – flood* (November 2020), p 14.

¹⁷² Submission 137c, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Parramatta Powerhouse: Response-to-submissions review – flood* (November 2020), p 14.

¹⁷³ Submission 137c, Ms Kylie Winkworth, Attachment 1: Molino Stewart, *Parramatta Powerhouse: Response-to-submissions review – flood* (November 2020), p 14.

¹⁷⁴ Evidence, Mr Simon Draper, Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure NSW, 15 February 2021, p 12.

Design, vision and collections programming

2.117 There were concerns raised during the inquiry relating to the design, vision and collections programming for the new Powerhouse Parramatta. Some of these went to general design and functionality, while others focused on the amount of exhibition space available, and whether the collections and programming would be appropriate.

Design and functionality

2.118 Mr Lionel Glendenning, Principal Government Architect for the Sulman Award winning 1988 Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo, expressed several concerns about the design brief and architectural plans for the museum, including that:

- the bulk of the two proposed buildings were deemed inappropriate and over-scaled for the site
- the building was seen to block the Parramatta CBD and citizens from the riverbank, destroying the civic access
- the large amount of north-facing glass, described as the antithesis of the light and temperature-controlled conditions required for museum standard exhibition spaces
- of the total 12,644 square metres of presentation spaces, only 5,094 square metres will meet international standard environmental conditions
- all the glazing will have high levels of glare and be over bright, creating the need for window treatments and additional air conditioning to manage the summer heat gain.¹⁷⁵

2.119 Ms Winkworth noted that 'having walls of north facing glass might be an issue for the environmental conditions in the buildings, their energy use, and control of light, temperature and humidity fluctuations'.¹⁷⁶ She noted that Parramatta now regularly experiences 40 degree days and is several degrees warmer than the Sydney CBD in summer.¹⁷⁷

2.120 Some stakeholders also criticised the lack of parking facilities at the new museum.¹⁷⁸ North Parramatta Residents' Action Group argued:

Whilst INSW and Lisa Havilah have been promoting the governments great investment in public transport that will be the way for patrons to travel to the museum, it shows the clear lack of understanding of how families move about on weekends and how they travel with extended family and/or small children from the suburbs in western Sydney. Or indeed those with disability or mobility issues that cannot take a metro ... and walk one hundred metres to the museum entrance.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ Submission 66b, Mr Lionel Glendenning, pp 2-5.

¹⁷⁶ Submission 137, Ms Kylie Winkworth, p 10.

¹⁷⁷ Submission 137, Ms Kylie Winkworth, p 10.

¹⁷⁸ Submission 135, North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, p 9; Submission 137, Ms Kylie Winkworth, p 13.

¹⁷⁹ Submission 135, North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, p 9.

2.121 Ms Winkworth further noted that 'family budgets are stretched, and while there are parking stations in Parramatta, adding the cost of parking to ticketed entry for a family may be a point of resistance when there are other leisure options'.¹⁸⁰ She concluded that 'the lack of parking in the development is a serious mistake and will be an impediment to family access and revenue from venue hire and corporate events'.¹⁸¹

Amount of museum-standard exhibition space

2.122 The committee heard considerable discussion and concern around the amount of exhibition space at Powerhouse Parramatta compared to that at Powerhouse Ultimo.

2.123 According to the government, Powerhouse Parramatta will be the largest museum in NSW at over 30,000sqm, including 18,000sqm of exhibition and public spaces.¹⁸² Ms Lisa Havilah, Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, told the committee that 'all of the exhibition spaces will be climate controlled to international standard and the whole of the museum has actually been engineered to be able to present the Powerhouse collection'.¹⁸³ By comparison, Powerhouse Ultimo has 15,080sqm of public and exhibition space.¹⁸⁴

2.124 However, analysis of the EIS architectural plans by Ms Winkworth (also cited by Save the Powerhouse and Dr Lindsay Sharp)¹⁸⁵ found that the total presentation space at Powerhouse Parramatta will be 12,644sqm.¹⁸⁶ This includes the commercial conference and function space on level 4, the immersive digital screen space on level 3, and the ground floor flood space, none of which, according to Ms Winkworth, are suitable for museum exhibitions.¹⁸⁷ Ms Winkworth therefore argued that Powerhouse Parramatta would only have 5,094sqm of presentation spaces that meet international museum standard environmental conditions.¹⁸⁸

2.125 Dr Lindsay Sharp argued that, in light of this analysis, Powerhouse Parramatta would have 'approximately half the footprint of the original Powerhouse Museum complex at Ultimo and far less in strategic cubic volumes'.¹⁸⁹

2.126 Taking these issues into account, some stakeholders expressed concerns that the size of Powerhouse Parramatta would mean that less of the collection would be accessible to visitors.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁰ Submission 137, Ms Kylie Winkworth, p 13.

¹⁸¹ Submission 137, Ms Kylie Winkworth, p 13.

¹⁸² Submission 142, NSW Government, p 1.

¹⁸³ Evidence, Ms Havilah, 29 July 2020, p 34.

¹⁸⁴ Answers to questions on notice, the Hon Don Harwin, former Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts, Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Ms Lisa Havilah, Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, 27 August 2020, p 8.

¹⁸⁵ Submission 53, Save the Powerhouse, p 8; Submission 65, Dr Lindsay Sharp, p 4.

¹⁸⁶ Submission 137, Ms Kylie Winkworth, p 11.

¹⁸⁷ Submission 137, Ms Kylie Winkworth, p 11.

¹⁸⁸ Submission 137, Ms Kylie Winkworth, p 12.

¹⁸⁹ Submission 65, Dr Lindsay Sharp, p 3.

¹⁹⁰ Submission 77, Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials, p 3; Submission 94, Dr Des Griffin, p 1.

Collections and programming

- 2.127** According to the NSW Government, Powerhouse Parramatta will 'present flexible programming such as exhibitions, major events, music, film, festivals, education, research, and industry events'.¹⁹¹ There will be multiple programs and events during the day and night, which is intended to contribute to the growth of the night-time economy.¹⁹² It is envisaged that Powerhouse Parramatta will 'integrate into the city, presenting a program of new large-scale community and cultural events that will expand the annual cultural calendar of Sydney'.¹⁹³
- 2.128** Powerhouse Parramatta will also feature an integrated commercial program. This will include conferences, industry events, product launches, and symposia.¹⁹⁴ Commercial activities will also include cafes and digital studios.¹⁹⁵
- 2.129** The Lang Walker Family Academy program will 'provide the opportunity for up to 10,000 regional schoolkids a year to come and stay at the museum for up to a week to completely embed themselves into science, technology, engineering and maths museum experiences, but also broader education experiences'.¹⁹⁶ The Academy program will also connect school students to industry leaders, the Westmead research institute, and Western Sydney University.¹⁹⁷
- 2.130** Powerhouse Parramatta will not have a permanent exhibition.¹⁹⁸ The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Board of Trustees submitted that it would instead present a 'constantly changing exhibition program'.¹⁹⁹ The exhibition spaces at Powerhouse Parramatta 'will be highly flexible and adaptable and will support multiple uses and a high turnover of activity'.²⁰⁰ It is anticipated Powerhouse Parramatta will attract 2 million visitors in its first year of operation.²⁰¹
- 2.131** Throughout this inquiry, several stakeholders expressed concerns that Powerhouse Parramatta would essentially be a function centre, with event space prioritised over exhibition space and collection display.²⁰²

¹⁹¹ Submission 142, NSW Government, p 2.

¹⁹² Submission 87, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Board of Trustees, p 6; Submission 142, NSW Government, p 2.

¹⁹³ Submission 142, NSW Government, p 2.

¹⁹⁴ Submission 87, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Board of Trustees, p 6.

¹⁹⁵ Submission 87, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Board of Trustees, p 6.

¹⁹⁶ Evidence, Ms Havilah, 15 February 2021, p 33.

¹⁹⁷ Evidence, Ms Havilah, 8 October 2020, p 8.

¹⁹⁸ Evidence, Ms Havilah, 17 March 2022, p 16.

¹⁹⁹ Submission 87, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Board of Trustees, p 4.

²⁰⁰ Submission 87, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Board of Trustees, p 5.

²⁰¹ Submission 87, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Board of Trustees, p 4.

²⁰² Submission 36, Engineers Australia (Sydney Division), p 4; Submission 79, Australian Museums and Galleries Association, p 4.

2.132 Inquiry participants described the plan for Powerhouse Parramatta variously as 'an entertainment/exhibition centre',²⁰³ a 'performing arts centre',²⁰⁴ an 'arts and performance centre',²⁰⁵ a 'multi-purpose 24 hour event facility'²⁰⁶ and a 'multi-purpose entertainment centre'.²⁰⁷ All were critical that this would diminish the focus on the museum's collection and exhibition program. Mr Glendenning referred to it as less of a museum and more of an 'arts, entertainment, retail, food and events facility'.²⁰⁸

2.133 Ms Winkworth argued that the Parramatta facility is not, in fact, a museum and the Powerhouse collection would be redundant to the kind of facility planned for Parramatta:

The Parramatta facility is not a museum. It is a multi-purpose 24 hour event facility for performing arts, concerts, conferences, cafes, kitchen, accommodation, trade fairs, farmers' markets and commercial spaces, and some exhibitions. The Stage 2 Design Brief reveals that the [Powerhouse Museum's] collection is redundant to the kind of facility planned for this site, and to the radical practice or new found museology that is outlined in the design brief.²⁰⁹

2.134 Similarly, Dr Des Griffin AM FRSN, former Director of the Australian Museum and museum expert, suggested that having a multipurpose building would be fine if the space was large enough, but this was not the case for Powerhouse Parramatta:

If the space was sufficiently large, there possibly would be nothing wrong with trying to have it serve as a multipurpose building. As I have said, it is not sufficiently large. The point is that it is being promoted as the Parramatta Museum or the Powerhouse Museum at Parramatta, and that is clearly not what it is. It is being misrepresented. I would like to go to the larger issue, just quickly. One of the major problems with this whole exercise is that the people you would expect to be expert in the whole project or set of projects—the staff of the museum—do not, as Ms Winkworth said, have agency in the proposal. They are simply being told, "This is what you will have; get on and run it." There is a major issue—not confined to museums, but generally—that centralised control does not work. If you want things to work, the people who are going to make it work have to have a major say in the way it is set up and the way it is run.²¹⁰

The focus on science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics

2.135 Another key concern held by inquiry participants was whether Powerhouse Parramatta would have a focus on science and technology. At a hearing in March 2022, the Hon Ben Franklin MLC, Minister for the Arts, said there would be an 'enormous focus' on STEM [science, technology, engineering and mathematics] at Powerhouse Parramatta, describing this as 'one of

²⁰³ Submission 36, Engineers Australia (Sydney Division), p 4.

²⁰⁴ Submission 81, The Hunters Hill Trust, p 1.

²⁰⁵ Submission 134a, Dr Andrew Simpson, p 1.

²⁰⁶ Submission 137, Ms Kylie Winkworth, p 3.

²⁰⁷ Submission 148, Engineers Australia, Engineering Heritage Australia, p 2.

²⁰⁸ Submission 66b, Mr Lionel Glendenning, p 2.

²⁰⁹ Submission 137, Ms Kylie Winkworth, p 3.

²¹⁰ Evidence, Dr Des Griffin, private citizen, 21 August 2020, p 34.

the foundations of the museum itself.²¹¹ The previous Minister for the Arts, the Hon Don Harwin, told the committee in February 2021 that Powerhouse Parramatta would have 'a focus on science and technology'.²¹²

- 2.136** However, Engineers Australia (Sydney Division) expressed concerns that the focus on events at Powerhouse Parramatta would 'erode the focus on technology heritage'.²¹³ Engineers Australia and Engineering Heritage Australia argued 'New South Wales needs a well-resourced science and technology museum and learning centre. The current proposal does not achieve this'.²¹⁴
- 2.137** Three of the biggest items in the Powerhouse collection, the Catalina flying boat 'Frigate Bird II', the Locomotive No. 1 and the Boulton and Watt steam engine, will be retained at Powerhouse Ultimo.²¹⁵ Prior to this being confirmed, several inquiry participants expressed strong concerns about how and whether these items would be able to be transported to, and exhibited at, Powerhouse Parramatta.²¹⁶
- 2.138** The Australian Museum and Galleries Association were also concerned that without the large steam and technology objects, Powerhouse Parramatta would be designed mostly for contemporary art installations and non-exhibitions spaces like apartments and cafes.²¹⁷

Risks involved in moving the Powerhouse collection to Parramatta

- 2.139** One concern raised during this inquiry was how items in the Powerhouse Ultimo collection would be able to be safely transported to Powerhouse Parramatta.
- 2.140** A focus of these concerns were three large items in the collection, the Catalina flying boat 'Frigate Bird II', the Locomotive No. 1 and the Boulton and Watt steam engine. As noted above at paragraph 2.137, these items will now be retained at Powerhouse Ultimo.
- 2.141** One large object at the Powerhouse Ultimo collection of note is the Maudslay Steam Engine. Mr Ian Debenham OAM told the committee about the complex requirements and work that moving such an object would require. His view on moving this object to Parramatta was that:

... quite frankly, I would have said at an inquiry like this that no, it is too valuable an object because of its historical relationship ... It is internationally famous and to put it at any risk at all is just not conscionable. As I say, curators tend to get rather worried about things like this.²¹⁸

²¹¹ Evidence, the Hon Ben Franklin MLC, Minister for the Arts, 17 March 2022, p 9.

²¹² Evidence, Mr Harwin, 15 February 2021, p 2.

²¹³ Submission 36, Engineers Australia (Sydney Division), p 4.

²¹⁴ Submission 148, Engineers Australia, Engineering Heritage Australia, p 2.

²¹⁵ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 7.

²¹⁶ Submission 10, Pyrmont Action Incorporated, p 3; Submission 53, Save the Powerhouse, p 7; Submission 65, Dr Lindsay Sharp, p 5.

²¹⁷ Submission 79, Australian Museums and Galleries Association, p 4.

²¹⁸ Evidence, Mr Ian Debenham OAM, Private individual, 21 August 2020, p 26.

- 2.142** Concerns were also raised about moving other items in the collection. Pymont Action Incorporated identified concerns around moving the Saturn 5 rocket engine (noting it cannot be rested vertically and has to be manipulated in 'a very complex way') and the Beech Queen Air (noting the section containing the wing stubs and engines is very frail and requires a specially made cradle).²¹⁹
- 2.143** The Australian Museums and Galleries Association also highlighted the difficulties in moving smaller objects made of glass and porcelain, which are very fragile; and of moving items like firearms and coins, which carry security risks.²²⁰
- 2.144** Engineers Australia (Sydney Division) argued, more generally, that:
- Many, especially the larger, complex items, are fragile and will inevitably experience some damage during relocation and storage. The lack of space available at the new site will result in many artefacts remaining in storage indefinitely. Those artefacts that are or displayed for temporary exhibitions will experience increased risk of handling damage each time they are moved.²²¹

Cost of the development

- 2.145** Understanding how much the Powerhouse Parramatta development will cost taxpayers – and whether this was a responsible, efficient and prudent use of public monies for the arts and cultural sector – also formed a key focus of the inquiry.
- 2.146** In evidence before the committee, there was a clear distinction between the *net* cost and *total* cost of the Powerhouse Parramatta project. The Hon Don Harwin, then Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, confirmed that the total *net* government capital contribution to Powerhouse Parramatta and the Museums Discovery Centre at Castle Hill was \$840 million.²²²
- 2.147** In response to questioning about the *total* cost of the project, Mr Harwin did not give a definitive number, stating that the government will not know the final cost until the project is complete. He further maintained that putting a figure into the public domain 'puts the taxpayer at a competitive disadvantage when it is dealing with the construction companies who will be bidding for the work'.²²³
- 2.148** A business case summary published by Infrastructure NSW in 2018 put the total cost of the project at \$1.179 billion in 2018 dollars (net present value terms at that time).²²⁴ A break down of this estimate is shown in Table 1 below.

²¹⁹ Submission 10, Pymont Action Incorporated, p 3.

²²⁰ Submission 79, Australian Museums and Galleries Association, p 5.

²²¹ Submission 36, Engineers Australia (Sydney Division), pp 1-2.

²²² Evidence, Mr Harwin, 15 February 2021, p 2.

²²³ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 6.

²²⁴ Infrastructure NSW, *Final business case summary: Powerhouse Museum in western Sydney* (April 2018), p 8.

Table 1 Costs of Powerhouse Parramatta (present value, \$FY18, \$m)²²⁵

Construction costs	\$640.5
Life cycle costs	\$42.5
Project operating costs	\$25.4
New museum operating costs	\$355.9
Land acquisition	\$115.0
Total costs	\$1,179.3

- 2.149** On the basis of this 2018 analysis, the project was estimated to have a Benefit Cost Ratio of 1.02.²²⁶ According to Treasury's Guidelines, an initiative is deemed to be 'potentially worthwhile' if the Benefit Cost Ratio is greater than one. A Benefit Cost Ratio greater than one means the present value of benefits is greater than the present value of costs.²²⁷
- 2.150** In 2018, the Benefit Cost Ratio for the Powerhouse Parramatta project was only marginally greater than one. Since then, there have been a number of variations to the project and changes in government direction, including the 4 July decision to not proceed with the sell off of parts of the Ultimo site (discussed in detail in Chapter 3). Ms Foy agreed that the Benefit Cost Ratio would be affected by these changes, although she noted that the benefit to the community of retaining Ultimo would need to be quantified.²²⁸
- 2.151** This sensitivity to the project's shifting parameters was highlighted in evidence from Ms Kylie Winkworth, who submitted that the 2018 Benefit Cost Ratio was only achieved by cutting costs out of the project, and by pre-empting a return from 'massive apartment towers at both Ultimo and Parramatta'.²²⁹ Ms Winkworth noted that the loss of a commercial tower in the Parramatta development would have likely impacted the Benefit Cost Ratio.²³⁰
- 2.152** At a subsequent hearing following approval of the State Significant Development Application, the government provided further detail on the capital cost of constructing the now-approved buildings at Powerhouse Parramatta – as a subset of the total project costs. This was quoted in evidence as \$915 million, comprising \$840 million in approved government capital investment plus a philanthropy contribution of \$75 million.²³¹ It was not clear whether this included the expansion of the Castle Hill Discovery Centre, or applied to the construction of the Powerhouse Parramatta only.

²²⁵ Infrastructure NSW, *Final business case summary: Powerhouse Museum in western Sydney* (April 2018), p 8.

²²⁶ Infrastructure NSW, *Final business case summary: Powerhouse Museum in western Sydney* (April 2018), p 8.

²²⁷ NSW Treasury, *TPP17-03: Policy and Guidelines Paper NSW Government Guide to Cost-Benefit Analysis* (2017), p 19.

²²⁸ See for example: Evidence, Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 29 July 2020, p 6.

²²⁹ Submission 137, Ms Kylie Winkworth, p 12. See also: Submission 98, Mrs Marina Garlick, p 1.

²³⁰ Submission 137, Ms Kylie Winkworth, p 12.

²³¹ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 15 February 2021, p 5.

- 2.153** In response to questioning about how this figure relates to the costs identified in Infrastructure NSW's 2018 business case summary, Mr Simon Draper, the agency's Chief Executive Officer, assured the committee that the SSDA-approved scope of works fits within the \$915 million envelope:

The project that has just been through a planning consent process ... The design and the scope that has been on exhibition and has now been approved by the Minister is designed to work within the budget that the Minister has outlined.²³²

- 2.154** With such numbers being quoted in evidence, attention turned to the lack of parity in arts and cultural funding for, on one hand, the Powerhouse Parramatta and, on the other, galleries and museums in regional New South Wales. Ms Kylie Winkworth, museum and heritage consultant and former museum Trustee, framed this as a fairness and equity issue:

The New South Wales Government has made a very large funding commitment of at least \$1 billion to build a new museum in Parramatta. The Premier has argued that this is important for western Sydney which represents 30 per cent of the population of New South Wales. There is another 30 per cent of the population living in regional New South Wales and I look forward to the Deputy Premier John Barilaro announcing a \$1 billion museum infrastructure fund for regional New South Wales on the same grounds because fairness matters.²³³

- 2.155** Questions were also raised about the government's expenditure on consultants. As at 29 July 2020, Mr Harwin advised the committee that since mid-2017, approximately \$19.6 million has been spent on consultants for the Powerhouse Parramatta.²³⁴ As at 15 February 2021, Mr Harwin quoted \$25.7 million as the total spend on consultants between mid-2017 when the project received Expenditure Review Committee approval and November 2020.²³⁵

- 2.156** Elsewhere in evidence, the NSW Government advised the committee that between December 2019 and February 2021, Infrastructure NSW spent approximately \$18.6 million on consultants. Of this amount, \$2.36 million was spent by Infrastructure NSW between December 2020 and February 2021. According to this evidence, this expenditure covered architectural, engineering, design, building, statutory planning and other specialist consultants required for the design and planning process.²³⁶

- 2.157** The consultant expenditure drew criticism from Ms Patricia Johnson, Co-convenor of the Save the Powerhouse Campaign. Ms Johnson told the committee that a succession of Premiers, Ministers and museum directors have 'wasted almost \$50 million of taxpayers' money in consultancy fees to attempt to justify this unjustifiable project'.²³⁷

²³² Evidence, Mr Draper, 15 February 2021, p 7.

²³³ Evidence, Ms Winkworth, 21 August 2020, p 28.

²³⁴ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 19.

²³⁵ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 15 February 2021, p 8.

²³⁶ Answers to questions on notice, Hon Don Harwin, former Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, and Mr Simon Draper, Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure NSW, 19 March 2021, p 1.

²³⁷ Evidence, Ms Patricia Johnson, Co-convenor, Save the Powerhouse Campaign, 21 August 2020, p 10.

2.158 Ms Winkworth took similar exception to the amount of money spent on consultants and suggested the cost of the design competition alone could have built a new regional museum.²³⁸

2.159 The adequacy of the government's 2018 business case for the Powerhouse Parramatta, including the justifications for such a significant investment of taxpayer dollars, were again called into question throughout the committee's inquiry:

- Pymont Action Incorporated considered the 2018 business case disingenuous and deficient, as it failed to cost all the options or compare the price of moving the museum with the cost of keeping it in its present location as required by NSW Treasury guidelines.²³⁹
- Convenors of the Save the Powerhouse campaign submitted that the government 'systematically underestimated the costs and overestimated the benefits of the project'.²⁴⁰
- Ms Grace Cochrane, curator and historian with 48 years' experience and former Powerhouse Museum employee, was of the view that the significant public investment could not be justified: 'The over \$1.5 billion estimated for the 're-location', cannot be justified, given other cost priorities in the state, and better options consistently identified for both the Powerhouse and Parramatta'.²⁴¹

2.160 At a hearing in March 2022, the Hon Peter Collins AM QC, President, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, confirmed that the capital budget for the development of Powerhouse Parramatta, the redevelopment of the Museums Discovery Centre at Castle Hill and the refurbishment of Powerhouse Ultimo is \$1.34 billion.²⁴²

2.161 Dr Des Griffin AM FRSM questioned the cost estimates that have been placed on record for the project, arguing they fail to take into account almost inevitable cost escalation:

The costing of the relocation fails to take account of the experience of cost escalation which has occurred in other capital projects over the last five years or so. The estimate of perhaps 1.5 million dollars is misleading in this respect. If the escalation of final costs compared with original estimates of previous projects is factored into the estimates it is clear that the more accurate cost is likely well over two million dollars and could be even \$3 million.²⁴³

2.162 There have been five business cases prepared for the Powerhouse Parramatta development since 2015.²⁴⁴ One of these, the *Final Business Case for the Powerhouse Museum in Western Sydney Project*, was released to the previous inquiry and discussed in depth in the Final Report.²⁴⁵ The remainder are cabinet in confidence and have not been made available to this committee. This

²³⁸ Submission 137, Ms Kylie Winkworth, p 14.

²³⁹ Submission 10, Pymont Action Incorporated, p 3.

²⁴⁰ Submission 53, Save the Powerhouse, p 4.

²⁴¹ Submission 44, Ms Grace Cochrane, p 6.

²⁴² Evidence, Mr Collins, 17 March 2022, p 13.

²⁴³ Submission 94, Dr Des Griffin, p 2.

²⁴⁴ Answers to questions on notice, the Hon. Ben Franklin MLC, Minister for the Arts, 14 April 2022, p 1.

²⁴⁵ Portfolio Committee No. 4, NSW Legislative Council, *Museums and galleries in New South Wales* (2019), pp 5-9.

includes the *Powerhouse Parramatta Final Business Case 2020* and the *Ultimo Creative Industries Precinct Final Business Case 2021*.²⁴⁶

- 2.163** In November 2021, following the release of the contract with Lendlease, it was reported that the building costs of the Powerhouse Parramatta had surged beyond half a billion dollars. According to this media report, the contract sum of \$553 million exceeded the \$400 million base build cost identified in the Stage 1 brief to the 2019 design competition.²⁴⁷

An alternative proposal: A new museum at the Fleet Street Heritage Precinct

- 2.164** Throughout this inquiry, several stakeholders argued that instead of building a new Powerhouse museum at the David Jones carpark site, the government should instead dedicate that expenditure to the Fleet Street Heritage Precinct.²⁴⁸ This precinct is set amid the 30 hectare Cumberland Hospital East Grounds in North Parramatta and includes the Parramatta Female Factory, Parramatta Lunatic Asylum, Roman Catholic Orphanage and Parramatta Girls Home.
- 2.165** North Parramatta Residents' Action Group prepared a proposal and concept paper for how this site could be restored and redeveloped.²⁴⁹ This set out a plan for a five-stage redevelopment of the site, which would include restoring the existing heritage buildings, landscaping the grounds, building walks and bicycle paths, building a new Museum of New South Wales, and creating a village precinct, at a total estimated cost of \$450 million.²⁵⁰
- 2.166** According to Save the Powerhouse, one of the main arguments for restoring and redeveloping this site is that it reflects Parramatta's unique culture and history.²⁵¹ Ms Meade argued that the site already has a 'wonderful narrative' which could be built upon.²⁵² Mr Bruce Dawbin, NSW State Representative, International Council on Monuments and Sites Australia, argued that there is 'a lot of potential also to enhance the heritage values' of the existing structures at the site.²⁵³
- 2.167** Ms Meade told the committee that other benefits of the Fleet Street site are that it is larger, more accessible, and does not carry a risk of flooding, compared to the David Jones carpark site.²⁵⁴ Some submissions also noted that redeveloping this site would be more cost-effective

²⁴⁶ Answers to questions on notice, the Hon. Ben Franklin MLC, Minister for the Arts, 14 April 2022, p 1.

²⁴⁷ Linda Morris, 'Costs surge for Parramatta Powerhouse', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 November 2021, p 4.

²⁴⁸ Evidence, Ms Winkworth, 21 August 2020, p 29; Submission 76, Heritage Solutions, p 3; Submission 84, Federation of Australian Historical Societies, p 3; Submission 135, North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, pp 1, 10-16; Submission 137c, Ms Kylie Winkworth, p 7.

²⁴⁹ Submission 135b, North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, pp 4-18.

²⁵⁰ Submission 135b, North Parramatta Residents' Action Group, pp 16-17.

²⁵¹ Submission 53, Save the Powerhouse, p 12.

²⁵² Evidence, Ms Meade, 21 August 2020, p 48.

²⁵³ Evidence, Mr Bruce Dawbin, NSW State Representative, International Council of Monuments and Sites Australia, 29 July 2020, p 54.

²⁵⁴ Evidence, Ms Meade, 21 August 2020, p 48. See also Submission 81, The Hunters Hill Trust, p 3.

than building a new Powerhouse museum.²⁵⁵ However, the Royal Australian Historical Society noted that there are no existing buildings at the Fleet Street site that would be suitable for a museum, considering 'the need to retrofit modern fittings and climate control and storage'.²⁵⁶ They suggested 'further exploration of this option' would be required.²⁵⁷

- 2.168** Generally, many inquiry participants expressed support for a new museum in Parramatta centred on the history and culture of Western Sydney, as opposed to another Powerhouse Museum.²⁵⁸ Pymont Action Incorporated argued that instead of a technology museum, the Western Sydney community wanted 'a museum which reflects the history of Western Sydney, its First Nations connections to the area, Parramatta's significance as the early hub of colonial government, its agricultural history, and, more recently, its migrant and multi-cultural story'.²⁵⁹ They argued the government should develop a 'cultural centre' in an 'easily accessed and safe precinct' in Western Sydney instead.²⁶⁰

Committee comment

- 2.169** The government's decision to remove Willow Grove from its original site has robbed Parramatta of its rapidly dwindling heritage. The irony of erasing an important part of Parramatta's history and heritage, to make way for a cultural institution that tells other stories about our past, was not lost on the committee. Indeed, the government's own heritage impact statement concluded that the removal of Willow Grove would have a major physical and visual impact on its heritage significance, resulting in the total irreversible loss of the conservation values that constitute its heritage significance.
- 2.170** The committee concurs with the view of the Heritage Council of New South Wales that removing a heritage item from its original site diminishes its significance. So much of heritage significance is about place and context, curtilage and setting, landscape – that is why the Burra Charter advocates for heritage items to remain *in situ* and only be moved as a last resort.
- 2.171** As the evidence made clear, the significance of Willow Grove was much more than its bricks and mortar, its fine Victorian Italianate architectural features. Believing it can be divorced from its context and visual setting and still retain its original meanings and significance, betrays an attitude that does not respect the importance of place in understandings of how and why an item or building has heritage significance. It ignores the nuances in meaning and values between, for instance, heritage that speaks to Australia's convict past, and heritage that speaks to late 19th Century development and commerce in Parramatta, including the beginnings of its distinct aesthetic identity in its built forms.

²⁵⁵ Submission 66b, Mr Lionel Glendenning, p 1; Submission 84, Federation of Australian Historical Societies, p 3.

²⁵⁶ Submission 85, Royal Australian Historical Society, p 2.

²⁵⁷ Submission 85, Royal Australian Historical Society, p 2.

²⁵⁸ Submission 10, Pymont Action Incorporated, p 2; Submission 33, The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, p 2; Submission 76, Heritage Solutions, pp 2-3; Submission 81, The Hunters Hill Trust, p 3.

²⁵⁹ Submission 10, Pymont Action Incorporated, p 2.

²⁶⁰ Submission 10, Pymont Action Incorporated, p 4.

Finding 1

That the NSW Government's removal of Willow Grove from its original site has had a significant and cumulative heritage impact.

Finding 2

That, when or if the NSW Government reconstructs Willow Grove on its new site, the resulting structure will not be the same Willow Grove.

Recommendation 1

That, given the removal of Willow Grove has already taken place despite widespread community opposition, the NSW Government commit to honouring the memory of Willow Grove by erecting a Blue Plaque on its former site.

- 2.172** While we welcome the government's decision to retain and adaptively reuse St George's Terrace as part of the new museum, we note concerns raised in evidence about the detail of how this will be achieved. They should be retained and integrated in a way that is sympathetic to the story and significance of these important terraces. Retaining only their facades would not achieve this and, in the committee's view, would be a poor heritage outcome. Sydney has enough examples of facadism done poorly. In addition to preserving their internal layout and separations, their original features should be restored to their former glory, as proposed by the City of Parramatta Council.
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Recommendation 2

That the NSW Government, in retaining and adaptively reusing St George's Terrace as part of Powerhouse Parramatta, commit to retaining their original internal separations as terraces and restoring their original features.

- 2.173** The committee notes the significant volume of evidence about the risk of flooding at the Powerhouse Parramatta site. This included riverine flooding from the Parramatta River and overland flooding from flows from Phillip Street to the river. There was considerable disagreement among experts as to the actual level of risk and the appropriateness of design measures to mitigate that risk. Some participants' views also changed following the EIS process, in which modifications were made to the design to address concerns raised in submissions.
- 2.174** It is still difficult for the committee to fathom why the NSW Government would choose a flood prone site to build one of the most significant pieces of cultural infrastructure – billed in evidence as the largest investment in cultural infrastructure since the Sydney Opera House – and then attempt to design their way around the inherent and very real flood risks. The committee looked aghast as the project site was flooded on several occasions during the course of our inquiry.
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- 2.175** The public pressure generated by this inquiry – including the several independent flood reports commissioned by the Powerhouse Museum Alliance – brought to light several deficiencies and omissions in the flood risk modelling and mitigation design work undertaken by Infrastructure NSW's chosen consultant. Without bringing those issues into full view, some of these deficiencies may never have been addressed. However, in the committee's view, further unanswered questions remain especially in relation to flood risks to the museum's very significant collections.

Recommendation 3

That, in implementing the flood-related conditions of consent issued as part of the State Significant Development Application determination, the NSW Government:

- address all outstanding flood-related issues and concerns highlighted by the detailed analyses submitted in evidence to this inquiry; and
 - re-test the flood immunity of the Powerhouse Parramatta (both riverine and overland flooding) using the new City of Parramatta Council Parramatta River flood study based on the 2019 Australian Rainfall and Runoff guidelines.
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- 2.176** The committee's attempts to ascertain whether the Powerhouse Project represents good value for taxpayers were hampered by a lack of transparency surrounding the most up-to-date project justifications and business cases for change. The information remained hidden under a veil of cabinet in confidence. The 2018 Benefit Cost Ratio was marginal, and much has changed since then. Given the significance of the project and the sums of money involved, the public has a right to know whether this is a responsible, efficient and prudent use of public money, one that can be justified by the public benefits it will deliver.

Recommendation 4

That the NSW Government release the *Powerhouse Parramatta Final Business Case 2020* and the *Ultimo Creative Industries Precinct Final Business Case 2021*, as well as any other business cases, conservation management plans, and precinct master plans for any aspect of the project (Parramatta, Ultimo and Castle Hill) that are not already in the public domain.

- 2.177** The committee notes the significant amount of expert evidence we received, including from former curators of the museum, other staff of long-standing tenure and former directors of other State collecting and cultural institutions. These are individuals and organisations with an in-depth knowledge of museums and the spaces, services and infrastructure needed to support their core functions.
- 2.178** Many of these stakeholders raised concerns about the lack of exhibition space, the design and functionality of the building and the focus on events rather than collections. Like others, the committee is concerned that Powerhouse Parramatta has less exhibition space than Ultimo and is in effect a multi-purpose entertainment and events centre masquerading as a museum.

Finding 3

That the NSW Government's current plans for Powerhouse Parramatta are more akin to an events centre than a museum.

- 2.179** The committee is also greatly concerned about the potential damage that could be caused by moving very large and/or fragile items from their existing location to Powerhouse Parramatta. Indeed, stakeholders emphasised the time, extent and costs likely to be associated with transporting these items, and how relocation is at odds with a general intention to preserve items in their original condition for as long as possible. In the committee's view, the government needs to publicly and specifically outline the strategy it will put in place to minimise the risks associated with moving large and fragile items to Powerhouse Parramatta.
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Recommendation 5

That the NSW Government publicly and specifically outline its strategy to minimise the risk of damage posed to large and fragile items by moving them from their existing location to Powerhouse Parramatta.

- 2.180** In the committee's view, it is unfortunate that the NSW Government gave so little consideration to the alternative proposal for a museum at the Fleet Street heritage precinct, as backed by a large proportion of inquiry participants including ICOMOS Australia. It is clear that the NSW Government does not wish to consider other options and alternatives, including one that clearly may have a better cost benefit ratio than the project before us. In the committee's view, it is difficult to see this as anything other than an attempt to reverse engineer the decision-making process to retrospectively support a pre-determined outcome.

Chapter 3 **The Powerhouse Ultimo and the Castle Hill Museums Discovery Centre**

This chapter considers the government's proposals for the museum's Ultimo site and the expansion of the Castle Hill Museums Discovery Centre. It is divided into two sections. The first focuses on the government's announcement to renew Ultimo, instead of selling the site to help fund the construction of Powerhouse Parramatta. The second section looks at the development of a new collection storage facility at the Museums Discovery Centre at Castle Hill.

The Powerhouse Ultimo

- 3.1** Like other aspects of this project, the government's proposals for the museum's Ultimo site evolved significantly during the course of the inquiry. Upon the inquiry's commencement, there was still the very real prospect that the Ultimo site (or parts thereof) would be sold to private interests, with speculation that this was one of the key drivers for relocating the museum to Parramatta.²⁶¹
- 3.2** Contributors to this inquiry again expressed their opposition to relocating the Powerhouse from Ultimo to Parramatta.²⁶²
- 3.3** This section addresses the evolution of the government's proposals for Ultimo while outlining stakeholder perspectives on some of the issues raised by the government's shift in policy direction. Its starting point is what has come to be known as 'the 4 July announcement' – a change in government priorities for the Ultimo site, welcomed by some and received with a degree of skepticism by others. This is followed by consideration of the various heritage considerations at Ultimo, most notably the recent State Heritage Register listing of the 'Ultimo Tramway Powerhouse' and issues surrounding the future of the Harwood Building. The committee then turns its attention to the government's vision for the Ultimo site, followed by consideration of staff impacts.

The 4 July announcement

- 3.4** As at the commencement of the inquiry, the NSW Government had planned to sell the Ultimo site, with an estimated market value of \$195 million, and the proceeds from the sale were to go towards the cost of constructing the new Powerhouse Parramatta.²⁶³ In preparation for the

²⁶¹ See for example: Submission 134, Dr Andrew Simpson, p 3.

²⁶² See for example: Submission 34, Ms Linda Scott, p 2; Submission 59, Mr Robert Gavagna, p 1; Submission 64, City of Sydney, p 3.

²⁶³ Alexandra Smith, 'Powerhouse backflip as Ultimo site saved by Berejiklian government', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 July 2020. See also: Evidence, Hon Don Harwin, former Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, 29 July 2020, p 3; Media release, Hon Gladys Berejiklian, former NSW Premier, and Hon Dominic Perrottet MP, former NSW Treasurer, 'More Powerhouse for the people – NSW Government to retain Ultimo museum', 4 July 2020.

move, the museum at Ultimo commenced a staged closure in 2020 with a full closure slated for July 2021.²⁶⁴

- 3.5** On 4 July 2020, then NSW Premier, Hon Gladys Berejiklian, and then NSW Treasurer, Hon Dominic Perrottet MP, announced that the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo will remain open and will operate alongside the 'facility' planned for Western Sydney. The decision was trumpeted as delivering two world-class facilities and a significant boost for the arts, tourism and employment sectors. The Powerhouse Parramatta was envisioned to be the flagship and 'jewel-in-the-crown' of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences' four centres (Parramatta, Ultimo, Sydney Observatory and Castle Hill Discover Centre).²⁶⁵
- 3.6** The decision was credited with enabling far more of the museum's collections to be exhibited, thereby providing 'unprecedented new levels of access to our collection, to exhibitions'.²⁶⁶ In a statement to the committee, Hon Don Harwin, then Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, highlighted the various benefits the 4 July decision would deliver in increasing access to and exhibition of the museum's collections.²⁶⁷
- 3.7** Mr Harwin told the committee the museum to be retained at Ultimo will be Australia's leading museum of design and innovation, noting its home will be in 'the Ultimo Power Station'.²⁶⁸
- 3.8** The decision to retain the museum at Ultimo had an impact on the net taxpayer contribution to the construction of the Powerhouse Parramatta and expansion of the Castle Hill Museum Discovery Centre. As a result of this decision, the government had to contribute an additional \$195 million to the project.²⁶⁹
- 3.9** In response to committee questioning about the cost of keeping Ultimo open, Mr Harwin said the government would need to look at costings and pointed to a final business case for the Ultimo facility, which he said had been in development since as far back as 2018.²⁷⁰ This business case is discussed in further detail below.
- 3.10** A much earlier business case, endorsed by the museum's Board of Trustees in 2014, put the net cost of renewing the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo at \$350 million.²⁷¹

²⁶⁴ Alexandra Smith, 'Powerhouse backflip as Ultimo site saved by Berejiklian government', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 July 2020; Evidence, Mr Troy Wright, Assistant General Secretary, Public Service Association of New South Wales, 29 July 2020, p 44.

²⁶⁵ Media release, Hon Gladys Berejiklian, former NSW Premier, and Hon Dominic Perrottet MP, former NSW Treasurer, 'More Powerhouse for the people – NSW Government to retain Ultimo museum', 4 July 2020. See also: Evidence, Prof Barney Glover, former President, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, 29 July 2020, p 21.

²⁶⁶ Media release, Hon Gladys Berejiklian, former NSW Premier, and Hon Dominic Perrottet MP, former NSW Treasurer, 'More Powerhouse for the people – NSW Government to retain Ultimo museum', 4 July 2020.

²⁶⁷ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 2.

²⁶⁸ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 2.

²⁶⁹ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 3.

²⁷⁰ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 4.

²⁷¹ Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, *Final business case for the renewal of the Powerhouse Museum* (24 October 2014), p 3.

- 3.11** Throughout the inquiry, the government asserted that the retention of a cultural or museum presence at the Ultimo site had always been the intention of the government and the then Minister.²⁷² Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet, gave evidence that the retention of a museum presence at Ultimo 'has always been part of the business case' and in this sense, 'the business case is not radically new ... it just becomes more specific in terms of what is the museum presence at Ultimo'.²⁷³
- 3.12** The 4 July announcement received a mixed reception among inquiry participants, sentiments to which the committee now turns.

Stakeholder views

- 3.13** For some inquiry participants, the 4 July announcement was seen as a carefully worded announcement that, on the surface, appeared as a win for supporters of the Powerhouse Ultimo, but in reality, raised other concerns.
- 3.14** One such participant was Dr Lindsay Sharp, representative of the Powerhouse Museum Alliance and former museum Director. Referring to the unique and appropriate spaces that house the museum's steam history and transport displays, Dr Sharp observed that the 4 July announcement gave the impression that such spaces and the valuable collections they contain would be retained and rejuvenated. In his opinion, this was a false impression. Dr Sharp suggested the government's true intentions were to demolish the Harwood building and move the smaller objects to an expanded Castle Hill Museums Discovery Centre.²⁷⁴
- 3.15** Ms Jennifer Sanders, former senior executive of the Powerhouse Museum and representative of the Powerhouse Museum Alliance, took a similar view, observing that the Alliance initially welcomed the decision but on further inspection, found that the 'insanity is still prevailing'.²⁷⁵ Ms Sanders pointed to the government's proposal for a lyric theatre and a creative precinct in the Ultimo site as evidence that any commitment to recognising the importance of the museum in its entirety and keeping it in its home in Ultimo had 'gone out the window'.²⁷⁶
- 3.16** The Alliance viewed the announcement as a 'carefully worded media release' and claimed, at least to some extent, it was misleading.²⁷⁷ In its opinion, the announcement said little more than '[w]e will keep some of the buildings and we will keep four large objects, basically, as window-dressing or furniture. And that is not what a museum is about'.²⁷⁸
- 3.17** Spokespersons for the Save the Powerhouse Campaign echoed these concerns. Ms Patricia Johnson, the campaign's co-convenor, expressed to the committee their cautious optimism at hearing of the 4 July announcement, an optimism she said was 'short lived as we rapidly realised

²⁷² Evidence, Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 29 July 2020, p 26; Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 7.

²⁷³ Evidence, Ms Foy, 29 July 2020, p 28.

²⁷⁴ Evidence, Dr Lindsay Sharp, Representative, Powerhouse Museum Alliance, 21 August 2020, p 3.

²⁷⁵ Evidence, Ms Jennifer Sanders, Representative, Powerhouse Museum Alliance, 21 August 2020, p 5.

²⁷⁶ Evidence, Ms Sanders, 21 August 2020, p 6.

²⁷⁷ Evidence, Ms Sanders, 21 August 2020, p 6.

²⁷⁸ Evidence, Dr Sharp, 21 August 2020, p 6.

that nothing has changed at all'.²⁷⁹ They informed the committee that, in the weeks following the announcement, the collections were still being packed up and a large proportion of the museum's exhibition space was being rented out for other uses.²⁸⁰

- 3.18** Evidence from Mr Andrew Grant – who has 33 years' experience as a curator at the Powerhouse Museum including being the former Senior Curator, Transport – corroborated these perspectives. According to Mr Grant, the spirit and intent of the government's announcement was not borne out by the 'contrary evidence' that had come to light thereafter.²⁸¹ Such contrary evidence included the very short list of objects to be retained at Ultimo.²⁸² He observed: '[t]he implication is that nothing else will be retained at Ultimo. What a cruel hoax that would be on an unsuspecting public'.²⁸³
- 3.19** Mr Grant agreed that the announcement was presented in a way that implied the Powerhouse Museum, in the form in which it has been operating at Ultimo since the 1980s, had been saved.²⁸⁴ A government letter Mr Grant tendered in evidence conveyed, in his opinion, the government's true intentions for the Ultimo site.²⁸⁵ He argued a more accurate interpretation of the 4 July announcement alludes to 'the preservation of the bricks and mortar of the former Powerhouse building' only – without any commitment to 'the assembly of buildings that constitutes the Powerhouse Museum proper, which includes the Harwood building and the Wran building facing Harris Street'.²⁸⁶

The government's vision, plans and intention for the Ultimo site

- 3.20** The government's 4 July announcement prompted questions about its vision for the renewed Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo and plans for the broader Ultimo site, including the complex of buildings that have been in use as part of the Powerhouse at Ultimo since the 1980s. These questions are the focus of the following sections.

Collections and programming at Ultimo: what items will remain and what will be the main focus?

- 3.21** Detail on what items within the Powerhouse collection will remain at Ultimo – and what will be at the forefront of the refreshed museum within the 'Ultimo Power Station' – remained high-level throughout the inquiry.

²⁷⁹ Evidence, Ms Patricia Johnson, Co-convenor, Save the Powerhouse Campaign, 21 August 2020, p 10.

²⁸⁰ Evidence, Mr Jean-Pierre Alexandre, Co-convenor, Save the Powerhouse Campaign, 21 August 2020, p 10.

²⁸¹ Evidence, Mr Andrew Grant, private citizen, 21 August 2020, p 17.

²⁸² Evidence, Mr Grant, 21 August 2020, pp 17-18.

²⁸³ Evidence, Mr Grant, 21 August 2020, p 18.

²⁸⁴ Evidence, Mr Grant, 21 August 2020, p 20.

²⁸⁵ Tabled document, Mr Andrew Grant, private citizen, Letter from the Hon Gladys Berejiklian, Member for Willoughby, to a constituent regarding the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo, 21 August 2020, p 1.

²⁸⁶ Evidence, Mr Grant, 21 August 2020, p 20.

- 3.22** The committee was able to confirm that the Boulton and Watt Steam Engine, Catalina Flying Boat and Locomotive No. 1 will all be retained at Ultimo.²⁸⁷ Then President of the museum's Board of Trustees, Professor Barney Glover, referred to a very clear decision by government that these items should not be considered for relocation.²⁸⁸
- 3.23** Beyond that, the committee heard on several occasions that the refreshed museum at Ultimo would have a focus on fashion and design.²⁸⁹ In a statement to the committee, Hon Ben Franklin MLC, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Regional Youth, submitted that design and fashion will be at the forefront of the Ultimo museum.²⁹⁰
- 3.24** The refreshed museum was similarly described by Mr Harwin, the former Arts Minister, as 'Australia's leading museum of design and innovation' and as consisting of a 'fashion museum' among other possible cultural uses.²⁹¹
- 3.25** Mr Bruce Dawbin, NSW State Representative, ICOMOS Australia, was not convinced of the merits of making fashion the centrepiece of the refreshed Powerhouse Ultimo. Mr Dawbin was of the view that the refreshed museum should not lose sight of its origins as a science and technology museum first and foremost – and that fashion is a 'very peripheral' part of applied arts and sciences.²⁹² He suggested it would be a 'very negative outcome' if fashion started to compete with the emphasis on showcasing the narrative of the development of industry and technology.²⁹³
- 3.26** Putting fashion in context as a percentage of the entire Powerhouse collection, Ms Jennifer Sanders estimated it represents approximately 1.5 per cent of the total collection.²⁹⁴
- 3.27** As noted above, the Boulton and Watt Steam Engine, Catalina Flying Boat and Locomotive No. 1 are to be retained at Ultimo. This raised concerns about the impact of breaking up the collection and divorcing these very large objects from their respective collections. Mr Andrew Grant, for instance, argued it would be 'absurd' to isolate these three large objects and treat them as exemplary signifiers of themes which apply almost universally to the collection as a whole.²⁹⁵
- 3.28** Another expert voice in this commentary was Professor David Miller, science and technology historian and Emeritus Professor at the University of New South Wales. Professor Miller expressed concerns about the future integrity of the broader context which lends meaning to these very large items. He submitted that the 'carefully constructed and curated context' gives a

²⁸⁷ Evidence, Ms Lisa Havilah, Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, 29 July 2020, p 30.

²⁸⁸ Evidence, Professor Glover, 29 July 2020, p 33.

²⁸⁹ See for example: Evidence, Ms Foy, 29 July 2020, p 26.

²⁹⁰ Evidence, Hon Ben Franklin MLC, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Regional Youth, 17 March 2022, p 2.

²⁹¹ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, pp 2 and 4.

²⁹² Evidence, Mr Bruce Dawbin, NSW State Representative, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Australia, 29 July 2020, p 57.

²⁹³ Evidence, Mr Dawbin, 29 July 2020, p 57.

²⁹⁴ Evidence, Ms Sanders, 21 August 2020, p 8.

²⁹⁵ Evidence, Mr Grant, 21 August 2020, p 18.

deeper meaning to the very large items on display to tell engaging 'stories about technological transformation'.²⁹⁶

- 3.29** According to Professor Miller, in order to appreciate the significance of objects like the Boulton and Watt Steam Engine, and to tell their stories to museum goers through interpretation, they require context. That is, they have to be interpreted in relation to other items that form part of their narrative of innovation and ingenuity in the course of history:

[T]he objects do not speak for themselves. They have to be interpreted and they have to be interpreted in relation to other things. The reason that the Boulton and Watt is so interesting and is such a magnificent object is that it is close to the beginning of a process of technological evolution in which steam technology transformed—in fact, created—modern societies in terms of its support of industry and its support of things like sewerage, electrical generation and so on ... It really is the case that if the large objects were stripped of this larger context, it becomes very, very difficult to appreciate them, let alone tell stories to a public audience about them.²⁹⁷

- 3.30** Ms Kylie Winkworth of the Powerhouse Museum Alliance expressed a similar view. In her opinion, the significance of the very large items and the spaces, installations and contexts in which they are currently displayed and brought to life in Ultimo, cannot be separated, conceptually or otherwise.²⁹⁸ Ms Winkworth argued that the Boulton and Watt, Locomotive No. 1 and the transport installation are integral to the heritage significance of the Powerhouse Museum, and highlighted the synergies between the two foundational technologies of motive power and steam transport.²⁹⁹
- 3.31** Likewise, Mr Bruce Dawbin, NSW State Representative, ICOMOS Australia, submitted it would be unacceptable to break up or dislocate the Steam Revolution display, the beam engine or the Transport Hall.³⁰⁰
- 3.32** Noting the government's vision of having a focus on fashion but also retaining the very large steam and transport items, the committee questioned government witnesses on how this would present from a curatorial and programming perspective. Under questioning from the committee, Minister Franklin dismissed suggestions it would be incongruous to have items of fashion displayed alongside items of industrial or technology heritage, arguing instead that 'design is part of art too. Fashion is part of art as well'.³⁰¹ Minister Franklin further argued that museums can have a range of focuses, and that whether its fashion or industrial items, they are all examples of industrial design.³⁰²

²⁹⁶ Evidence, Professor David Miller, science and technology historian, 21 August 2020, pp 29-29.

²⁹⁷ Evidence, Professor Miller, 21 August 2020, p 32.

²⁹⁸ Evidence, Ms Kylie Winkworth, museum and heritage consultant, 21 August 2020, p 32.

²⁹⁹ Evidence, Ms Winkworth, 21 August 2020, p 32.

³⁰⁰ Evidence, Mr Dawbin, 29 July 2020, p 52.

³⁰¹ Evidence, Minister Franklin, 17 March 2022, p 9.

³⁰² Evidence, Minister Franklin, 17 March 2022, p 10.

The future of the broader Ultimo site and its various built elements

- 3.33** On several occasions throughout the inquiry, the committee heard that the costs of renewing the museum at Ultimo and the potential future uses of the site were subject to a business case said to be in development since prior to the last State election in 2018.³⁰³
- 3.34** As at 8 October 2020, Ms Lisa Havilah, the museum's Chief Executive, told the committee that Create Infrastructure was leading the development of the business case, including 'extensive' community and stakeholder consultation to inform the renewal of the Ultimo museum.³⁰⁴ According to Ms Havilah, the business case will consider 'the renewal of the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo as part of the broader creative industries precinct'.³⁰⁵
- 3.35** Mr Harwin told the committee the business case will consider:
- improving circulation through the museum, addressing dead areas and investigating ways to improve functionality;
 - issues in relation to storage in the Harwood Building and the role of the Museums Discover Centre at Castle Hill; and
 - the role of the museum in the broader precinct and the place-making capacities of that precinct.³⁰⁶
- 3.36** Mr Harwin advised that the total cost of the final business case for Ultimo was \$5 million.³⁰⁷
- 3.37** As at 15 February 2021, it was reported that the museum was awaiting the government's consideration of the business case.³⁰⁸
- 3.38** At the committee's final hearing, Ms Lisa Havilah, the museum's Chief Executive, updated the committee on the progress of plans for the Ultimo site. Ms Havilah informed the committee of the government's commitment to invest between \$480 million to \$500 million into the renewal of the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo.³⁰⁹
- 3.39** This referred to an announcement made in June 2021 promoting a 'transformative investment' from the NSW Government for the renewal of the Ultimo museum.³¹⁰ According to this announcement, the investment will:
- renew the Powerhouse at Ultimo with a focus on design and fashion, presenting exhibitions and programs that support the design and fashion industries

³⁰³ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 4.

³⁰⁴ Evidence, Ms Havilah, 8 October 2020, p 2.

³⁰⁵ Evidence, Ms Havilah, 8 October 2020, p 12.

³⁰⁶ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, pp 9-10.

³⁰⁷ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 9.

³⁰⁸ Evidence, Ms Havilah, 15 February 2021, p 24.

³⁰⁹ Evidence, Ms Havilah, 17 March 2022, p 14.

³¹⁰ Media release, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, 'The iconic Powerhouse transformed', 15 June 2021.

- deliver renewed and expanded exhibition and public space and re-orient the museum to the connecting Goods Line and adjacent precincts
- deliver subsidised studio and work-spaces for creative industries
- fund the development of 'The Academy' to provide design and fashion education to regional and remote students in New South Wales.³¹¹

3.40 Opponents of the project suggested that the transformation of the museum's Ultimo presence would mean the end of the renowned Powerhouse Ultimo in the form in which it has operated in for several decades. For example, Dr Lindsay Sharp of the Powerhouse Museum Alliance suggested that the collection will be decanted and broken up, destroying its international status, certain buildings will be removed from the site, and a creative industries complex will be developed where there was previously an international museum. He suggested the Harwood site will become a lyric theatre sitting underneath a vast number of creative industry apartments.³¹²

3.41 Ms Patricia Johnson of the Save the Powerhouse Campaign foresaw a similar fate for the Ultimo site.³¹³

3.42 The business case for the renewal of the Powerhouse at Ultimo was subject to an order for papers by the NSW Legislative Council under Standing Order 52 in June 2022.

The Harwood Building

3.43 The future of the museum's Harwood Building was also discussed during this inquiry. The Harwood Building began its life as the tram depot for Sydney's first intra-urban tram network.³¹⁴ Built in 1899, this was the first structure of what was to become by the 1920s the largest tramway network in the British Commonwealth outside London.³¹⁵ Following the end of the initial electric tram era in Sydney, ownership of the building was transferred to the museum in 1964 when it was intended that it would become the transport museum.³¹⁶

3.44 The building was re-purposed in the 1980s for its current use,³¹⁷ described in evidence as consisting of 'a fully equipped workshop; large object handling and treatment; an exhibition preparation, staging and presentation area; temporary exhibition movements; a photography studio; conservation laboratories; a publicly accessible research library and archives; building maintenance workshops; collection management and other staff accommodation; and of course high-quality storage that is, for the record, publicly accessible'.³¹⁸

³¹¹ Media release, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, 'The iconic Powerhouse transformed', 15 June 2021.

³¹² Evidence, Dr Sharp, 21 August 2020, p 4; Submission 65d, Dr Lindsay Sharp, p 2.

³¹³ Evidence, Ms Johnson, 21 August 2020, p 10.

³¹⁴ Submission 65d, Dr Lindsay Sharp, p 1.

³¹⁵ Evidence, Mr Grant, 21 August 2020, p 17.

³¹⁶ Evidence, Ms Sanders, 21 August 2020, p 7.

³¹⁷ Submission 119c, Mr Andrew Grant, p 8.

³¹⁸ Evidence, Mr Grant, 21 August 2020, p 17. See also: Submission 74a, Ms Jennifer Sanders, p 8.

- 3.45** It was classified by the National Trust of NSW as being historically, aesthetically and socially significant in 1994 and was listed on the National Trust register in 1997.³¹⁹ On 27 March 2020, the Trust nominated the Harwood Building (former Ultimo Tramsheds) for listing on the State Heritage Register.³²⁰
- 3.46** Mr Andrew Grant, former senior curator of the museum's transport collection, considered the Harwood Building a highly significant industrial structure. He submitted that, together with the adjacent Power House, it had a close association with the development of the Darling Harbour Goods Line in the first half of the twentieth century.³²¹ According to Mr Grant, the Harwood Building and the Ultimo Power House – which opened in 1899 to generate the electricity required for Sydney's new tramway network – were the two most important elements of the 1980s Sulman Award-winning Powerhouse redevelopment.³²²
- 3.47** In evidence before the committee, Dr Lindsay Sharp characterised these former industrial buildings, with their heritage values and large-scale spaces, as being 'perfect' to display large objects and tell the story of the industrial revolution.³²³
- 3.48** Evidence to the inquiry suggested a range of different futures for the Harwood Building as a result of the government's Ultimo renewal project:
- Mr Harwin told the committee a 1,500 seat lyric theatre was one of the options being considered in the Ultimo business case among others³²⁴
 - Mr Bill d'Anthes of Pymont Action Incorporated told the committee that the Harwood Building was the major target of a property grab by developers³²⁵
 - Ms Jennifer Sanders gave evidence that it was slated for demolition³²⁶
 - Dr Lindsay Sharp gave evidence that the Harwood Building will be primarily occupied by a lyric theatre or will be demolished to build something else on the site³²⁷
 - Mr Tom Lockley submitted that the heritage controls on the site give the government a licence for the destruction of the Harwood Building.³²⁸
- 3.49** When pressed by the committee on whether the government plans to sell the building or use it for a non-museum commercial purpose, Mr Harwin indicated there were no plans to sell, but that the Ultimo business case would look at how the precinct can achieve more in terms of creative industries and driving visitation to the Ultimo museum.³²⁹

³¹⁹ Submission 119, Mr Andrew Grant, p 3; Evidence, Mr Burdon, 29 July 2020, p 60.

³²⁰ Submission 35, National Trust of Australia (New South Wales), p 2.

³²¹ Submission 119c, Mr Andrew Grant, p 8.

³²² Submission 119c, Mr Andrew Grant, p 8; Submission 119d, Mr Andrew Grant, p 1.

³²³ Evidence, Dr Sharp, 21 August 2020, p 6.

³²⁴ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 26 July 2020, p 17.

³²⁵ Evidence, Mr Bill d'Anthes, Deputy Convenor, Pymont Action Incorporated, 21 August 2020, p 47.

³²⁶ Submission 74a, Ms Jennifer Sanders, p 8.

³²⁷ Evidence, Dr Sharp, 21 August 2020, pp 3 and 4.

³²⁸ Submission 118, Mr Tom Lockley, p 2.

³²⁹ Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 10.

3.50 In a statement to the committee, Mr Grant argued for the retention of the Harwood Building in its current functions, saying it is essential if the museum is to be retained at Ultimo in recognisable form.³³⁰ He told the committee it is integral to the Powerhouse Museum, both historically and functionally.³³¹

3.51 A number of other former museum staff and inquiry participants outlined the case for why the Harwood Building is so important functionally, in terms of museum and curatorial practice:

- Mr Ian Debenham OAM pointed to the efficiencies of having the 'well equipped workshop, conservation laboratory, photography studio, high quality small object and organic material storage, curatorial, design and registration areas in close proximity and a short walk from the Powerhouse exhibition building'.³³² One example cited in evidence was the clear advantage of having specialist staff in close proximity to the exhibition spaces to carry out regular maintenance or inspect the condition of objects on display.³³³
- Mr Lionel Glendenning submitted that the proximity of the specialist spaces within the Ultimo museum – including the deep storage in the Harwood Building – is part of what makes it such an 'integrated, museologically powerful expression of a museum.' In his view, this proximity and ease of access is 'fundamental' to the research and operation of a curatorial profession.³³⁴
- Also highlighting the benefits of co-location, Dr Sharp told the committee that the services housed within the Harwood Building are the envy of museum professionals around the world: '[they] could not believe we could have a workshop, a storage space, a photographic space ... literally adjacent to the main display spaces'.³³⁵ He concluded 'the Harwood Building is absolutely critical to heritage and functionality'.³³⁶

3.52 Other arguments were advanced in evidence to demonstrate why the Harwood building is of inestimable strategic importance to the museum's functions and operations. One of these arguments related to the risks involved in moving objects.³³⁷ The committee heard that every object movement requires consideration and management of risks, and that adjacency or proximity of storage and exhibition spaces 'greatly simplifies' the risk profile.³³⁸ Appearing before the committee, Mr Grant explained how the greater the number of steps involved in an object movement, the more complex the risk:

The nature of movements of objects, the number of steps involved in doing that—for example, from careful hands to a vehicle and then from a vehicle to careful hands to an exhibition location—adds a level of complexity and risk that merely placing an object on a soft-tyred trolley and taking it directly 100 metres, 200 metres to a place of

³³⁰ Evidence, Mr Grant, 21 August 2020, p 17.

³³¹ Evidence, Mr Grant, 21 August 2020, p 17.

³³² Submission 100, Mr Ian Debenham OAM, p 3.

³³³ Evidence, Mr Ian Debenham OAM, private citizen, 21 August 2020, p 21.

³³⁴ Evidence, Mr Lionel Glendenning, private citizen, 21 August 2020, p 44.

³³⁵ Evidence, Dr Sharp, 21 August 2020, p 6.

³³⁶ Evidence, Dr Sharp, 21 August 2020, p 6.

³³⁷ Evidence, Mr Glendenning, 21 August 2020, p 44.

³³⁸ Evidence, Mr Grant, 21 August 2020, p18.

exhibition is much more straightforward and greatly simplifies and reduces the amount of risk involved.³³⁹

- 3.53** Another argument related to cost efficiencies. Dr Andrew Simpson argued that, in order for a museum to function correctly, it is essential to have staff and facilities co-located with collections and exhibition spaces – otherwise the museum will incur significant costs 'in terms of staff time, moving round from one place to another'.³⁴⁰ Pointing to the complexities in curatorial work, Dr Simpson highlighted the efficiency gains that come from having various activities co-located in one area:

The work that staff like curators undertake in a museum is complex because it involves everything from research, conservation, overseeing conservation work, and engaging with the public. So if you have got all those activities co-located in the one area, they are obviously going to be much more efficient and much less costly than they otherwise would be if you separate one part of the ecosystem from the other.³⁴¹

- 3.54** Expressing a different view on the functionality of the Harwood Building, Mr Harwin told the committee the building is not entirely fit-for-purpose and has a number of drawbacks or limitations as a collections storage facility, including that it does not allow the public to view the collection in non-museum conditions in the same way they are at the Museums Discovery Centre.³⁴²

- 3.55** This view was echoed by the Hon Peter Collins AM QC, President of the museum's Board of Trustees. He observed that the Harwood Building was not built for purpose, being an adaptation of what was originally a tram depot. Mr Collins submitted that, while it has served the museum's needs for the past 30 years, '[i]t is running out of time, in terms of being a proper place for occupational health and safety. It is not a terrific office environment for the many staff who are working in there'.³⁴³

- 3.56** A number of inquiry participants with direct experience working in the Harwood Building called into question assertions that public access to the basement is problematic.

- 3.57** For example, Mr Andrew Grant spoke of the many occasions on which they conducted parties of limited numbers through the basement store, saying 'there are no practical problems if the appropriate steps are taken to do just that and continue to do that if the store was fully utilised'.³⁴⁴ He suggested there could be another motive to overstate the problems about 'the continuing function of what is still an excellent facility in any museum terms, even today'.³⁴⁵ He gave evidence that:

³³⁹ Evidence, Mr Grant, 21 August 2020, p 22.

³⁴⁰ Evidence, Dr Andrew Simpson, private citizen, 21 August 2021, p 21.

³⁴¹ Evidence, Dr Simpson, 21 August 2021, p 21.

³⁴² Evidence, Mr Harwin, 29 July 2020, p 10.

³⁴³ Evidence, Hon Peter Collins, AM QC, President, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, 15 February 2021, p 32.

³⁴⁴ Evidence, Mr Grant, 21 August 2020, p 23.

³⁴⁵ Evidence, Mr Grant, 21 August 2020, p 24.

The claimed operational problems of the Harwood Building are baseless and designed to discredit what is a unique and envied museum facility in Australia, and very rare internationally. Put simply, the Harwood building was designed and built to function as the mothership of operations at Ultimo.³⁴⁶

- 3.58** Also countering the government's evidence, Ms Judith Coombs, President, Australian Museums and Galleries Association (NSW Division), argued that it is better to have collections where people are rather than physically removed at a distant site, while also questioning any suggestion of the Harwood collections storage as 'dead' space:

My view is that it is better to have collections where the people are. I was responsible for managing the collection at the Harwood Building and it was a very active space. It is not just like a dead museum collection. We are constantly taking tours through; researchers, student groups, artists and curators could easily access that there. Castle Hill is a great site but it has always been very difficult to get visitors to go there. It is an hours' drive from the city. It is a 25 minute drive from Parramatta.³⁴⁷

- 3.59** Suggestions that the Harwood Building is inflexible and unable to provide public access to display storage were also dismissed by Dr Lindsay Sharp as 'just nonsense'.³⁴⁸ He maintained that the building could be very easily repurposed to accommodate display storage down one side which could be used for rotating or changing collections. He further noted that there is a display space of 1,000 square metres at the building's southern end, which can be used for temporary exhibitions.³⁴⁹

- 3.60** The committee also noted evidence suggesting that the Harwood Building's maintenance issues were not as bad as they had been presented in previous justifications for the government's project proposal.³⁵⁰ One former employee of the museum, tenured between 2000 and 2018, advised that they were directed by the museum's former Director to emphasise the age of the stores and the air conditioning malfunctions – a 'false view' that was repeated in an earlier business case to government.³⁵¹

- 3.61** The committee toured the Harwood Building on 25 September 2020, meeting with Ms Lisa Havilah; Mr Matthew Connell, Director of Curatorial, Collections and Exhibitions; Ms Trish Stokes, A/Head of Collections and Major Projects; Ms Kylie Winkworth; and Dr Lindsay Sharp.

Listing of the 'Ultimo tramway powerhouse' on the State Heritage Register

- 3.62** In evidence to the committee, the future of the Ultimo site and its assembly of museum buildings was tied to questions surrounding the listing of part of the site on the State Heritage Register under the *Heritage Act 1977*.

³⁴⁶ Evidence, Mr Grant, 21 August 2020, p 17.

³⁴⁷ Evidence, Ms Judith Coombs, President, Australian Museum and Galleries Association (NSW Division), 29 July 2020, p 50.

³⁴⁸ Evidence, Dr Sharp, 21 August 2020, p 7.

³⁴⁹ Evidence, Dr Sharp, 21 August 2020, p 7.

³⁵⁰ See for example: Evidence, Mr Grant, 21 August 2020, p 24.

³⁵¹ Submission 79a, Australian Museums and Galleries Association (NSW Branch), p 1.

- 3.63** On 4 September 2020, as the committee's inquiry was still in progress, the 'Ultimo Power House' was listed on the State Heritage Register on the recommendation of the Heritage Council of NSW and at the direction of the then Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, the Hon Don Harwin.³⁵²
- 3.64** Mr Tim Smith OAM, Director of Heritage Operations at Heritage NSW, informed the committee that the listing encompasses the Turbine Hall, the Boiler House, the Switch House, the Engine House and the Office Building.³⁵³ According to his evidence, these elements – a subset of the wider Ultimo museum site – were considered by the Heritage Council of NSW as being the most significant in terms of telling the principal story of that place, being the advent of electricity generation to power Sydney's first tram network.³⁵⁴
- 3.65** Mr Frank Howarth AM PSM, Chair of the Heritage Council of NSW, advised the committee the Ultimo Powerhouse was nominated for listing on the State Heritage Register by the National Trust. The Trust lodged three separate nominations:
- in 2015, the Trust nominated 'the core site' comprising the buildings eventually listed on the State Heritage Register in September 2020
 - in 2019, the Trust nominated the Harwood Building for listing on the Register
 - in late 2019 or early 2020, the Trust submitted a nomination for the entire Powerhouse site at Ultimo.³⁵⁵
- 3.66** In relation to the Harwood Building, Mr Howarth said that the Heritage Council did indeed consider this building with a view to listing, but determined it did not meet the threshold for State heritage significance.³⁵⁶
- 3.67** In response to questioning about the Heritage Council's consideration of the wider values of the entire Ultimo site, Mr Smith emphasised that the 2015 nomination was 'only for those elements that ultimately were endorsed and gazetted' while noting the Council also looked at the wider values of the site as part of its due diligence.³⁵⁷ According to Mr Smith, the 2015 National Trust nomination concentrated on the engineering and historical significance of the core buildings and their functions in power generation, and did not frame up 'succinctly' the other values on the site such as social significance and attachment to the museum.³⁵⁸
- 3.68** Many inquiry participants familiar with the Ultimo Powerhouse took exception to the 2020 government-endorsed listing.

³⁵² Evidence, Mr Tim Smith OAM, Director, Heritage Operations, Heritage NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 8 October 2020, p 28.

³⁵³ Evidence, Mr Smith, 8 October 2020, p 29. For full inventory details, see: Heritage NSW, *State Heritage Inventory: Ultimo Power House*, <https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/ViewItem?itemId=5055576>.

³⁵⁴ Evidence, Mr Smith, 8 October 2020, p 28.

³⁵⁵ Evidence, Mr Frank Howarth AM PSM, Chair, Heritage Council of NSW, 8 October 2020, p 32. In its submission to the inquiry, the National Trust of Australia (NSW) indicated it nominated the Harwood Building for listing on the State Heritage Register on 27 March 2020.

³⁵⁶ Evidence, Mr Howarth, 8 October 2020, p 30.

³⁵⁷ Evidence, Mr Smith, 8 October 2020, p 29.

³⁵⁸ Evidence, Mr Smith, 8 October 2020, p 32.

- 3.69** Mr Lionel Glendenning, lead government architect and Architect of Record for the 1980s Powerhouse redevelopment, was particularly blunt in his assessment of what he referred to as this 'faux' State Heritage Register listing.³⁵⁹ Mr Glendenning charged Heritage NSW with changing the original National Trust nomination, commissioning a 'biased and fatally flawed' heritage assessment report and reaching a conclusion that was expedient for the government's agenda for the Ultimo site.³⁶⁰ He submitted that, after years of apparent inaction, the proposed listing was rushed through public exhibition to meet 'some undeclared government urgent planning approval agenda'.³⁶¹
- 3.70** Mr Glendenning took particular issue with the heritage assessment report commissioned in support of the proposed listing, a report entitled the 'Ultimo Tramway Power House' which he said does not exist as a known building on the site.³⁶² He questioned the expertise and credibility of the report's authors and also highlighted other perceived deficiencies, omissions and errors. He referred to their commentary as 'simplistic', 'obtuse', poorly referenced, inadequately researched and lacking a nuanced understanding of the site's values – suggesting that the report reads like a government press release.³⁶³
- 3.71** In evidence before the committee, Mr Glendenning observed that the 140 year history of the museum in the precinct and the significance of its collections were dismissed as irrelevant, and that '[t]wo brick walls became the focus of this weird, faux, Claytons heritage listing'.³⁶⁴
- 3.72** For Mr Glendenning, at the heart of the Powerhouse Museum is an 'extraordinary synergy' between the integrated museum buildings and the collection: 'one is the other – without either, it is diminished'.³⁶⁵ He urged the Heritage Council of NSW and NSW Government to reject the heritage assessment report and 'prepare a new submission for the museum buildings and collection immediately for listing as one of the legacies of the 1988 Bicentennial year and, our enduring legacy from an international, national and state cultural heritage and historical context'.³⁶⁶
- 3.73** Mr Glendenning was not alone in his assessment of the listing of the 'Ultimo tramway powerhouse' (later changed to the 'Ultimo Power House') on the State Heritage Register:
- Dr Lindsay Sharp argued that, contrary to the listing that was endorsed by the Heritage Council and government, there are six core heritage buildings at Ultimo: the boiler hall; the engine house; the switch house; the Harwood tram depot building; the power station; and the administrative building just north of the engine house. Through the government-endorsed listing, three of these core buildings have effectively been removed in terms of heritage.³⁶⁷

³⁵⁹ Evidence, Mr Glendenning, 21 August 2020, p 40.

³⁶⁰ Submission 66, Mr Lionel Glendenning, p 1.

³⁶¹ Submission 66, Mr Lionel Glendenning, p 3.

³⁶² Submission 66, Mr Lionel Glendenning, p 4.

³⁶³ Submission 66, Mr Lionel Glendenning, pp 4-6.

³⁶⁴ Evidence, Mr Glendenning, 21 August 2020, p 40.

³⁶⁵ Submission 66, Mr Lionel Glendenning, p 9.

³⁶⁶ Submission 66, Mr Lionel Glendenning, p 9.

³⁶⁷ Evidence, Dr Sharp, 21 August 2020, p 3.

- Ms Patricia Johnson, Co-convenor of the Save the Powerhouse Campaign, pointed to the Heritage NSW proposal for listing 'an institution that did not exist by the name they gave it' and surmised that by not using the word 'museum' in the listing, the government could avoid any commitment to considering the entire site as a respected and functioning museum.³⁶⁸ According to this inquiry participant, the intent was to list only the exterior shell of the Power Station building.³⁶⁹
- Mr Andrew Grant agreed the listing was framed in a way to focus on some select buildings isolated from their functional museum context, and that only the shell of the former Power House building would have protections under the Heritage Act.³⁷⁰
- Mr Bruce Dawbin of Australia ICOMOS expressed concerns about listing the 'Ultimo tramway powerhouse' in isolation from the rest of the Ultimo complex, and backed calls for a 'full and detailed assessment of the heritage values of the entire site and upgrading the listing nomination to include the entire Powerhouse Museum site'.³⁷¹
- Mr Ian Debenham OAM described the heritage assessment report as being 'dogged by errors and superficial analyses' and submitted that the misleading reference to the 'Ultimo Tramway Power House' limits the statutory heritage protections to the Turbine Hall, Boiler House and Switch House.³⁷² He argued that the listing should include the Harwood Building and acknowledge the museum aspect as an important part of the site's heritage, including consideration of the Wran Building and galleria.³⁷³ His evidence also highlighted the 'symbiotic' relationship between the museum buildings and the important collections they contain: 'one supports the interpretation of the other'.³⁷⁴
- Ms Jennifer Sanders expressed strong objection to the listing on similar grounds to those cited by Mr Glendenning and asserted that its very selective curtilage supports the government's plan to demolish and sell the buildings excluded from the listing. Ms Sanders also pointed to the factual deficiencies and lack of understanding in the accompanying heritage assessment which, in her view, underscored 'the absolute necessity of listing the Powerhouse Museum in its entirety'.³⁷⁵

3.74 Adding to this evidence, Professor David Miller argued that the combined value of the entire Powerhouse Museum site at Ultimo is so high, the whole museum, including the Galleria, Wran Building, Harwood Building and the steam collection should be listed on the State Heritage Register.³⁷⁶

³⁶⁸ Evidence, Ms Johnson, 21 August 2020, p 13.

³⁶⁹ Submission 53, Save the Powerhouse, p 11.

³⁷⁰ Evidence, Mr Grant, 21 August 2020, pp 20 and 21.

³⁷¹ Evidence, Mr Dawbin, 29 July 2020, p 52.

³⁷² Submission 100, Mr Ian Debenham OAM, p 1.

³⁷³ Submission 100, Mr Ian Debenham OAM, p 1.

³⁷⁴ Submission 100, Mr Ian Debenham OAM, p 1.

³⁷⁵ Submission 74, Ms Jennifer Sanders, p 3.

³⁷⁶ Submission 93, Professor David Miller, p 2.

Staff impacts

- 3.75** Evidence from the Public Service Association of NSW detailed the impacts on staff as a result of the government's evolving plans for the Powerhouse Museum. Indeed, evidence from Mr Troy Wright, Assistant General Secretary, suggested that the organisation is in disarray, subject to a poorly managed transition with little certainty for workers, alongside a simultaneous expansion of the managerial class.³⁷⁷
- 3.76** Noting the slated closure of the Ultimo site for renewal in December 2023, Mr Wright said many of their members employed at Ultimo are still 'very much in the dark as to who will be doing what at which site and when'.³⁷⁸ He explained:
- What we have not seen—we have asked for it since the announcement by the Government in June 2020 that Ultimo would stay—is some sort of project plan about how many people will be at Ultimo, what will be happening at Ultimo, how many people will be at Parramatta, how many people will be at Castle Hill, where will they be in the intervening periods when each of the centres is either being demolished and reinvigorated or built completely, in the case of Parramatta. Our members are not clear about that.³⁷⁹
- 3.77** According to Mr Wright, the many questions raised by the 4 July announcement remain unanswered, and this uncertainty is having an impact on staff morale. He referred to a prevailing 'culture of anxiety' as the project looms closer and staff remain uninformed about what the future holds.³⁸⁰ In particular, Mr Wright outlined the uncertainty around where staff will be located if that means a long commute to another facility:
- You cannot underestimate the significance if they are going to work at Castle Hill for a couple of years and they have worked at Ultimo and they live near Ultimo. You cannot underestimate the impact that is going to have on their lives. That is one small part of that anxiety.³⁸¹
- 3.78** As noted in Chapter 1, the Parramatta facility is intended as the museum's flagship and the majority of staff will be based there.³⁸²
- 3.79** In relation to the museum's establishment and workforce management, Mr Wright described this as proceeding in two very different directions. On one hand, he said business-as-usual staff numbers were dwindling through attrition, and vacant positions were not being backfilled because of a pending restructure.³⁸³

³⁷⁷ Evidence, Mr Wright, 17 March 2022, p 26.

³⁷⁸ Evidence, Mr Wright, 17 March 2022, p 26.

³⁷⁹ Evidence, Mr Wright, 17 March 2022, pp 26-27.

³⁸⁰ Evidence, Mr Wright, 17 March 2022, p 30. See also: Evidence, Mr Wright, 29 July 2020, p 46.

³⁸¹ Evidence, Mr Wright, 17 March 2022, p 30.

³⁸² Evidence, Ms Havilah, 29 July 2020, p 33.

³⁸³ Evidence, Mr Wright, 17 March 2022, p 27.

3.80 On the other hand, he observed the organisation was becoming increasingly top heavy through a significant growth in the number of Directors and Managers, including temporary managers that are not being appointed through competitive merit selection.³⁸⁴ Mr Wright told the committee that the majority of these roles are not in the museum's current structure and while ostensibly temporary, are remaining in place for longer than 12 months.³⁸⁵

3.81 Dr Des Griffin, former Director of the Australian Museum, was asked for his reflections on staff feedback from the museum's People Matters Employment Survey. For Dr Griffin, the results were a sign there are 'problems' that need to be addressed, and they underscored the importance of communication and staff engagement through change management processes:

The key issues in any organisation are the way in which the staff are fully engaged in understanding the processes for making decisions and how to work together productively and have strong support for leadership of the museum. The inquiry you mentioned, the questions are entirely appropriate and reveal a situation which, as you possibly suggest, are unsatisfactory. There are problems there, demonstrated also by, I think, a fairly high turnover of staff. If you look at the very best museums around the world, as I have, admittedly a small sample but the characteristics are cohesive leadership and visitor-focused public programming.³⁸⁶

3.82 Other evidence pointed to concern about the loss of highly skilled and specialised staff from the museum as a direct result of the government's purported mismanagement. Ms Jennifer Sanders spoke of a 'steady and accelerating drain of expertise out of the museum' saying:

People who are highly skilled understand not just the knowledge bank but also the nuts and bolts of how you move and handle these important objects—so conservation, registration staff have been so frustrated and disturbed at what is happening that there has been a drain. Those staff that are left who are from a museum profession—because there are many staff coming in now, particularly at a senior level, who have not worked in a museum before.³⁸⁷

3.83 The committee was advised that of the full time staff at the establishment when the museum opened, roughly 160 remain.³⁸⁸

Castle Hill Museums Discovery Centre

3.84 Another component of the Powerhouse project is the development of a new collection storage facility at the Museums Discovery Centre at Castle Hill. According to the museum's Board of Trustees, the new storage facility will increase the facility's storage capacity and 'activate the site through enhanced curatorial, restoration and exhibition production activities'.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁴ Evidence, Mr Wright, 17 March 2022, p 28.

³⁸⁵ Evidence, Mr Wright, 17 March 2022, p 29.

³⁸⁶ Evidence, Dr Des Griffin, private citizen, 21 August 2020, p 37.

³⁸⁷ Evidence, Ms Sanders, 21 August 2020, p 8.

³⁸⁸ Evidence, Dr Sharp, 21 August 2020, p 8.

³⁸⁹ Submission 87, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Board of Trustees, p 7.

- 3.85** It is envisaged to host up to 50 museum staff as well as a larger number of visitors to the site to view and engage with the museum's collection. It is proposed to include spaces that will support education programs, tours, events, gatherings and meetings of the local community.³⁹⁰
- 3.86** The business case for the upgrade and expansion of the Museums Discovery Centre was included in the broader 2018 business case for the Powerhouse Parramatta.³⁹¹
- 3.87** This component of the project was subject to its own State Significant Development Application under State planning laws, which was approved on 23 April 2021.³⁹² This sought approval for the construction of a new building of 8,135 square metres – known as 'Building J' – to meet the museum's needs for additional storage and other operational requirements.³⁹³ Building J is to be located on a site adjacent to the existing Museums Discovery Centre. This site is currently occupied by TAFE NSW.³⁹⁴
- 3.88** The Environmental Impact Statement described the primary objective of the proposed development as being to 'provide expanded facilities to accommodate the Powerhouse collections including spaces for storage, conservation, research and display and spaces to facilitate increased public access to the collection through education, public programs, workshops, talks, exhibitions and events'.³⁹⁵
- 3.89** While the committee received limited evidence on this component of the project, a sample of stakeholder views are summarised below:
- Mr Andrew Grant noted that, based on the SEARS document, none of the facilities in the workshop of the Harwood Building will be replaced or replicated in Building J³⁹⁶
 - Ms Kylie Winkworth raised similar concerns, noting the Harwood building's large object conservation and exhibition preparation workshops will no longer be replicated in Building J. She indicated that this was due to development and cost constraints, saying 'it is shocking that the Powerhouse Museum's world's best practice collection facilities are being demolished and not replaced like-for-like'.³⁹⁷
 - Dr Lindsay Sharp also considered this a loss of the essential facilities currently in the Harwood Building, saying they will not be replicated at Castle Hill.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁰ Submission 87, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Board of Trustees, p 7.

³⁹¹ Evidence, Ms Havilah, 8 October 2020, p 8.

³⁹² NSW Government, *NSW planning portal: State significant development: Expansion of the Museums Discovery Centre* [no date], <https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/expansion-museums-discovery-centre>.

³⁹³ Milestone Town Planning, *Environmental Impact Statement: Museums discovery centre expansion* (September 2020), p 7.

³⁹⁴ Milestone Town Planning, *Environmental Impact Statement: Museums discovery centre expansion* (September 2020), p 7.

³⁹⁵ Milestone Town Planning, *Environmental Impact Statement: Museums discovery centre expansion* (September 2020), p 7.

³⁹⁶ Submission 119a, Mr Andrew Grant, p 2.

³⁹⁷ Submission 137, Ms Kylie Winkworth, p 5.

³⁹⁸ Evidence, Dr Sharp, 21 August 2020, p 3.

- 3.90** At its final hearing on 17 March 2022, the committee heard that Building J was under construction.³⁹⁹

Committee comment

- 3.91** Based on evidence to this inquiry, the committee is concerned that the collections to remain at Ultimo will be a hotchpotch of fashion items alongside large industrial and transport items which cannot be moved to another facility. From a public programming perspective, this appears confused and incongruous.
- 3.92** As we heard in evidence from a number of museum curators and other experts, the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo, as it has operated since the 1980s, presents an integrated and thematically coherent narrative about innovation and ingenuity in our industrial past as well as other society-changing advancements across applied arts and sciences. Its home in historic buildings associated with electricity generation and Sydney's first intra-urban mass transit system cannot be underestimated: place lends meaning and significance to collections, and collections lend meaning and significance to place. As a museum of science and technology, it has a clear identity. In the committee's view, this will be undermined by the future museum envisioned by the NSW Government, which appears to be primarily a fashion museum with a few very large industrial and transport objects in the mix.
- 3.93** The committee notes the evidence we received about the impact of breaking up the museum's collections. Isolating the Boulton and Watt Steam Engine, Locomotive No. 1 and Catalina Flying Boat at Ultimo devoid of their broader context will diminish the ability of audiences to interpret those items and appreciate their significance as part of a broader narrative about the advent of steam technology and motive power. Breaking up these collections will impact significantly on the integrity of their story-telling contexts.

Finding 4

That the NSW Government's plan to break up the museum's collections and strip items of context will diminish their significance as collections and adversely impact their interpretation.

- 3.94** In the committee's view, the Harwood Building is an indispensable element of the museum, both from a historical and functional perspective. It is clear that the co-location of storage and exhibition spaces provides efficiencies and other curatorial benefits. The committee does not accept that the building has such significant limitations or issues that would warrant it to not be retained at Ultimo in its current recognisable form.

³⁹⁹ Evidence, Mr Collins, 17 March 2022, p 13.

Recommendation 6

That the NSW Government, as part of the renewal of the Ultimo museum, commit to:

- retaining the Harwood Building in its current form with museum-related, non-commercial uses, and
 - investigate the feasibility of adapting its storage spaces to better facilitate public access to collections in 'display storage' conditions.
-

3.95 The committee has serious reservations about the government-endorsed listing of the 'Ultimo Power House' on the State Heritage Register in September 2020. We note evidence suggesting other agendas were at play in progressing the listing for the 'core buildings' only, when the same nominator had lodged a nomination for the entire Powerhouse Museum site at Ultimo.

3.96 The heritage assessment report that informed the government-endorsed listing was clearly wanting on a number of grounds. It concerns us to hear that there was little consideration of the museum's highly significant collections – nor any consideration of attachments to place derived from the use of the buildings over many decades to tell stories of our industrial past. The listing appears to amount to little more than the exterior walls of a few select buildings in isolation from their uses and functions as one of the most respected science and technology museums in the world. This is unacceptable, and we call on the NSW Government to progress, on a priority basis, the National Trust nomination to list the *entire* Ultimo site on the State Heritage Register.

Recommendation 7

That the NSW Government progress, on a priority basis, the National Trust of Australia nomination to list the entire Ultimo site on the State Heritage Register and make representations to the Heritage Council of NSW to flag this as a government priority.

Chapter 4 Government support for regional galleries and museums

This final chapter focuses on museums and galleries in regional NSW and the challenges facing the sector, including its reliance on volunteers and the impact of recent natural disasters and COVID-19. The chapter then explores the adequacy of funding for regional museums and galleries, from both state and local government. It then turns to opportunities for sector reform, particularly related to funding processes and decisions and the need for a statewide museums and galleries strategy. Finally, the chapter considers equity of access to collections, including collection digitisation and inter-gallery and inter-museum loans.

Overview of the museums and galleries sector

- 4.1 There are a large number of museums and galleries in New South Wales. According to the 2018 Museums and Galleries of NSW Sector Consensus, a survey of the sector, there are 524 museums, galleries and Aboriginal cultural centres. This includes 337 community run and managed museums, 58 public and regional galleries, 58 public and regional museums, 39 community run and managed galleries and artist run initiatives, and 32 Aboriginal cultural centres.⁴⁰⁰ Mr Michael Rolfe, Chief Executive Officer, Museums and Galleries of NSW, estimated that two-thirds of museums, galleries and cultural centres in New South Wales are in regional areas.⁴⁰¹
- 4.2 In 2018, museums and galleries outside the Sydney metropolitan area conducted 2,955 exhibitions and 15,312 events and public programs.⁴⁰² The economic output generated by galleries and museums in New South Wales has been valued at \$843 million.⁴⁰³
- 4.3 The total contribution of the arts, screen and cultural sectors to New South Wales' gross state product was valued at \$16.4 billion in 2016-17. According to the NSW Government, every dollar expended annually in New South Wales on arts, screen and culture generates a return of \$1.88 to the New South Wales economy.⁴⁰⁴
- 4.4 Museums and galleries in regional New South Wales can be broadly divided into those that are community-run and those that are run by local councils. Community-run museums and galleries tend to be staffed by volunteers and generally receive lower funding. Local council run museums and galleries often have a small number of paid staff.⁴⁰⁵
- 4.5 Museums and galleries are an important driver of tourism to regional New South Wales. Arts Mid North Coast, the peak regional body for arts and cultural development across the Mid North Coast region of New South Wales, cited research by the World Tourism Organisation

⁴⁰⁰ Submission 22, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 4.

⁴⁰¹ Evidence, Mr Michael Rolfe, Chief Executive Officer, Museums and Galleries of NSW, 2 September 2020, p 16.

⁴⁰² Submission 22, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 4.

⁴⁰³ Submission 72, Public Service Association of NSW, p 2.

⁴⁰⁴ Submission 142, NSW Government, p 17.

⁴⁰⁵ Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 3.

estimating that more than 50 per cent of global tourism is motivated by a desire to experience culture and heritage.⁴⁰⁶

- 4.6** According to the NSW Government, in 2019, there were 9.7 million culture and heritage visitors to New South Wales. These visitors stayed 67.7 million nights and contributed \$11.4 billion to the New South Wales economy.⁴⁰⁷ The 2018 Museums and Galleries of NSW Sector Census reported that in 2017, museums and galleries received more than 5.5 million visitors, of which three million visited country areas.⁴⁰⁸
- 4.7** Cultural and heritage tourism in regional New South Wales is predominantly driven by the domestic market.⁴⁰⁹ Research indicates that domestic culture and heritage tourists tend to spend more money per night than international tourists.⁴¹⁰
- 4.8** Some participants to this inquiry specifically highlighted the importance of museums and galleries in attracting tourists to regional areas.⁴¹¹ For example, Ms Sarah Ruberto, Business Manager, Marketing, Events & Culture, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, told the committee that 'for Goulburn, heritage and cultural tourism is the main attractor of people to our destination'.⁴¹² Ms Niomi Sands, Regional Gallery Director, Clarence Valley Council, added that in the Clarence Valley, regional museums and galleries are 'really important' and 'provide an economic benefit for tourism within the villages across the Clarence'.⁴¹³

Challenges facing regional museums and galleries

- 4.9** Separate to funding related concerns, participants to this inquiry identified several key challenges facing regional museums and galleries in New South Wales. These include the reliance on volunteers, and the impact of recent bushfires, droughts and floods. The committee also heard how COVID-19 has also impacted the sector.

Reliance on volunteers

- 4.10** Several inquiry participants considered the lack of paid staff and consequent reliance on volunteers as a key challenge for regional museums and galleries. In the Museums and Galleries of NSW 2018 Sector Census, over half of all museums, galleries and cultural centres reported that they rely solely on volunteers. According to Museums and Galleries of NSW, in 2017, 8,629

⁴⁰⁶ Submission 82, Arts Mid North Coast, p 5.

⁴⁰⁷ Submission 142, NSW Government, p 20.

⁴⁰⁸ Submission 22, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 4.

⁴⁰⁹ Submission 142, NSW Government, p 16.

⁴¹⁰ Submission 82, Arts Mid North Coast, p 5.

⁴¹¹ Evidence, Ms Sarah Ruberto, Business Manager, Marketing, Events & Culture, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, 2 September 2020, p 33; Evidence, Ms Niomi Sands, Regional Gallery Director, Clarence Valley Council, 2 September 2020, p 33; Evidence, Mr Renzo Benedet, President and Secretary, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, 2 September 2020, p 35.

⁴¹² Evidence, Ms Ruberto, 2 September 2020, p 33.

⁴¹³ Evidence, Ms Sands, 2 September 2020, p 33.

active volunteers gave almost five million hours to museums and galleries in New South Wales, at a value of over \$100 million.⁴¹⁴

- 4.11** While museums and galleries participating in this inquiry emphasised their appreciation for volunteers, it was noted that they are not necessarily a substitute for paid professional staff. Ms Debbie Sommers, Volunteer Curator for Port Macquarie Museum, highlighted that volunteers can join and leave at will which, in her view, presents challenges in consistent management and long-term planning.⁴¹⁵
- 4.12** Local Government NSW noted that volunteers often lack skills in writing funding applications and, as a result, applications by organisations which rely solely on volunteers may be less competitive than those written by organisations with paid professional staff.⁴¹⁶
- 4.13** The committee also heard concerns about diminishing numbers of volunteers in regional New South Wales. Museums and Galleries of NSW outlined drivers of this, including COVID-19, volunteer burnout, volunteers relocating to larger communities to access increasingly centralised retail, health services and care services, and ageing rural and regional populations.⁴¹⁷
- 4.14** Mr Michael Rolfe, Chief Executive Officer of Museums and Galleries NSW, spoke of how COVID-19 had highlighted the critical role of volunteers in the museums and galleries sector – 'the extraordinary estimated \$100 million per annum contribution of volunteers right across our sector' – and how this was at risk of being 'severely diminished'.⁴¹⁸ Museums and Galleries NSW expressed a concern that losing volunteers would lead to 'a loss of association and connection between local stories, cultural knowledge and collections'.⁴¹⁹
- 4.15** Some of the challenges volunteer-dependent museums face were detailed in evidence from the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, a community run museum with an extensive collection of historical firearms and munitions. This museum characterised volunteering as a 'universal need' right across the community-operated museum sector and highlighted the largely in-kind benefits they offer to attract and recruit volunteers to the museum:

Volunteering is perhaps the one universal need across volunteer-based museums. It is a major risk to museums, especially those in regions. We do not have the luxury of paid staff like the taxpayer funded museums. The [Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum] is always seeking volunteers. We offer training and development across an array of roles, thus adding to the capability and competencies of the individual. We also pay base travel costs in some cases where volunteers are required to travel some distance from home to the museum.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁴ Submission 22, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 4.

⁴¹⁵ Evidence, Ms Debbie Sommers, Volunteer Curator, Port Macquarie Museum, 2 September 2020, p 42.

⁴¹⁶ Submission 27, Local Government NSW, p 7.

⁴¹⁷ Submission 22, Museums and Galleries of NSW, pp 5–6.

⁴¹⁸ Evidence, Mr Rolfe, 2 September 2020, p 12.

⁴¹⁹ Submission 22, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 6.

⁴²⁰ Submission 21, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, p 12.

- 4.16** In explaining where the problems might lie, the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum pointed to the finite pool of volunteers that many museums must draw from, the general lack of young people within that pool and the largely non-existent educational or career development pathways for volunteers in the museum sector:

... we are one of many museums doing this. We are all 'fishing in the same pond'. There does need [to be] a new approach to this, especially in bringing through younger people who are willing to learn. Relying on the 'older brigade' for volunteering is not sustainable. But there is little avenue for volunteers in the museum sector (in regions) to gain educational value. The cost of external training is prohibitive.⁴²¹

- 4.17** To address this shortage, the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum proposed that the government develop learning pathways through tertiary training institutions specifically for museum volunteers, which would result in a formal statement of attainment:

Develop learning pathways for volunteers leading to a Statement of Attainment training and new skills. Museums are not Registered Training Organisations but having pathways, through tertiary training institutions which can help develop skills would be desirable, especially if there were training materials which could be made available to museums for their review and implementation.⁴²²

- 4.18** Similarly, Arts Mid North Coast argued that the government should encourage the employment of trained curators in rural and regional New South Wales, suggesting that regional museum networks could be created as a base for training and development.⁴²³

Bushfires, droughts and floods

- 4.19** Several inquiry participants noted the severe impacts of consecutive droughts, bushfires and floods on regional New South Wales, including the museum and gallery sector.

- 4.20** The NSW Government, for instance, drew the committee's attention to the impacts of the drought that began to ease in certain parts of the state in May 2020 as well as the bushfires of 2019-2020.⁴²⁴ According to the NSW Government, these events had a serious impact on many regional museums and galleries, with some of them losing significant income through cancelled activities and exhibitions and drops in visitation during the peak tourism period.⁴²⁵

- 4.21** Local Government NSW submitted that droughts and fires in New South Wales, as well as COVID-19, have exacerbated the strain that the local government sector was already experiencing as a result of rate pegging:

⁴²¹ Submission 21, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, p 12.

⁴²² Submission 21, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, p 13.

⁴²³ Submission 82, Arts Mid North Coast, p 3.

⁴²⁴ NSW Department of Primary Industries, Climate: NSW seasonal updates, <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/dpi/climate/seasonal-conditions-and-drought/nsw-state-seasonal-update>

⁴²⁵ Submission 142, NSW Government, p 17.

Increasing demands and rate pegging have impacted local government resources and revenue streams over the last 10 years. Cost shifting from State and Federal governments has also had an impact on service provision. With current external factors including the impact of drought, fires and COVID-19, further strain will be placed on local government's limited resources and revenue.⁴²⁶

- 4.22** Ms Sarah Ruberto, Business Manager, Marketing, Events & Culture, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, noted that these events 'have highlighted the risks in the lack of disaster preparedness across the state for the arts, which lack funding to address this need'.⁴²⁷ Local Government NSW also identified a need for operational funding for museums and cultural institutions to increase their environmental sustainability.⁴²⁸
- 4.23** In response to these challenges, the NSW Government reported that it had implemented several relief measures, including additional funding, to the arts and cultural sector.⁴²⁹

COVID-19

- 4.24** With the COVID-19 pandemic commencing shortly after this inquiry began on 27 February 2020, stakeholders outlined concerns about the significant impact of the pandemic on the museum and gallery sector.
- 4.25** The committee heard that COVID-19 had multiple critical impacts on regional museums and galleries. Lockdowns and restrictions on travel led to lower visitor numbers, reducing income from admission and exhibition fees.⁴³⁰ The Public Service Association submitted:

The advent of the COVID19 pandemic requires a rethink about how these institutions are funded with COVID19 threatening up to \$91 million in annual funding, with funding from non-government sources such as box office, sales, services, and sponsorship potentially paused with a high likelihood of a slow recovery post resumption of operations.⁴³¹

- 4.26** Participants also noted that COVID-19 had led to a reduction in staff and volunteers at museums and galleries.⁴³² Mr Michael Rolfe, Chief Executive Officer, Museums and Galleries of NSW, said his organisation was predicting a 'significant loss' in volunteer numbers.⁴³³ The Public Service Association of NSW was also concerned that the reduction in staff and volunteers would mean 'years of knowledge' could be lost.⁴³⁴

⁴²⁶ Submission 27, Local Government NSW, p 13.

⁴²⁷ Evidence, Ms Ruberto, 2 September 2020, p 24.

⁴²⁸ Submission 27, Local Government NSW, p 6.

⁴²⁹ Submission 142, NSW Government, p 17.

⁴³⁰ Submission 72, Public Service Association of NSW, p 2; Submission 82, Arts Mid North Coast, p 3.

⁴³¹ Submission 72, Public Service Association of NSW, p 2.

⁴³² Submission 72, Public Service Association of NSW, p 2; Evidence, Mr Rolfe, 2 September 2020, pp 12, 20-21.

⁴³³ Evidence, Mr Rolfe, 2 September 2020, p 21.

⁴³⁴ Submission 72, Public Service Association of NSW, p 2.

- 4.27** Some participants suggested ways in which the impacts of COVID-19 could be ameliorated. Several stakeholders, including Museums and Galleries of NSW, Local Government NSW and Lake Macquarie City Council, recommended that the NSW Government should provide additional funding to museums and galleries.⁴³⁵ For example, Local Government NSW submitted:

We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the cultural sector (and others) and expect that governments at all levels will need to look at what policy levers can be used to support the sector's recovery. It is important that this work look not only at how the sector can recover, but also how the sector can be re-established to become more innovative, agile and resilient to future crises. This will largely depend on available funding to enable transformation of business models, continued delivery of excellence, employment and career development opportunities.⁴³⁶

- 4.28** Mr Rolfe indicated there may be a need for a 'collection rescue program to be undertaken where significant objects are salvaged, secured and cared for', as there was a risk that smaller museums and galleries would close without sufficient volunteers or staff.⁴³⁷
- 4.29** Ms Debbie Sommers, Volunteer Curator, Port Macquarie Museum, stated that there should be advisory services to assist organisations to adapt to ongoing changes:

Many museums in our region have also opened, but there are also a number of museums within our region and beyond that are really struggling with how they are going to cope with COVID, so it is a concern. Some of them probably need a hand in navigating what needs to be done. It is alright for me to send them a link to the Health department advice and M&G NSW's and M&G Queensland's guidelines, but there are some museums out there who need you to tell them how to do it in their situation.⁴³⁸

Adequacy of funding for regional museums and galleries

- 4.30** Diminishing funding for regional museums and galleries was also a concern of stakeholders. The Public Service Association of NSW and the Australian Museums and Galleries Association reported that the funding for regional museums and galleries, particularly from the NSW Government, had decreased over recent years.⁴³⁹ This was despite an increase in the number of visitors received by these organisations.⁴⁴⁰ They also reported that some museums and galleries were required to retrench staff, increase admission fees, shorten opening hours, or reduce the number of exhibitions as a result.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁵ Submission 22, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 2; Submission 27, Local Government NSW, pp 6–8; Submission 40, Lake Macquarie City Council, p 1.

⁴³⁶ Submission 27, Local Government NSW, p 6.

⁴³⁷ Evidence, Mr Rolfe, 2 September 2020, p 21.

⁴³⁸ Evidence, Ms Sommers, 2 September 2020, p 48.

⁴³⁹ Submission 72, Public Service Association of NSW, p 17; Submission 79, Australian Museums and Galleries Association, p 6.

⁴⁴⁰ Submission 72, Public Service Association of NSW, p 11; Evidence, Mr Paul Brinkman, President, Regional and Public Galleries NSW, 2 September 2020, p 12.

⁴⁴¹ Submission 72, Public Service Association of NSW, p 18; Submission 79, Australian Museums and Galleries Association, p 6; Answers to questions on notice, Cr Linda Scott, President, Local Government NSW, 23 September 2020, p 1.

- 4.31** Mr Paul Brinkman, President, Regional and Public Galleries NSW, commented that in some cases, local governments have increased their financial support of museums and galleries to make up for the shortfall in state government funding:

While local governments are increasingly doing the heavy lifting in this space, accounting for more than 46 per cent of the running costs of the sector, the State Government's commitment has dropped to 13 per cent.⁴⁴²

- 4.32** However, there was also evidence that many local governments are also facing decreasing funding, which may impact their ability to continue to support regional museums and galleries.⁴⁴³

Current funding arrangements

- 4.33** The main sources of state government funding for regional museums and galleries include grants from Create NSW, including those through the NSW Government Regional Cultural Fund; and grants from Museums and Galleries of NSW. Additionally, the ClubGRANTS program administered by Liquor & Gaming NSW allocates a portion of funds to infrastructure projects in arts and culture.⁴⁴⁴ Many museums and galleries also receive local government funding.

- 4.34** According to Local Government NSW, in 2017-18, the NSW Government spent \$79.15 per capita on arts and culture, which it reported was the lowest of all the Australian states.⁴⁴⁵ By contrast, the NSW Government reported that its funding for art museums, other museums and cultural heritage specifically was higher than Victoria and Queensland, based on per capita spending in New South Wales (\$31.04).⁴⁴⁶

- 4.35** Several inquiry participants argued that, generally, there is a need for additional funding for regional museums and galleries in New South Wales.⁴⁴⁷ Some, including Local Government NSW and the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, claimed that current funding is weighed too heavily in favour of metropolitan museums at the expense of regional institutions.⁴⁴⁸ Engineers Australia (Sydney Division) said the Powerhouse relocation demonstrated:

⁴⁴² Evidence, Mr Brinkman, 2 September 2020, p 12. See also Evidence, Cr Linda Scott, President, Local Government NSW, 2 September 2020, p 15.

⁴⁴³ Evidence, Ms Ruberto, 2 September 2020, p 24; Submission 27, Local Government NSW, p 13.

⁴⁴⁴ Answers to questions on notice, Mr Renzo Benedet, President and Secretary, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, 28 September 2020, p 3.

⁴⁴⁵ Submission 27, Local Government NSW, p 15.

⁴⁴⁶ Submission 142, NSW Government, pp 15–16.

⁴⁴⁷ Evidence, Ms Sommers, 2 September 2020, pp 38–39; Submission 22, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 3; Submission 43, Clarence Valley Council, p 2; Submission 82, Arts Mid North Coast, p 3; Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, pp 4–6.

⁴⁴⁸ Submission 27, Local Government NSW, p 8; Submission 21, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, pp 1, 12.

... an extreme example of recent policy whereby a huge amount is to be spent in one part of Sydney focussing on the entertainment sector while regional communities, the museum sector in general, and technology museums in particular, are neglected.⁴⁴⁹

The Arts and Cultural Funding Program

- 4.36** The Arts and Cultural Funding Program administered by Create NSW is the 'key mechanism' by which the NSW Government supports the regional museums and galleries sector.⁴⁵⁰ The NSW Government reported that in 2019-20, the total budget for the program was \$61 million. Of this, funding for galleries and museums was approximately \$10 million, and funding for galleries and museums in regional New South Wales was \$2.79 million.⁴⁵¹
- 4.37** The Arts and Cultural Funding Program was reformed in 2019. There are now two funding rounds per year, with three categories available: multi-year commitments, open grants rounds, and the leadership program.⁴⁵² The 2019 reforms also introduced Artform Advisory Boards to assess applications, with separate expert panels for Museums and History and the Visual Arts.⁴⁵³ Museums and Galleries of NSW reported that the 2019 reforms 'were favourably received by the sector'.⁴⁵⁴
- 4.38** Port Macquarie Museum told this inquiry that it applied unsuccessfully for a Create NSW grant in 2018-19 (prior to the reforms). The feedback it received indicated that there was a 4.6 per cent application success rate.⁴⁵⁵ The NSW Government reported that in 2018-19, a total of \$394,001 was provided in funding under Create NSW's Regional Partnership category.⁴⁵⁶
- 4.39** Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum was critical of Create NSW, arguing that it focusses too heavily on performing and visual arts.⁴⁵⁷ Its President and Secretary, Mr Renzo Benedet, commented:

I think Create NSW is more about the arts part of the equation. I think the museum part of the equation there is a big hole because there is a hole in the knowledge that they have. How can they promote something that they know very little about? That is my view on that.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁴⁹ Submission 36, Engineers Australia (Sydney Division), p 3.

⁴⁵⁰ Submission 142, NSW Government, p 10.

⁴⁵¹ Answers to questions on notice, Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet and Ms Annette Pitman, Head of Create Infrastructure, Create NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 6 October 2020, p 7.

⁴⁵² Submission 142, NSW Government, p 10.

⁴⁵³ Submission 142, NSW Government, p 10; Submission 22, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 3.

⁴⁵⁴ Submission 22, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 3.

⁴⁵⁵ Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 4.

⁴⁵⁶ Answers to questions on notice, Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet and Ms Annette Pitman, Head of Create Infrastructure, Create NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 6 October 2020, p 8.

⁴⁵⁷ Evidence, Ms Donna White, Vice President and Custodian, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, 2 September 2020, p 50; Evidence, Mr Benedet, 2 September 2020, p 50.

⁴⁵⁸ Evidence, Mr Benedet, 2 September 2020, p 50.

The Regional Cultural Fund

- 4.40** The Regional Cultural Fund, administered by Create NSW, is another key source of funding for regional museums and galleries. Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet, advised the inquiry that in 2018, the Regional Cultural Fund distributed \$42 million to 42 museums and galleries in New South Wales.⁴⁵⁹
- 4.41** Having previously received funding through this program, Port Macquarie Museum characterised the Regional Cultural Fund as an 'an exciting and welcomed program for regional NSW' which 'provided a much needed boost to regional cultural projects'.⁴⁶⁰ Similarly, Ms Niomi Sands, Regional Gallery Director, Clarence Valley Council, noted that 'we were really fortunate in being successful with our Regional Cultural Fund grant'.⁴⁶¹
- 4.42** The most recent round of the Regional Cultural Fund grant program closed on 29 January 2021. A further round has not been announced.⁴⁶² Ms Debbie Sommers, Volunteer Curator, Port Macquarie Museum, told the committee:

In regards to infrastructure grants—and the Regional Cultural Fund was a fantastic initiative—the problem is now, though, where to next? There is not another bucket of money.⁴⁶³

Museums and Galleries of NSW grants

- 4.43** Museums and Galleries of NSW provides funding to regional museums and galleries as devolved grants from Create NSW.⁴⁶⁴ In 2019-2020, Create NSW provided approximately \$1.3 million to Museums and Galleries of NSW and the Royal Australian Historical Society. Of this, \$355,000 was administered to the volunteer museum and history sector.⁴⁶⁵
- 4.44** Museums and Galleries of NSW grants are capped at \$2,000 for project based grants and \$7,500 for development and skills based grants.⁴⁶⁶ Museums are only able to receive one grant per year and according to the Port Macquarie Museum, there has not been any changes to the grant scheme in five years.⁴⁶⁷
- 4.45** The Port Macquarie Museum argued that this level of funding is insufficient:

In 2018 the M&G NSW total grants program for community run and managed museums amounted to \$79,400. The program funded 37 museum projects, an average of \$2,145 per project. If we divide the total funding by the number of volunteer

⁴⁵⁹ Evidence, Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2 September 2020, p 3.

⁴⁶⁰ Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 6.

⁴⁶¹ Evidence, Ms Sands, 2 September 2020, p 31.

⁴⁶² Create NSW, *Regional Cultural Fund*, <https://www.create.nsw.gov.au/create-infrastructure/regional-cultural-fund-2/>

⁴⁶³ Evidence, Ms Sommers, 2 September 2020, p 38.

⁴⁶⁴ Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 4.

⁴⁶⁵ Submission 142, NSW Government, p 10.

⁴⁶⁶ Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 4.

⁴⁶⁷ Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 4.

managed community museums the amount available to each museum would be \$235. This amount would fund less than one month of our building insurance costs, and less than one month's electricity costs.⁴⁶⁸

- 4.46** Museums and Galleries of NSW also provides expert advice and services to the museum sector, which includes fellowships, volunteer placements and professional training. In 2019-20, the NSW Government provided \$1.195 million to carry out these services.⁴⁶⁹

Local government funding

- 4.47** Local Government NSW noted that local governments in New South Wales invest \$520 million in the arts, screen and culture sectors each year.⁴⁷⁰

- 4.48** Several inquiry participants highlighted the increased reliance on local government to fund regional galleries and museums.⁴⁷¹ Cr Linda Scott, President, Local Government NSW, reported that of the 377 art, museum and heritage organisations in New South Wales surveyed in 2018, 75 per cent said that local government was their primary source of funding. Port Macquarie Museum remarked that 'the current management and resourcing of museums in regional NSW is left primarily to local government' and there is 'an assumption that local government will resource community owned museums and collections'.⁴⁷²

- 4.49** The committee heard that this reliance means that funding for museums and galleries can depend on the local council area in which a museum or gallery is situated. For example, Port Macquarie Museum commented that:

There is also a Create NSW expectation that projects and indeed program funding will have some level of Local Government support, this again excludes or makes it difficult for some of us to achieve, particularly where Councils do not wish to fund or resource community owned cultural collections and heritage infrastructure. In the case of our Council, they tend to view any notion that Council's need to make cash contributions to community cultural projects as yet another form of cost shifting from the State government to local government.⁴⁷³

- 4.50** Another challenge highlighted in evidence to the committee was the broader financial pressures local councils face and the implication this has on museums and galleries that rely on local government funding. According to Regional and Public Galleries New South Wales Inc, between 1996 and 2018 local government experienced a 44 per cent decrease in financial assistance grants and a 340 per cent increase in expenditure.⁴⁷⁴ Cr Scott also noted that local

⁴⁶⁸ Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 4.

⁴⁶⁹ Answers to questions on notice, Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet and Ms Annette Pitman, Head of Create Infrastructure, Create NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 6 October 2020, p 8.

⁴⁷⁰ Submission 23, Regional and Public Galleries New South Wales Inc, p 2; Submission 27, Local Government NSW, p 3.

⁴⁷¹ Evidence, Mr Brinkman, 2 September 2020, p 12; Evidence, Cr Scott, 2 September 2020, p 15.

⁴⁷² Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, pp 1, 5.

⁴⁷³ Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, pp 5–6.

⁴⁷⁴ Submission 23, Regional and Public Galleries New South Wales Inc, p 2.

councils were not eligible for JobKeeper (implemented as a response to COVID-19), which 'put councils under an enormous amount of stress financially'.⁴⁷⁵

- 4.51** Local Government NSW highlighted that the reliance on often diminishing local government funding was particularly impacting cultural services in regional communities.⁴⁷⁶ Ms Sarah Ruberto, Business Manager, Marketing, Events & Culture, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, remarked that 'museums, galleries and libraries are often the services that suffer because of this, with funding reallocated to what the community demand and consider more essential services'.⁴⁷⁷

The efficiency dividend

- 4.52** State government funding for the six state cultural institutions, being the Art Gallery of NSW, the Australian Museum, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the State Library of NSW, Sydney Living Museums and the Sydney Opera House, is subject to the efficiency dividend.
- 4.53** While the NSW Government claimed this 'has been successful in reducing back office costs and focussing expenditure where it is needed most',⁴⁷⁸ other participants were critical of the dividend and the impact it has had on these institutions. For example, the Australian Museums and Galleries Association argued '[t]he concept of an Efficiency Dividend is a false one – it is in essence a compounding cut to operational budgets'.⁴⁷⁹
- 4.54** The Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum questioned the merits of using the efficiency dividend as a measure of how efficiently a publicly funded museum is being run. In its view, some museums simply cost more to run than others to meet 'increasing demands', and the curatorial knowledge and craft needed to manage, conserve and program collections should not be subject to funding cuts:

We do not necessarily agree with the use of the 'efficiency dividend' marker as a universal measure of efficiency. In some cases, museums are required to have higher budgets and higher staffing to meet increasing demands through exhibits, events, promotions and educational displays. As such, the Museum's operational recurrent budget is crucial. One can deploy technology or build new facilities, but the essence of a museum is what it holds. One cannot replace the knowledge and craft involved in curatorship, public education, conservation and care for collections. It is their core business and restricting funding for some 'efficiency dividend' makes no sense.⁴⁸⁰

- 4.55** While the efficiency dividend does not apply to small museums and galleries, some participants indicated that it has flow-on effects for these organisations, for example, in restricting the capacity of major institutions to loan their collections to regional museums and galleries.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁵ Evidence, Cr Scott, 2 September 2020, p 15.

⁴⁷⁶ Submission 27, Local Government NSW, p 13.

⁴⁷⁷ Evidence, Ms Ruberto, 2 September 2020, p 24.

⁴⁷⁸ Submission 142, NSW Government, p 15.

⁴⁷⁹ Submission 79, Australian Museums and Galleries Association, p 5.

⁴⁸⁰ Submission 21, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, p 10.

⁴⁸¹ Submission 23, Regional and Public Galleries New South Wales Inc, p 3; Submission 27, Local Government NSW, p 13.

- 4.56** Some organisations, including the Public Service Association of NSW and Local Government NSW, argued that the efficiency dividend should be removed from all funding for cultural institutions.⁴⁸² A survey by the Public Service Association of NSW of its members found that 'no one was positive about the effect of the efficiency dividend'.⁴⁸³ It concluded that:

The effect of the budget cuts through the efficiency dividend, labour expenses cap and other budget cost cutting measures has been disastrous for the human capital of Museums and Galleries. A number of experienced staff have been lost.⁴⁸⁴

- 4.57** In this vein, it should be noted that the previous inquiry into museums and galleries in New South Wales conducted by Portfolio Committee No. 4 recommended that the NSW Government exempt state-owned museums from the annual efficiency dividend.⁴⁸⁵ The inquiry found that efficiency dividends created negative impacts including 'an inability to build a revenue base; restrictions in terms of reach, programs and exhibitions; and reduction of staff numbers'.⁴⁸⁶ In its response to this recommendation, the NSW Government noted that the efficiency dividend does not apply to expenses relating to donations, private sector grants, sale of goods and services and other non-Government revenue.⁴⁸⁷

The need for recurrent and operational funding

- 4.58** Funding for regional museums and galleries through Create NSW is typically provided by one-off grants for specific programs or outcomes. While this funding was welcome, several inquiry participants, including Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum and Port Macquarie Museum, saw recurrent funding as being equally if not more critical to operations.⁴⁸⁸
- 4.59** The NSW Government reported to the committee that it provides 'support for arts and cultural outcomes rather than operational funding'.⁴⁸⁹ Several organisations confirmed they did not receive any, or only received minimal, funding for ongoing or recurrent costs, including Grafton Regional Gallery, Port Macquarie Museum and the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸² Submission 72, Public Service Association of NSW, p 19; Submission 27, Local Government NSW, p 13.

⁴⁸³ Submission 72, Public Service Association of NSW, p 17.

⁴⁸⁴ Submission 72, Public Service Association of NSW, p 17.

⁴⁸⁵ Portfolio Committee No. 4, NSW Legislative Council, *Museums and galleries in New South Wales* (2019), p 24.

⁴⁸⁶ Portfolio Committee No. 4, NSW Legislative Council, *Museums and galleries in New South Wales* (2019), p 22.

⁴⁸⁷ Correspondence from Hon Don Harwin MLC to the Clerk of the Parliaments, providing government response to the inquiry into museums and galleries, 12 July 2019.

⁴⁸⁸ See for example: Evidence, Cr Scott, 2 September 2020, p 13; Submission 21, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, p 6; Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 6.

⁴⁸⁹ Answers to questions on notice, Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet and Ms Annette Pitman, Head of Create Infrastructure, Create NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 6 October 2020, p 7.

⁴⁹⁰ Submission 21, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, p 11; Submission 43, Clarence Valley Council, p 1; Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 6.

4.60 The Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum noted that recurrent costs include those associated with staff wages and training, curatorial duties and conservation, displays and collection storage, utilities, cleaning, building repairs, security, marketing and promotions, and management and administration.⁴⁹¹

4.61 The absence of ongoing funding was seen by some to present several challenges to regional museums and galleries. Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum told the committee that it prevents organisations from being able to undertake long-term planning and budgeting, commenting that 'the current practice of continually applying for grant funding is too uncertain and does not provide any certainty in planning and budgeting for growth'.⁴⁹²

4.62 Another challenge raised in evidence was that while grant funding may be received for a capital project, there is often no ongoing funding for the continued implementation of that project.⁴⁹³ Mr Paul Brinkman, President, Regional and Public Galleries NSW, explained:

The existing funding situation being short-term project based means that fantastic work gets done and then it just stops. There are fantastic opportunities to build on that and to grow that so our communities can really benefit from their regional galleries. Having more surety around long-term funding rather than single-year or two-year funding would really benefit the long-term prosperity of our industry.⁴⁹⁴

4.63 Similarly, Ms Sarah Ruberto, Business Manager, Marketing, Events & Culture, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, highlighted the limitations associated with grant funding:

... we are always thrilled to receive grant funding. While it is a wonderful thing, and it allows us to develop, enhance and create new products and experiences for our communities and visitors, it does leave us with something that we need to maintain. It adds additional operational, staffing and maintenance costs. The only solution, from our perspective, would be some kind of permanent funding solution. Grants are great but they never really deal with operational requirements.⁴⁹⁵

The library funding model

4.64 Several inquiry participants, including the President of Regional and Public Galleries NSW and some local councils, raised the current funding arrangement for public libraries as a model that could be implemented for regional museums and galleries.⁴⁹⁶ This involves a legislated per capita

⁴⁹¹ Answers to questions on notice, Mr Renzo Benedet, President and Secretary, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, 28 September 2020, p 2.

⁴⁹² Submission 21, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, p 6.

⁴⁹³ Evidence, Ms Ruberto, 2 September 2020, p 27; Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 6.

⁴⁹⁴ Evidence, Mr Brinkman, 2 September 2020, p 16.

⁴⁹⁵ Evidence, Ms Ruberto, 2 September 2020, p 27.

⁴⁹⁶ Evidence, Mr Brinkman, 2 September 2020, p 12; Submission 19, Blacktown City Council, p 2; Submission 23, Regional and Public Galleries New South Wales Inc, p 2.

subsidy for libraries based on local government area population size.⁴⁹⁷ Lake Macquarie City Council also noted that this model includes a subsidy for a capital infrastructure contribution.⁴⁹⁸

- 4.65** Proponents of this model suggested it could address the uncertainties experienced by museums and galleries under current funding arrangements, which were described as 'ever-changing' and 'piecemeal'.⁴⁹⁹ Ms Sarah Ruberto, Business Manager, Marketing, Events & Culture, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, argued that the library funding model could enable organisations to 'cater for individual needs whilst taking a strategic approach'.⁵⁰⁰ It was also argued that this model could address the inequality of funding between metropolitan and regional organisations.⁵⁰¹
- 4.66** Ms Jessica Dowdell, Lifelong Learning and Engage Coordinator, Lake Macquarie City Council also saw merit in this model, arguing it provides consistency, enables strategic planning and facilitates constructive exchange between the regions and metropolitan areas.⁵⁰²
- 4.67** On the other hand, Ms Debbie Sommers, Volunteer Curator, Port Macquarie Museum, noted that some local councils may be concerned that introducing a library funding model for museums would represent another example of cost-shifting to local government.⁵⁰³ She argued that while a per capita arrangement might not be the appropriate model, what was needed was 'an overall strategy that identifies what museums are really intending or intended to do and how they are going to be funded'.⁵⁰⁴
- 4.68** Mr Renzo Benedet, President and Secretary, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, also noted that per capita funding 'does not recognise that museums exist for a wider community which goes well beyond the geographic boundary in which the museum is located'.⁵⁰⁵ Mr Benedet submitted that 'over 90% of our visitations come from outside the Lithgow LGA and having a funding stream based on a per capita basis (local Lithgow LGA population) would severely put the museum at a disadvantage'.⁵⁰⁶ Instead, Mr Benedet recommended that New South Wales introduce a lottery system of funding, in which an allocated percentage of the lottery takings would be distributed to community and volunteer-based museums.⁵⁰⁷

⁴⁹⁷ Evidence, Mr Brinkman, 2 September 2020, p 12; Evidence, Ms Jacqui Hemsley, Manager, Arts, Culture and Tourism, Lake Macquarie City Council, 2 September 2020, p 26; Submission 19, Blacktown City Council, p 2; Submission 23, Regional and Public Galleries New South Wales Inc, p 2.

⁴⁹⁸ Evidence, Ms Hemsley, 2 September 2020, p 26.

⁴⁹⁹ Evidence, Mr Brinkman, 2 September 2020, p 12.

⁵⁰⁰ Evidence, Ms Ruberto, 2 September 2020, p 24.

⁵⁰¹ Evidence, Ms Ruberto, 2 September 2020, p 30; Evidence, Ms Jessica Dowdell, Lifelong Learning and Engage Coordinator, Lake Macquarie City Council, 2 September 2020, p 31.

⁵⁰² Evidence, Ms Jessica Dowdell, Lifelong Learning and Engage Coordinator, Lake Macquarie City Council, 2 September 2020, p 31.

⁵⁰³ Evidence, Ms Sommers, 2 September 2020, p 41.

⁵⁰⁴ Evidence, Ms Sommers, 2 September 2020, p 41.

⁵⁰⁵ Answers to questions on notice, Mr Renzo Benedet, President and Secretary, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, 28 September 2020, p 1.

⁵⁰⁶ Answers to questions on notice, Mr Renzo Benedet, President and Secretary, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, 28 September 2020, p 1.

⁵⁰⁷ Answers to questions on notice, Mr Renzo Benedet, President and Secretary, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, 28 September 2020, pp 4–5.

Opportunities for reform

4.69 Inquiry participants raised several suggestions for how current funding and policies for regional museums and galleries could be improved. These included improving the processes around funding decisions and creating an overarching strategy for museums and galleries in New South Wales.

Improved processes around funding decisions

4.70 In the course of this inquiry, many participants highlighted that the dispersed pools of funding available to regional museums and galleries can be difficult to navigate, particularly for small, volunteer-run organisations. For example, Regional and Public Galleries New South Wales Inc submitted that while the system of funding 'has been streamlined in the last year', 'there is still significant complexity around the application and indeed the acquittal process'.⁵⁰⁸ Port Macquarie Museum remarked that 'there is a lack of coordination, consultation and commitment between all levels of Government'.⁵⁰⁹

4.71 Some participants argued that the system of funding needs reform. Local Government NSW contended 'a more effective distribution of funds, other than competitive grant processes, should be considered'.⁵¹⁰ Goulburn Mulwaree Council noted 'a state wide approach would consolidate expertise and resources'.⁵¹¹ As an alternative approach, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum suggested there could be 'an easy to understand Government funding pack which lists the various bodies, basic details of the program, contact details and timings'.⁵¹²

4.72 The inquiry also heard concerns about the way funding decisions are made. One concern was the lack of transparency. For example, Goulburn Mulwaree Council noted it had a funding agreement that was changed from three to five years without an opportunity for review, or bid for further funds.⁵¹³

4.73 Another concern was the delay in receiving the results of funding applications. The committee heard that museums and galleries often program two to three years in advance, so certainty of funding is essential. However, some local councils gave examples of delayed funding decisions.⁵¹⁴

4.74 Ms Jessica Dowdell, Lifelong Learning and Engage Coordinator, Lake Macquarie City Council, noted that delays in receiving funding applications affect the capacity to plan school education programs.⁵¹⁵

⁵⁰⁸ Submission 23, Regional and Public Galleries New South Wales Inc, p 2.

⁵⁰⁹ Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 1.

⁵¹⁰ Submission 27, Local Government NSW, p 9.

⁵¹¹ Submission 29, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, p 2.

⁵¹² Submission 21, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, p 5.

⁵¹³ Submission 29, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, p 2.

⁵¹⁴ Evidence, Ms Ruberto, 2 September 2020, p 27; Evidence, Ms Dowdell, 2 September 2020, p 28.

⁵¹⁵ Evidence, Ms Dowdell, 2 September 2020, p 28.

4.75 Ms Sarah Ruberto, Business Manager, Marketing, Events & Culture, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, also commented that delayed state government funding can impact the willingness of local government to fund museums and galleries, as it can:

... make councillors and senior management in local government question the viability of the sector and of libraries, galleries and museums when we are in this position that there is no guarantee of funding. It makes them question why councils should invest so much money in local government if it appears that the State is not interested in coming to the party.⁵¹⁶

The need for a statewide museums and galleries strategy

4.76 Several inquiry participants identified the lack of a state-wide strategy for galleries and museums as a key issue needing redress.

4.77 The key existing state government policies applicable to museums and galleries are *Create in NSW: The NSW Government Arts and Cultural Policy Framework* (developed in 2015) and the *Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+* (developed in 2019).⁵¹⁷ The NSW Government is also currently developing a new Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Strategic Framework.⁵¹⁸

4.78 Several inquiry participants, including the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, Museums and Galleries of NSW and some local councils, were concerned about that the lack of an up-to-date, overarching strategy or vision for regional museums and galleries in New South Wales.⁵¹⁹

4.79 Museums and Galleries of NSW argued that this 'has hampered any ability to effectively harness state-wide benefits, often glimpsed, but not fully realised'.⁵²⁰ Port Macquarie Museum remarked that the absence of a strategy has resulted in 'poor planning, poor leadership, lack of vision and inadequate resourcing'.⁵²¹

4.80 These organisations therefore called for the state government to develop and implement such a strategy.⁵²² Port Macquarie Museum argued that this strategy should cover 'not only infrastructure requirements, but also those of collection management including digitisation, staffing, [and] operational resources'.⁵²³

⁵¹⁶ Evidence, Ms Ruberto, 2 September 2020, p 28.

⁵¹⁷ Submission 142, NSW Government, p 14.

⁵¹⁸ Submission 142, NSW Government, p 14.

⁵¹⁹ Submission 21, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, pp 4, 8–10; Submission 22, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 5; Submission 29, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, p 1; Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 1.

⁵²⁰ Submission 22, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 5.

⁵²¹ Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 1.

⁵²² Evidence, Ms Ruberto, 2 September 2020, p 24; Submission 21, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, p 10; Submission 22, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 5; Submission 40, Lake Macquarie City Council, p 1; Submission 79, Australian Museums and Galleries Association, p 5; Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 1.

⁵²³ Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 1.

4.81 Some participants also recommended that the strategy should include consideration of education and conservation, COVID-19 recovery, the role of local governments, and the relationship between metropolitan and regional institutions.⁵²⁴ Goulburn Mulwaree Council argued such a strategy would 'strengthen our capacity to deliver quality experiences for our communities'.⁵²⁵

4.82 Port Macquarie Museum argued that a state-wide strategy should also include planning around museum funding:

What needs to come first though, is a State-wide Museum Strategy. We believe that Government funding for Museums as well as any other publicly funded infrastructure, needs to be strategic, considered and purposeful. Such infrastructure investment also needs to consider how the operations and maintenance costs of those facilities will be funded in the longer term. Museum infrastructure is about respecting, protecting, exhibiting and sharing cultural collections with the community, and not simply about building a venue.⁵²⁶

Equity of access to collections

4.83 Another issue raised in this inquiry was the equity of access to museums and galleries across New South Wales. Participants raised two main areas in which this could be improved: through digitisation of collections, and improved access to collections held in the six state cultural institutions.

Digitisation of museum and gallery collections

4.84 Several inquiry participants highlighted the importance of digitising museum and gallery collections.⁵²⁷ Digitisation has two main functions: assisting organisations to document and catalogue their collections, and facilitating public access to these collections through virtual exhibitions. Lake Macquarie City Council contended that COVID-19 has emphasised the importance of both of these functions:

A lesson we are all learning during the COVID-19 pandemic is that we need to embrace digital technology to increase the accessibility of our cultural collections. We suggest this mindset needs to continue post-pandemic and should seek to balance the need to record historical data with the ability to deliver digital programs and exhibitions.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁴ Evidence, Ms Ruberto, 2 September 2020, p 24; Evidence, Ms Dowdell, 2 September 2020, p 25; Evidence, Cr Scott, 2 September 2020, pp 15–17; Submission 79, Australian Museums and Galleries Association, p 5.

⁵²⁵ Submission 29, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, p 1.

⁵²⁶ Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 9.

⁵²⁷ Evidence, Mr Brinkman, 2 September 2020, p 20; Submission 40, Lake Macquarie City Council, p 2; Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, pp 5, 7–8.

⁵²⁸ Submission 40, Lake Macquarie City Council, p 2.

- 4.85** Other participants to this inquiry commented that digitising collections allows regional museums and galleries to have 'longevity'⁵²⁹ and 'remain relevant and present'.⁵³⁰
- 4.86** In 2018, Museums and Galleries of NSW received funding to develop a Collections and Stories digitisation pilot program. According to Local Government NSW and Port Macquarie Museum, the pilot was yet to receive a government response or additional funding.⁵³¹ Some submissions argued that the state government should allocate ongoing funding to prioritise this initiative and/or to otherwise facilitate digitisation of collections held by regional museums and galleries.⁵³²

Access to state collections and inter-gallery and inter-museum loans

- 4.87** According to the NSW Government, between 2016-17 and 2018-19, the Art Gallery of NSW toured 14 separate exhibitions to 31 different locations, which were viewed by just under 550,000 people.⁵³³ The Government reported that the Australian Museum also has long-term collection loans to several regional museums, including the Age of Fishes Museum in Canowindra, Wellington Caves Museum, and the Fossils and Minerals Museum in Bathurst.⁵³⁴
- 4.88** Ms Niomi Sands, Regional Gallery Director, Clarence Valley Council, said that access to the State Cultural Institution collections by regional museum and galleries 'allows regional galleries and museums to present outstanding cultural experiences to regional communities that are otherwise not available within regional New South Wales'.⁵³⁵
- 4.89** However, several stakeholders reported difficulties in accessing state collections, including Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum and Lake Macquarie City Council.⁵³⁶ A common concern was the prohibitive requirements imposed by lending institutions, such as environmental, security and handling controls.⁵³⁷ These requirements were noted to be particularly challenging for community-run museums and galleries, with Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum describing access to collections held by other museums as 'almost near impossible'.⁵³⁸

⁵²⁹ Evidence, Mr Brinkman, 2 September 2020, p 20.

⁵³⁰ Evidence, Ms Ruberto, 2 September 2020, p 24.

⁵³¹ Submission 27, Local Government NSW, p 9; Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 8.

⁵³² Submission 22, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 7; Submission 27, Local Government NSW, p 9; Submission 83, Port Macquarie Museum, p 5.

⁵³³ Submission 142, NSW Government, p 13.

⁵³⁴ Submission 142, NSW Government, p 12.

⁵³⁵ Evidence, Ms Sands, 2 September 2020, p 25.

⁵³⁶ See for example: Submission 21, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, p 6; Submission 22, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 6; Submission 40, Lake Macquarie City Council, p 1.

⁵³⁷ Evidence, Ms Dowdell, 2 September 2020, p 25; Submission 22, Museums and Galleries of NSW, p 6; Submission 27, Local Government NSW, p 11; Submission 40, Lake Macquarie City Council, p 1.

⁵³⁸ Submission 21, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, p 6.

- 4.90** Regional and Public Galleries New South Wales Inc called for greater flexibility around access to state collections, with less stringent requirements.⁵³⁹ Stakeholders also recommended that State Cultural Institutions provide better support to regional museums and galleries,⁵⁴⁰ or that this be a requirement of their funding.⁵⁴¹ Local Government NSW recommended there should be a national framework for access to state and national collections.⁵⁴²
- 4.91** Ms Jessica Dowdell, Lifelong Learning and Engage Coordinator, Lake Macquarie City Council, called on the government to 'improve the ability of lending and borrowing institutions, revise the collection climate-control conditions in line with international standards, list the overall capabilities of the sector for investment in cultural facilities and professional development opportunities, and incentivise innovation in the sector through the display of significant collections in regional locations'.⁵⁴³

Committee comment

- 4.92** Museums and galleries play an essential role in the cultural landscape of regional New South Wales. The committee acknowledges the significant challenges that face this sector, which have only intensified since the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee extends its gratitude to the thousands of volunteers whose time and dedication are critical to ensuring these institutions remain open.
- 4.93** Evidence before the committee made it clear that this sector is gravely under-funded. We were troubled by reports that funding is often piecemeal, uncertain, and not provided for ongoing and operational costs. There is a clear need for existing funding arrangements to be reviewed. Such a review must focus on how museums and galleries can be provided with greater certainty about funding avenues and decisions, to facilitate essential long-term planning. It should include consideration of whether the library funding model would be a suitable way to fund regional museums and galleries in New South Wales.

Recommendation 8

That the NSW Government review the current funding arrangements for regional museums and galleries, with consideration of:

- how to ensure greater certainty of funding for regional museums and galleries, and
 - whether a library funding model would be an appropriate way to fund regional museums and galleries in New South Wales.
-

⁵³⁹ Submission 23, Regional and Public Galleries New South Wales Inc, p 2.

⁵⁴⁰ Evidence, Ms Sands, 2 September 2020, p 26; Evidence, Ms Ruberto, 2 September 2020, p 26.

⁵⁴¹ Submission 23, Regional and Public Galleries New South Wales Inc, p 3.

⁵⁴² Submission 27, Local Government NSW, p 10.

⁵⁴³ Evidence, Ms Dowdell, 2 September 2020, p 25.

- 4.94** The committee is deeply concerned that there is no statewide museums and galleries strategy in New South Wales. Evidence was clear that such a strategy would play an important role in setting out an overarching vision for the sector, as well as addressing key concerns around leadership, resourcing, and the relationship between metropolitan and regional institutions. We are therefore of the view that a statewide museums and galleries strategy should be developed as a matter of priority.
- 4.95** A museums and galleries strategy should include consideration of how to improve access to state collections by regional museums and galleries. It is imperative that people in regional areas have access to the world-class collections held in museums and galleries in Sydney. We are concerned by evidence from regional institutions articulating how challenging this can be. A new museums and galleries strategy represents a prime opportunity to reconsider how access can be improved.

Recommendation 9

That the NSW Government develop a statewide museum and galleries strategy, which should include consideration of how to improve access to state collections by regional museums and galleries.

Appendix 1 Submissions

No.	Author
1	Mr Gordon Chirgwin
2	Ms Alice-Anne Bagster
3	Mr Gary Carter
4	Mr David Churchill
5	Mr Peter May
6	Ms Jennifer Blackman AO
7	Confidential
8	Mr Peter Wotton
9	Name suppressed
10	Pymont Action Incorporated
11	Name suppressed
12	Ms Una Williamson
13	Mr Johan Hagedoorn
14	Mr Aaron Drew
15	Ms Sally Macmillan
16	Name suppressed
17	Name suppressed
18	Mr Chris Betteridge
19	Blacktown City Council
20	Name suppressed
21	Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum
22	Museums and Galleries of NSW
23	Regional and Public Galleries New South Wales Inc. (RPGNSW)
24	Ms Debbie Rudder
24a	Ms Debbie Rudder
24b	Ms Debbie Rudder
25	Ms Lesley Carnus
26	Ms Kathy Maxwell
27	Local Government NSW
28	Decorative Arts Society
29	Goulburn Mulwaree Council
30	Name suppressed

No.	Author
31	Name suppressed
32	Name suppressed
33	The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP
34	Ms Linda Scott
35	The National Trust of Australia (New South Wales)
36	Engineers Australia (Sydney Division)
37	Confidential
38	Ms Jennifer Jungheim
39	Confidential
40	Lake Macquarie City Council
41	Mrs Christine Cook
42	Dr Peter Watts
43	Clarence Valley Council
44	Ms Grace Cochrane AM
44a	Ms Grace Cochrane AM
45	Mr Yang Xing Hu
46	Mr Michael Wright
47	Mr Glen Ravenscroft
48	Name suppressed
49	Name suppressed
50	Mr Peter Fenton
51	Mrs Susan Wright
52	Mr Neville Pleffer
53	Save the Powerhouse
53a	Save the Powerhouse
54	Name suppressed
55	Name suppressed
56	Name suppressed
57	Name suppressed
58	Inner Sydney Greens
59	Mr Robert Gavagna
60	Name suppressed
61	Name suppressed
62	Mrs Helen Donovan
63	Greater Hume Council

No.	Author
64	City of Sydney
65	Dr Lindsay Sharp
65a	Dr Lindsay Sharp
65b	Dr Lindsay Sharp
65c	Dr Lindsay Sharp
65d	Dr Lindsay Sharp
66	Mr Lionel Glendenning
66a	Mr Lionel Glendenning
66b	Mr Lionel Glendenning
67	Ms Marion Barker
68	Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation
69	Mr Chris Doubae
70	Cr Donna Davis
71	Mr Ian Stephenson
72	Public Service Association of NSW
73	Ms Julie Owens MP
74	Ms Jennifer Sanders
74a	Ms Jennifer Sanders
74b	Ms Jennifer Sanders
75	Name suppressed
76	heritage solutions
77	Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials (AICCM)
78	Sydney City Skywatchers
79	Australian Museums and Galleries Association
79a	Australian Museums and Galleries Association
80	Western Sydney Business Chamber
81	The Hunters Hill Trust
82	Arts Mid North Coast
83	Port Macquarie Museum
84	Federation of Australian Historical Societies
85	Royal Australian Historical Society
86	International Council of Museums Australia (ICOM Australia)
87	Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Board of Trustees
88	Mr Andrew Harris
89	Ms Anne Schofield AM

No.	Author
89a	Ms Anne Schofield AM
90	Name suppressed
91	Mr Kelan Raffo
92	Mr Stephen Borg
93	Professor David Philip Miller
94	Dr Des Griffin
95	Water Solutions
96	Ms Irma Havlicek
97	Mr Leslie Carter
98	Mrs Marina Garlick
99	Judith White
100	Mr Ian Debenham OAM
101	Mr Gary Carter
102	Mr Peter Wotton
103	Mr John Williams
104	Ms Chloe Green
105	Name suppressed
106	Ms Kathy Elliott
107	Miss Nicole Edwards
108	Mr Hamish Thompson
109	Mrs Yvonne Fessler
110	Mr Peter Reid
111	Mr Neil Joseph
112	Mrs Kirsten Garrett
113	Mrs Janice Westlake
114	Name suppressed
115	Name suppressed
116	Ms Carolyn Diamond
117	Mr Craig Lyons
118	Mr Tom Lockley
118a	Mr Tom Lockley
119	Mr Andrew Grant
119a	Mr Andrew Grant
119b	Mr Andrew Grant
119c	Mr Andrew Grant

No.	Author
119d	Mr Andrew Grant
120	Ms Louise Douglas
121	Ms Jane Maber
122	Ms Sandra McEwen
123	Name suppressed
124	Name suppressed
125	Mr Colin Macgregor
126	Name suppressed
127	Name suppressed
128	Mr Roy Antaw
129	Saving Sydneys Trees
130	Name suppressed
131	Name suppressed
132	Name suppressed
133	Ms Susan Wittenoom
134	Dr Andrew Simpson
134a	Dr Andrew Simpson
135	North Parramatta Residents' Action Group
135a	North Parramatta Residents' Action Group
135b	North Parramatta Residents' Action Group
135c	North Parramatta Residents' Action Group
135d	North Parramatta Residents' Action Group
136	Confidential
137	Ms Kylie Winkworth
137a	Ms Kylie Winkworth
137b	Ms Kylie Winkworth
137c	Ms Kylie Winkworth
138	Dr Nicholas G Pappas AM
139	Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)
140	Mr Keith Baker
141	Newcomen, The International Society for the History of Engineering and Technology
142	NSW Government
143	The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage
144	Sydney Tramway Museum
145	Ms Laraine Sutherland

No.	Author
146	Community Action for Windsor Bridge
147	Mr Simon Beck
148	Engineers Australia, Engineering Heritage Australia
149	Confidential
149a	Mr James Colman
150	Mr Paul Chapman
151	Mr Greg Roberts OAM

Appendix 2 Witnesses at hearings

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
Wednesday 29 July 2020 Macquarie Room Parliament House, Sydney	The Hon Don Harwin MLC	Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts
	Mr Simon Draper	Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure NSW
	Ms Kate Foy	Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet
	Ms Lisa Havilah	Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences
	Professor Barney Glover AO	President, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences
	Councillor Clover Moore	Lord Mayor of Sydney, City of Sydney
	Ms Monica Barone	Chief Executive, City of Sydney
	Mr Brett Newman	Chief Executive Officer, City of Parramatta
	Ms Jennifer Concato	Executive Director, City Planning and Design, City of Parramatta
	Mr Troy Wright	Assistant General Secretary, Public Service Association of NSW
	Ms Judith Coombes	President, Australian Museum and Galleries Association (NSW Division)
	Ms Alex Marsden <i>(via teleconference)</i>	National Director, Australian Museum and Galleries Association
	Mr Bruce Dawbin	NSW State Representative, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Australia
Ms Cherie McNair	Secretary, International Council of Museums (ICOM) Australia	

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
	Mr David Burdon	Chair, Built Heritage Conservation Committee, National Trust of Australia (New South Wales)
Friday 21 August 2020 Macquarie Room Parliament House, Sydney	Ms Jennifer Sanders	Representative, Powerhouse Museum Alliance
	Dr Lindsay Sharp	Representative, Powerhouse Museum Alliance
	Ms Patricia Johnson	Co-convenor, Save the Powerhouse Campaign
	Mr Jean-Pierre Alexandre	Co-convenor, Save the Powerhouse Campaign
	Mr Andrew Grant	Private citizen
	Mr Ian Debenham OAM	Private citizen
	Dr Andrew Simpson	Private citizen
	Ms Kylie Winkworth	Museum and heritage consultant
	Dr Des Griffin	Private citizen
	Professor David Philip Miller	Science and technology historian
	Mr Lionel Glendenning	Private citizen
	Ms Anne Schofield	Private citizen
	Mr Bill d'Anthes	Deputy Convenor, Pyrmont Action Incorporated
	Ms Suzette Meade	North Parramatta Residents Action Group
	Mr Steven Molino	Principal, Molino Stewart Environmental and Natural Hazards Consultants
	Dr John Macintosh <i>(via teleconference)</i>	Flood/Hydrological Engineer, Water Solutions
Wednesday 2 September 2020 Macquarie Room Parliament House, Sydney	Ms Kate Foy	Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet
	Ms Annette Pitman	Head of Create Infrastructure, Create NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
	Mr Paul Brinkman	President, Regional and Public Galleries NSW
	Mr Michael Rolfe	Chief Executive Officer, Museums and Galleries of NSW
	Councillor Linda Scott	President, Local Government NSW
	Ms Sarah Ruberto <i>(via videoconference)</i>	Business Manager, Marketing, Events & Culture, Goulburn Mulwaree Council
	Ms Jacqui Hemsley <i>(via videoconference)</i>	Manager, Arts, Culture and Tourism, Lake Macquarie City Council
	Ms Jessica Dowdell <i>(via videoconference)</i>	Lifelong Learning and Engage Coordinator, Lake Macquarie City Council
	Ms Niomi Sands <i>(via videoconference)</i>	Regional Gallery Director, Clarence Valley Council
	Mr Renzo Benedet	President and Secretary, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum
	Ms Donna White	Vice President and Custodian, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum
	Ms Debbie Sommers <i>(via videoconference)</i>	Volunteer Curator, Port Macquarie Museum
	Mr James Colman	Private citizen
Thursday 8 October 2020 Macquarie Room Parliament House, Sydney	Ms Lisa Havilah	Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences
	Mr David Borger	Representative, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences
	Ms Julie Jones (Webb)	Chair, Dharug Strategic Management Group
	Professor Richie Howitt	Director and Finance Officer, Dharug Strategic Management Group
	Mr Adam Lindsay	Executive Director, Sydney Living Museums

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
	Ms Kate Foy	Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet
	Mr Frank Howarth AM PSM	Chair, Heritage Council of NSW
	Mr Tim Smith OAM	Director, Heritage Operations, Heritage NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet
	Mr Darren Greenfield	Secretary, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union NSW
	Ms Rita Mallia	President, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union NSW
Monday 15 February 2021 Jubilee Room Parliament House, Sydney	The Hon Don Harwin MLC	Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts
	Ms Kate Foy	Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet
	Mr Simon Draper	Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure NSW
	Ms Lisa Havilah	Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences
	The Hon Peter Collins AM QC	President, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences
	Mr Christopher Brown AM <i>(via videoconference)</i>	Chair, Western Sydney Powerhouse Museum Community Alliance
	Mr Darren Greenfield	Secretary, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union NSW
	Mr Steven Molino	Principal, Molino Stewart Environmental and Natural Hazards Consultants
	Mr Tom Lockley	Private citizen
	Councillor Donna Davis	Private citizen

Date	Name	Position and Organisation
Thursday 17 March 2022 Jubilee Room Parliament House, Sydney	The Hon Ben Franklin MLC	Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Regional Youth
	Ms Annette Pitman	Acting Chief Executive, Create NSW
	Ms Kate Foy	Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet
	Ms Lisa Havilah	Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences
	The Hon Peter Collins AM QC	President, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences
	Mr Troy Wright	Assistant General Secretary, Public Service Association
	Mr Richard Dewar	Technical Director, WMA Water
	Dr John Macintosh <i>(via videoconference)</i>	Flood/Hydrological Engineer, Water Solutions
	Mr Tom Gellibrand	Head of Projects, Infrastructure NSW
	Mr Greg Rogencamp	Associate Principal, Surface Water Engineering Leader, ARUP
Councillor Donna Davis	Lord Mayor, City of Parramatta	
Ms Suzette Meade	North Parramatta Residents' Action Group	

Appendix 3 Minutes

Minutes no. 1

Thursday 12 March 2020

Select Committee on the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Room 1254, Parliament House, 1.03 pm

1. Members present

Mr Borsak, *Chair*

Mr Shoebridge, *Deputy Chair*

Ms Jackson

Mr Khan

Mr Martin

2. Tabling of resolution establishing the committee

The Chair tabled the resolution of the House establishing the committee.

3. Election of Chair

The committee noted that, as per the resolution establishing the committee, the Chair of the committee is Mr Robert Borsak MLC.

4. Election of Deputy Chair

The committee noted that, as per the resolution establishing the committee, the Deputy Chair of the committee is a member of the Greens (Mr David Shoebridge MLC).

5. Conduct of committee proceedings – media

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Khan: That the following procedures are to apply for the life of the committee:

- the committee authorise the filming, broadcasting, webcasting and still photography of its public proceedings, in accordance with the resolution of the Legislative Council of 18 October 2007
- the committee webcast its public proceedings via the Parliament's website, where technically possible
- the committee adopt the interim guidelines on the use of social media and electronic devices for committee proceedings, as developed by the Chair's Committee in May 2013
- media statements on behalf of the committee be made only by the Chair.

6. Conduct of the inquiry into the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

6.1 Proposed timeline

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee adopt the following timeline for the administration of the inquiry:

- Submission closing date: Sunday 3 May 2020
- Hearings: two days in May/June/July 2020, the dates of which are to be determined by the Chair after consultation with members regarding their availability, with potentially additional hearings to follow
- Report deliberative: December 2020
- Table report: December 2020.

6.2 Stakeholder list

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the secretariat email members with a list of stakeholders to be invited to make written submissions, and that members have until 4.00pm Tuesday 17 March 2020 to amend the list or nominate additional stakeholders.

6.3 Advertising

The committee noted that all inquiries are advertised via Twitter, Facebook, stakeholder letters and a media release distributed to all media outlets in New South Wales.

It is no longer standard practice to advertise in the print media. The committee should pass a resolution if it wishes to do so.

6.4 Online questionnaire

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Jackson: That an online questionnaire be conducted, and that draft questions be circulated to the committee via email for approval, with a meeting called if members wish to discuss in detail.

7. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 1.08 pm, *sine die*.

Anthony Hanna
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 2

Wednesday 29 July 2020

Select Committee on the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Macquarie Room, Parliament House, 9:07 am

1. Members present

Mr Borsak, *Chair (from 9.07 am until 3.43 pm) (from 4.11 pm)*

Mr Shoebridge, *Deputy Chair (from 9.07 am until 4.17 pm)*

Mr Franklin

Ms Jackson

Mr Khan *(from 9.07 am until 9.57 am) (from 10.55 am)*

Mr Secord

2. Apologies

Mr Martin

3. Draft minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That draft minutes no.1 be confirmed.

4. Correspondence

The committee noted the following correspondence:

Received:

- 14 May 2020 – Email from Mr Robert Gavagna, individual to the secretariat, providing an answer to one of the questions from the online questionnaire
- 20 May 2020 – Email from Ms Marina Garlick, individual, to the Chair, asking that the Chair make a request to the Government that the closing date of the Powerhouse Museum be extended so that individuals could visit before the museum is moved to Parramatta
- 25 June 2020 – Email from Ms Grace Cochrane AM, bcc'd to Museums inquiry, enclosing a newsletter with an attachment entitled "Size does Matter: Shrinking the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta" by Kylie Winkworth dated 17 June 2020
- 2 July 2020 – Email from Ms Tanya Burrows, individual, to the committee, commenting on the closure of the Powerhouse Museum

- 9 July 2020 – Email from Mr Patrick Moore, Parliamentary Liaison Officer, Office of the Hon Don Harwin MLC, to the secretariat, requesting that the Minister be allowed to make a 10 minute opening statement at the hearing on 29 July 2020
- 9 July 2020 – Email from Ms Kylie Winkworth, Museum and heritage expert, to the Chair, requesting publication of a submission attachment, being an expert report from Molino Stewart
- 13 July 2020 – Email from Mr Patrick Moore, Parliamentary Liaison Officer, Office of the Hon Don Harwin MLC, to the secretariat, advising Mr Simon Draper and Ms Kate Foy will attend the hearing on 29 July 2020
- 16 July 2020 – Email from Mr David Borger, Executive Director, Western Sydney Business Chamber, to the secretariat declining the committee's invitation to give evidence at the public hearing on 29 July 2020
- 17 July 2020 – Email from Mr Craig Limkin to the secretariat declining the committee's invitation to give evidence at the public hearing on 21 August 2020
- 28 July 2020 – Email from Ms Kate Boyd, General Council, Department of Premier and Cabinet, to the secretariat, requesting that Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet, remain as a witness alongside Ms Lisa Havilah and Prof Barney Glover AO at the public hearing on 29 July 2020 from 11.30 am to 12.30 pm.

Sent:

- 8 July 2020 – Letter from the Chair to the Hon Don Harwin MLC, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, inviting him to give evidence at the first hearing on 29 July 2020.

5. Submissions

5.1 Public submissions and attachments

The committee noted that the following submissions were published by the committee clerk under authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: 1-6, 8, 10, 12-15, 18, 19, 21-29, 33-36, 38, 40-43, 44-47, 50-53, 53a, 58, 59, 62-64, 66, 66a, 67-74, 74a, 74b, 76-82, 84-89, 89a, 91-104, 106-113, 116, 117, 119-122, 125, 128, 129, 133, 134, 134a, 135, 137, 137a, 138, 139, 140-147

5.2 Partially confidential submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge:

- That the committee keep the following information confidential, as per the request of the author: names and/or identifying and sensitive information in submissions nos. 9, 11, 16, 17, 20, 30-32, 48, 49, 54-57, 60, 61, 75, 90, 105, 114, 115, 123, 124, 127, 130-132
- That the committee authorise the publication of submission nos. 83 and 126, with the exception of identifying information which is to remain confidential, as per the recommendation of the secretariat
- That the committee authorise the publication of submission nos. 65 and 118, with the exception of potential adverse mention, identifying/sensitive information and inappropriate/offensive language which is to remain confidential, as per the recommendation of the secretariat.

5.3 Confidential submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee keep submission nos. 7, 37, and 136 confidential, as per the request of the author, as they contain identifying and/or sensitive information.

5.4 Attachment to submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee authorise the publication of attachments to submission nos. 64 and 137a.

6. Online questionnaire report

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Secord: That the committee authorise the publication of the online questionnaire report on the committee's website.

7. Camera operator arrangements for committee hearings

The committee noted the new camera operating arrangements.

8. Publication of committee footage on the committee's website

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee authorise the secretariat to publish video recordings of the hearings on the committee's website.

9. Opening statement by the Minister for the Arts

The committee noted that it agreed via email to a request that the Minister for the Arts make a 10 minute opening statement as part of his evidence to the committee.

10. Allocation of questioning

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the allocation of questioning be left in the hands of the Chair.

11. Email from Ms Kate Boyd, General Council, Department of Premier and Cabinet

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Khan: That the committee consent to Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet, remaining as a witness alongside Ms Lisa Havilah and Prof Barney Glover AO at the public hearing on 29 July 2020 from 11.30 am to 12.30 pm.

12. Public hearing

The committee proceeded to take evidence in public.

The Hon Don Harwin MLC, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, departmental witnesses, and media were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of proceedings, adverse mention and other matters. The Chair noted that members of Parliament swear an oath to their office, and therefore do not need to be sworn prior to giving evidence before a committee.

The following witnesses were sworn:

- Mr Simon Draper, Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure NSW
- Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet

Mr Shoebridge tendered the following document:

- *Stage 1 Assessment for the Proposed New Parramatta Powerhouse Museum: Flood Risk and Review Assessment*, Report by Melino Stewart on behalf of the Powerhouse Museum Alliance, May 2020 (previously accepted and published)

The Minister and departmental witnesses were examined by the committee.

The evidence concluded and the Minister and Mr Draper withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Lisa Havilah, Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences
- Prof Barney Glover AO, President, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences

Ms Foy continued to be examined.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Cr Clover Moore, Lord Mayor of Sydney, City of Sydney
- Ms Monica Barone, Chief Executive, City of Sydney
- Mr Brett Newman, Chief Executive Officer, City of Parramatta
- Ms Jennifer Concato, Executive Director, City Planning and Design, City of Parramatta

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Troy Wright, Assistant General Secretary, Public Service Association of NSW
- Ms Judith Coombes, President, Australian Museum and Galleries Association (NSW Division)
- Ms Alex Marsden, National Director, Australian Museum and Galleries Association (*via teleconference*)

Ms Judith Coombes tendered the following document:

- Opening statement entitled 'Second Enquiry – Notes'

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Bruce Dawbin, NSW State Representative, International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Australia
- Ms Cherie McNair, Secretary, International Council of Museums (ICOM) Australia

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Mr David Burdon, Chair, Built Heritage Conservation Committee, National Trust of Australia (New South Wales).

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 4:32 pm.

13. **Tendered documents**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Franklin: That the committee accept and publish the following document tendered during the public hearing:

- Opening statement entitled 'Second Enquiry – Notes', tendered by Ms Judith Coombes

14. **Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 4.34 pm, until Friday 21 August 2020 (public hearing).

Anthony Hanna
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 3

Friday 21 August 2020

Select Committee on the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Macquarie Room, Parliament House, 9:34 am

1. **Members present**

Mr Borsak, *Chair (from 9:34 am to 11:59 am; and from 12:21pm to 5:00 pm)*

Mr Shoebridge, *Deputy Chair (until 3.20 pm)*

Mr Franklin

Ms Jackson

Mr Khan (*from 9:34 am to 10.32 am; and from 12:06 pm to 5:00 pm*)

Mr Martin (*until 3.20 pm*)

Mr Secord

2. **Draft minutes**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Franklin: That draft minutes no.2 be confirmed.

3. Correspondence

The committee noted the following correspondence:

Received:

- 24 July 2020 – Email from Mr Jonathan Russell, National Manager, Public Affairs and Policy, Engineers Australia, to the secretariat, advising that the Engineers Australia witnesses are no longer available to attend the hearing on 29 July 2020
- 9 August 2020 – Email from Dr Lindsay Sharp to the committee, suggesting a number of witnesses be invited to appear before the committee
- 16 August 2020 – Email from Dr Lindsay Sharp to the Chair requesting the committee order the production of various Government business cases

4. Submissions

4.1 Public submissions

The committee noted that the following submissions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submission nos. 44a, 65a, 65c, 65d, 66b, 137b, 148, 150 and 151.

4.2 Partially confidential submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee authorise the publication of submission no. 65b, with the exception of inappropriate/offensive language which is to remain confidential, as per the recommendation of the secretariat.

4.3 Confidential submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee keep submission no. 149 confidential, as per the request of the author, as it contains identifying and/or sensitive information.

4.4 Attachment to submission

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee authorise the publication of the attachment to submission no. 137b.

5. Allocation of questioning

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Secord: That the allocation of questioning be left in the hands of the Chair.

6. Consideration of site visits and stakeholder meetings

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee conduct a site visit to Willow Grove in Parramatta and the Harwood Building within the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum Precinct. The site visit is to commence at Willow Grove at 9:30am and to include an informal meeting with representatives of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU), the City of Parramatta, the North Parramatta Residents Action Group and other identified stakeholders. The site visit is to conclude with a tour of the Harwood Building in Ultimo.

7. Request for documents

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee write to the Hon Don Harwin MLC, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relation, the Art and Aboriginal Affairs, requesting the following documents, to be provided to the committee within 7 days:

- The business case underpinning the Powerhouse Parramatta project
- The business case underpinning the Powerhouse Museum Castle Hill Discovery Centre Project
- The business case underpinning the Powerhouse Museum Ultimo Project

8. Public hearing

The committee proceeded to take evidence in public.

Witnesses were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of proceedings, adverse mention and other matters.

The following witnesses were sworn:

- Ms Jennifer Sanders, Representative, Powerhouse Museum Alliance
- Dr Lindsay Sharp, Representative, Powerhouse Museum Alliance

Ms Jennifer Sanders tendered the following documents:

- Australia ICOMOS 2019 Sydney Talk Series Number 6, Tuesday 1st October 2019, *Policy, Power and the Cultural and Heritage Values of the Powerhouse Museum*, Kylie Winkworth and Jennifer Sanders, Powerhouse Museum Alliance
- Powerhouse Museum Awards: 1988-2008. Website extraction, Migration Heritage Centre, New South Wales: Awards
- Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences: list of collections, number of individual items and highlights

Dr Lindsay Sharp tendered the following document:

- *Yesterday's Tomorrows, The Powerhouse Museum and its Precursors 1880-2005*, edited by Graeme Davison and Kimberley Webber

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Patricia Johnson, Co-convenor, Save the Powerhouse Campaign
- Mr Jean-Pierre Alexandre, Co-convenor, Save the Powerhouse Campaign

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Andrew Grant, private citizen
- Mr Ian Debenham OAM, private citizen
- Dr Andrew Simpson, private citizen

Mr Andrew Grant tendered the following document:

- Letter from The Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP, Member for Willoughby, NSW Premier, to an individual, responding to their letter regarding the Powerhouse Museums at Ultimo and Parramatta.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Kylie Winkworth, museum and heritage consultant
- Dr Des Griffin, private citizen
- Prof David Philip Miller, science and technology historian

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Lionel Glendenning, private citizen
- Ms Anne Schofield, private citizen

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Bill d'Anthes, Deputy Convenor, Pyrmont Action Incorporated
- Ms Suzette Meade, North Parramatta Residents Action Group

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Steven Molino, Principal, Molino Stewart Environmental and Natural Hazards Consultants
- Dr John Macintosh, Flood/Hydrological Engineer, Water Solutions (*via teleconference*)

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 5:15 pm.

9. **Tendered documents**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Khan: That the committee accept and publish the following documents tendered during the public hearing:

- Australia ICOMOS 2019 Sydney Talk Series Number 6, Tuesday 1st October 2019, *Policy, Power and the Cultural and Heritage Values of the Powerhouse Museum*, Kylie Winkworth and Jennifer Sanders, Powerhouse Museum Alliance, tendered by Ms Jennifer Sanders, Representative, Powerhouse Museum Alliance
- Powerhouse Museum Awards: 1988-2008. Website extraction, Migration Heritage Centre, New South Wales: Awards, tendered by Ms Jennifer Sanders, Representative, Powerhouse Museum Alliance
- Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences: list of collections, number of individual items and highlights, tendered by Ms Jennifer Sanders, Representative, Powerhouse Museum Alliance
- *Yesterday's Tomorrows, The Powerhouse Museum and its Precursors 1880-2005*, Edited by Graeme Davison and Kimberley Webber, tendered by Dr Lindsay Sharp, Representative, Powerhouse Museum Alliance.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Khan: That the committee accept and publish the following document tendered during the public hearing, with the exception of identifying information which is to remain confidential:

- Letter from The Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP, Member for Willoughby, NSW Premier, to an individual, responding to their letter regarding the Powerhouse Museums at Ultimo and Parramatta, tendered by Mr Andrew Grant, private citizen.

10. **Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 5:00 pm, until Wednesday 2 September 2020 (public hearing).

Anthony Hanna
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 4

Wednesday 2 September 2020

Select Committee on the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Macquarie Room, Parliament House, 9:21 am

1. **Members present**

Mr Borsak, *Chair (from 9:21 am to 10:53 am; and from 10:59 am to 4:21 pm)*

Mr Shoebridge, *Deputy Chair (from 10.40 am)*

Mr Franklin

Ms Jackson *(from 9:21 am to 3:00 pm; and from 3:20 pm to 4:21 pm)*

Mr Khan *(from 9:21 am to 11.30 am; and from 12.00 pm to 4:21 pm)*

Mr Martin

Mr Secord

2. **Draft minutes**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Franklin: That draft minutes no.3 be confirmed.

3. Correspondence

The committee noted the following correspondence:

Received:

- 25 August 2020 – Email from Ms Monika Herfurth, Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, to the secretariat confirming that Ms Lisa Havilah will facilitate access to the Harwood Building for a committee site visit
- 25 August 2020 – Letter from Mr Michael Leckey, Group Manager, Property, Security, Assets and Services, City of Parramatta, to the secretariat, advising that Council must seek Licensor approval in order to facilitate access to Willow Grove

Sent:

- 24 August 2020 – Letter from the Chair to Mr Brett Newman, Chief Executive Officer, City of Parramatta, requesting assistance in organising a site visit to Willow Grove in Parramatta
- 24 August 2020 – Letter from the Chair to Ms Lisa Havilah, Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, requesting assistance in organising a site visit to the Harwood Building within the Powerhouse Museum precinct at Ultimo
- 27 August 2020 – Letter from the Chair to the Hon Don Harwin MLC, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, requesting production of the Government's business cases for projects at Ultimo, Parramatta and Castle Hill

4. Submissions

4.1 Public submissions

The committee noted that the following submissions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submission nos. 135a, 135b, and 135c.

4.2 Confidential submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Franklin: That the committee keep submission no. 39 confidential, as per the request of the author, as it contains identifying and/or sensitive information.

4.3 Attachment to submission

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Khan: That the committee authorise the publication of the attachment to submission no. 21.

5. Allocation of questioning

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Khan: That the allocation of questioning be left in the hands of the Chair.

6. Public hearing

The committee proceeded to take evidence in public.

Witnesses were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of proceedings, adverse mention and other matters.

The Chair reminded the following witness that they did not need to be sworn, as they had been sworn at another hearing for the same inquiry:

- Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet

The following witness was sworn:

- Ms Annette Pitman, Head of Create Infrastructure, Create NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet

The witnesses were examined by the committee.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Paul Brinkman, President, Regional and Public Galleries NSW

- Mr Michael Rolfe, Chief Executive Officer, Museums and Galleries of NSW
- Councillor Linda Scott, President, Local Government NSW

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Sarah Ruberto, Business Manager, Marketing, Events & Culture, Goulburn Mulwaree Council (via video link)
- Ms Jacqui Hemsley, Manager, Arts, Culture and Tourism, Lake Macquarie City Council (via video link)
- Ms Jessica Dowdell, Lifelong Learning and Engage Coordinator, Lake Macquarie City Council (via video link)
- Ms Niomi Sands, Regional Gallery Director, Clarence Valley Council (via video link)

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The committee noted that due to a technical problem, witnesses scheduled to appear at 2.00 pm did not commence until 2.30 pm.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Franklin: That Mr Adam Lindsay, Executive Director, Sydney Living Museums, scheduled to appear at 3.00 pm, be excused from today's hearing and be invited to appear at the next hearing on 8 October 2020.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Renzo Benedet, President and Secretary, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum
- Ms Donna White, Vice President and Custodian, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum
- Ms Debbie Sommers, Volunteer Curator, Port Macquarie Museum (via video link)

Mr Renzo Benedet tendered the following documents:

- Firearms in Museums, Changes to NSW Firearms Regulation Targets Museums and
- Firearms in Museums, Role of Museums In Public Policy
- Firearms in Museums, New Amendment to NSW Firearms Regulation Misses an Opportunity for Positive Change

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Mr James Colman, private citizen

Mr James Colman tendered the following documents:

- Images to accompany presentation
- Items from reports prepared by Edward Higginbotham and Associates P/L, consultants in archaeology, history and heritage

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 4:18 pm.

7. **Tendered documents**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee accept and publish the following documents tendered during the public hearing:

- Firearms in Museums, Changes to NSW Firearms Regulation Targets Museums, tendered by Mr Renzo Benedet, President and Secretary, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum
- Firearms in Museums, Role of Museums In Public Policy, tendered by Mr Renzo Benedet, President and Secretary, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum
- Firearms in Museums, New Amendment to NSW Firearms Regulation Misses an Opportunity for Positive Change, tendered by Mr Renzo Benedet, President and Secretary, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum
- Images to accompany presentation, tendered by Mr James Colman, private citizen

- Items from reports prepared by Edward Higginbotham and Associates P/L, consultants in archaeology, history and heritage, tendered by Mr James Colman, private citizen.

8. Request for Government advice on the status of local government grant applications

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Khan: that the committee write to Create NSW noting its concerns about the delays to multi-year funding grant applications for Council operated museums and galleries, as described in evidence on 2 September 2020, and requesting advice on when such funding applications will be determined and announced.

9. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 4:21 pm, until Friday 25 September 2020 (site visit).

Anthony Hanna
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 5

Friday 25 September 2020

Select Committee on the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Willow Grove, 34 Phillip Street, Parramatta, 9:36 am

1. Members present

Mr Borsak, *Chair*
Mr Shoebridge, *Deputy Chair (until 11:50 am)*
Ms Jackson
Mr Martin
Mr Secord (*until 1.19 pm*)

2. Apologies

Mr Franklin
Mr Khan

3. Site visit to Willow Grove and the Harwood Building

3.1 Locations of site visit

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee conduct a site visit to Willow Grove in Parramatta and the Harwood Building within the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum Precinct. The site visit is to commence at Willow Grove at 9:30am and to include an informal meeting with representatives of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU), the City of Parramatta, the North Parramatta Residents Action Group and other identified stakeholders. The site visit is to conclude with a tour of the Harwood Building in Ultimo.

3.2 Visit to Willow Grove

The committee visited Willow Grove and met with:

- Ms Roslyn Mayled, Director, Create Infrastructure, Create NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Mr David Riddell, Consultant, Infrastructure NSW
- Ms Michelle Locke, Secretary, Dharug Strategic Management Group
- Ms Julie Jones (Webb), Chair, Dharug Strategic Management Group
- Mr Darren Greenfield, Secretary, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU)
- Ms Suzette Meade, North Parramatta Residents Action Group
- Ms Kylie Winkworth, museum and heritage consultant

3.3 Visit to the Harwood Building, Powerhouse Museum

The committee visited the Harwood Building, digitisation workshop, heritage core, steam revolution, and the Maton exhibition and met with:

- Ms Lisa Havilah, Chief Executive, Powerhouse Museum
- Mr Matthew Connell, Director, Curatorial, Collections & Exhibitions, Powerhouse Museum
- Ms Trish Stokes, A/Head of Collections & Major Projects, Powerhouse Museum
- Ms Kylie Winkworth, museum and heritage consultant
- Dr Lindsay Sharp, private citizen.

4. Next meeting

The committee adjourned at 1.46 pm until Thursday, 8 October 2020 (public hearing).

Anthony Hanna

Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 6

Thursday 8 October 2020

Select Committee on the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Macquarie Room, Parliament House, 9:17 am

1. Members present

Mr Borsak, *Chair*

Mr Shoebridge, *Deputy Chair*

Mr Franklin

Ms Jackson (*until 11.50 am, from 2.05 pm*)

Mr Khan

Mr Martin

Mr Secord

2. Draft minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That draft minutes nos. 4 and 5 be confirmed.

3. Correspondence

The committee noted the following correspondence:

Received:

- 2 September 2020 – Email from Dr Lindsay Sharp, private citizen, to the Chair, requesting committee consideration of additional issues and witnesses for future examination
- 3 September 2020 – Letter from the Hon Don Harwin MLC, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, to the Chair responding to the committee's correspondence requesting the production of the Government's business cases for the Parramatta, Ultimo and Castle Hill projects
- 4 September 2020 – Letter from Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet, to the secretariat requesting clarification of evidence from the hearing on 29 July 2020
- 9 September 2020 – Letter from Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet, to the Chair, providing a timeframe for the release of funding decisions for the Local Government Authorities Art and Cultural Programs Multiyear Funding Program
- 11 September 2020 – Email from Mr Michael Rolfe, Chief Executive Officer, Museums and Galleries of NSW, to the secretariat, providing further information to the committee following his appearance on 2 September 2020

- 16 September 2020 – Letter from Mr Colin Gale to the committee raising concerns about submission no. 68 from the Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation
- 21 September 2020 – Email from Ms Katherine Littlewood, Executive Officer to the Chief Executive, City of Parramatta, declining the committee's invitation to attend the site visit to Willow Grove on 25 September 2020
- 1 October 2020 – Email from Mr Craig Limkin to the secretariat, declining the committee's invitation to give evidence at the hearing on 8 October 2020
- 2 October 2020 – Email from Mr James Freeman, Fund Manager, Australian Unity, to the secretariat, declining the committee's invitation to give evidence at the hearing on 8 October 2020
- 2 October 2020 – Email from Mr Patrick Moore, Parliamentary Liaison Officer to the Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, to the secretariat declining the committee's invitation for the Minister and Departmental officials to give evidence at the hearing on 8 October 2020

Sent:

- 7 September 2020 – Letter from the Chair to Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet, seeking advice on funding decisions for the Local Government Authorities Art and Cultural Programs Multiyear Funding Program
- 22 September 2020 – Letter from the Chair to the Hon Don Harwin MLC, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, inviting the Minister and Departmental officials to give evidence at the hearing on 8 October 2020

4. Public submissions

The committee noted that the following submissions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submission nos. 79a, 118a, 119a, 135d and 149a.

5. Additional witnesses for the hearing on 8 October

Committee noted that it agreed (via email) to a proposal for the following witnesses to be invited to give evidence to the committee, preferably on 8 October 2020, in addition to the previously resolved witness list:

- Mr Frank Howarth AM PSM, Chair, Heritage Council of NSW
- Mr Tim Smith OAM, Director, Heritage Operations, Heritage NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Senior representatives of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU)
- Mr Craig Limkin, private citizen
- Representatives of the Dharug Strategic Management Group
- Representatives of the Australian Unity Corporation, as owners of the lot adjacent to Willow Grove Parramatta.

6. Answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions

Committee noted that the following answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee:

- The Hon Don Harwin MLC, Ms Kate Foy and Ms Lisa Havilah, received on 27 August
- Mr Brett Newman and Ms Jennifer Concato of the City of Parramatta, received on 14 August
- Ms Cherie McNair of ICOM Australia, received on 27 August
- Ms Judith Coombes of AMaGA, received on 27 August
- Mr Troy Wright of the Public Service Association of NSW, received on 28 August

7. Clarification of evidence

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee authorise the addition of a footnote to the evidence of Ms Kate Foy and Ms Lisa Havilah noting the requested clarification.

8. Request for documents

Committee considered correspondence of 3 September 2020 from the Hon Don Harwin MLC, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, to the Chair advising that the Government is not required to produce the documents requested on the basis of Cabinet confidentiality.

Mr Shoebridge moved: That the Chair is to bring an order before the House pursuant to Standing Order 52 seeking the production of the documents in question.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Borsak, Ms Jackson, Mr Secord, Mr Shoebridge

Noes: Mr Franklin, Mr Kahn, Mr Martin

Question resolved in the affirmative.

9. Inquiry timeline

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Jackson: That the committee:

- Have a hearing in February/march 2021, with the proposed witness list to be circulated and agreed to via email; and
- Table the report by June 2021.

10. Allocation of questioning

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Secord: That the allocation of questioning be left in the hands of the Chair for the hearing on 8 October 2020.

11. Request for Kate Foy to appear alongside certain witnesses

Committee deliberated on the request from Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet, to appear alongside Ms Lisa Havilah, Chief Executive, MAAS, for the hearing on 8 October 2020.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That Ms Foy is not to appear alongside Ms Havilah at the witness table, but can be present in a support/advisor capacity for Ms Havilah's round of questioning.

12. Decline from Minister Harwin to give evidence on 8 October 2020

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That Minister Harwin be invited to a future hearing, on a date to be determined.

13. Inviting Professor Glover AO to a future hearing

Consideration of item deferred by the committee.

14. Public hearing

The committee proceeded to take evidence in public.

Witnesses, the public and the media were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of proceedings, adverse mention and other matters.

The Chair reminded the following witness that they did not need to be sworn, as they had been sworn at another hearing for the same inquiry:

- Ms Lisa Havilah, Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences

The following witness was sworn:

- Mr David Borger, Representative, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences

The witnesses were examined by the committee.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Ms Julie Jones (Webb), Chair, Dharug Strategic Management Group
- Professor Richie Howitt, Director and Finance Officer, Dharug Strategic Management Group

Professor Richie Howitt, tendered the following document:

- Dharug Strategic Management Group Ltd, Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Select Committee on the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in NSW – Opening Statement and Further Comments, dated 8 October 2020
- Submission from Dharug Strategic Management Group Ltd, State Significant Development: Powerhouse Parramatta, Environmental Impact Statement

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Mr Adam Lindsay, Executive Director, Sydney Living Museums

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The Chair reminded the following witness that they did not need to be sworn, as they had been sworn at another hearing for the same inquiry:

- Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet

The following witnesses were sworn:

- Mr Frank Howarth AM PSM, Chair, Heritage Council of NSW
- Mr Tim Smith OAM, Director, Heritage Operations, Heritage NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet

The witnesses were examined by the committee.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

- Mr Darren Greenfield, Secretary, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union NSW
- Ms Rita Mallia, President, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union NSW

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 2:55 pm.

15. **Tendered documents**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee accept and publish the following documents tendered during the public hearing:

- Dharug Strategic Management Group Ltd, 'Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Select Committee on the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in NSW', Opening Statement and Further Comments, dated 8 October 2020 - tendered by Professor Richie Howitt, Director and Finance Officer, Dharug Strategic Management Group
- 'Submission from Dharug Strategic Management Group Ltd, State Significant Development: Powerhouse Parramatta, Environmental Impact Statement' - tendered by Professor Richie Howitt, Director and Finance Officer, Dharug Strategic Management Group

16. **Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 2:55 pm. *Sine die.*

Anthony Hanna
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 7

Monday 15 February 2021

Select Committee on the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Jubilee Room, Parliament House, 9.03 am

1. Members presentMr Borsak, *Chair*Mr Shoebridge, *Deputy Chair (from 9.30 am until 4.03 pm)*

Mr Franklin

Ms Jackson

Mr Khan (*from 1.30 pm*)

Mr Martin

Mr Secord

2. Draft minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Franklin: That draft minutes no. 6 be confirmed.

3. Correspondence

The committee noted the following correspondence:

Received:

- 1 January 2021 – Email from Ms Grace Cochrane AM, member of the Powerhouse Museum Alliance, to the committee secretariat noting the Alliance's concerns about the future content and programming for the Powerhouse Parramatta and the renewed Ultimo precinct.

Sent:

- 27 January 2021 – Letter from the Chair to the Hon Don Harwin MLC, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, inviting the Minister and Departmental officials to give evidence at the hearing on 15 February 2021.

4. Answers to questions on notice

Committee noted that the following answers to questions on notice were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee:

- Ms Lisa Havilah of the MAAS, received on 3 November 2020
- Ms Kate Foy of DPC and Mr Tim Smith OAM of Heritage NSW, received on 4 November 2020
- the first of two answers provided by Mr Renzo Benedet of the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, received on 28 September 2020, regarding potential funding models for museums

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Franklin: That the committee keep confidential the second of two answers provided by Mr Renzo Benedet of the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, received on 28 September 2020, regarding instances of firearm theft.

5. Public submissions

The committee noted that the following submission was published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee: submission no. 137c.

6. Attachments to submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Franklin: That the committee authorise the publication of the attachment to submission no. 137c, including on the committee's website.

7. Allocation of questioning

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Jackson: That the allocation of questioning be left in the hands of the Chair for the hearing on 15 February 2021.

8. Request for Kate Foy to appear alongside certain witnesses

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Secord: That the committee agree to the request from Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet, to appear alongside Ms Lisa Havilah, Chief Executive, MAAS, and Mr Peter Collins AM QC, President, Board of Trustees, MAAS, for the hearing on 15 February 2021.

9. Public hearing

The media and public were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of proceedings, adverse mention and other matters.

The Chair noted that members of Parliament swear an oath to their office, and therefore do not need to be sworn prior to giving evidence before a committee.

The Chair reminded the following witnesses that they did not need to be sworn, as they had been sworn at another hearing for the same inquiry:

- Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Mr Simon Draper, Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure NSW

The Hon Don Harwin MLC, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts and departmental witnesses were examined by the committee.

The evidence concluded and the Minister and Mr Draper withdrew.

The Chair reminded the following witness that they did not need to be sworn, as they had been sworn at another hearing for the same inquiry:

- Ms Lisa Havilah, Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Hon Peter Collins AM QC, President, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences

Ms Foy continued to be examined.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Mr Christopher Brown AM, Chair, Western Sydney Powerhouse Museum Community Alliance

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The Chair reminded the following witness that they did not need to be sworn, as they had been sworn at another hearing for the same inquiry:

- Mr Darren Greenfield, Secretary, Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union NSW.

The witness was examined.

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The Chair reminded the following witness that they did not need to be sworn, as they had been sworn at another hearing for the same inquiry:

- Mr Steven Molino, Principal, Molino Stewart Environmental and Natural Hazards Consultants.

The witness was examined.

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Mr Tom Lockley, private citizen

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The following witness was sworn and examined:

- Cr Donna Davis, private citizen

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 4.30 pm.

10. Inquiry timeline

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Secord: That the reporting date be extended until 31 December 2021 with the option of further hearings in 2021, to be convened by the Chair in consultation with committee members if and when needed.

11. Provision of transcript to the Mayor of Parramatta

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Franklin: That the Chair write to the Mayor of Parramatta, Lord Mayor Dwyer, providing a copy of the transcript from 15 February 2021 and giving him an opportunity to comment on or address evidence given by Cr Donna Davis.

12. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 4.38 pm. *Sine die*.

Anthony Hanna
Committee Clerk

Minutes no. 8

Thursday 17 March 2022

Select Committee on the Government's Management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Jubilee Room, Parliament House, Sydney at 9.48 am

1. Members present

Mr Borsak, *Chair*

Mr Shoebridge, *Deputy Chair* (from 9.52 am)

Mr Harwin

Ms Jackson (from 9.59 am)

Mr Secord (until 2.14 pm)

2. Apologies

Mr Martin

Mr Poulos

3. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Secord: That draft minutes no. 7 be confirmed.

4. Correspondence

The committee noted the following correspondence:

Received:

- 15 March 2021 – Correspondence from Ms Julie Jones, Ms Michelle Locke and Mr Richard Howitt of the Dharug Strategic Management Group Ltd to the secretariat, addressing comments made by various witnesses at the committee's hearing on Monday 15 February 2021
- 1 February 2022 – Email from Mr Tom Lockley, private individual, to the committee requesting examination of paragraph 1(b)(vii) of the inquiry terms of reference, being the NSW Government's response to the previous Portfolio Committee No. 4 inquiry into museums and galleries in NSW

- 10 March 2022 – Email from Ms Jennifer Concato, Executive Director, City Planning and Design, City of Parramatta, declining the committee's invitation to give evidence on 17 March 2022
- 11 March 2022 – Email from Dr Peter Phelps, Executive Director, Office of the Premier, to the secretariat, declining the committee's invitation to give evidence on 17 March 2022
- 11 March 2022 – Email from Mr Craig Limkin to the secretariat regarding the committee's hearing on 17 March 2022
- 15 March 2022 – Email from Mr Mark Morrow to the secretariat declining the committee's- invitation to give evidence on 17 March 2022

Sent:

- 3 March 2021 – Letter from the Chair to Cr Bob Dwyer, Lord Mayor of Parramatta, inviting him to comment on or respond to evidence given by Cr Donna Davis at the committee's hearing on Monday 15 February 2021
- 7 March 2022 – Letter from the Chair to Hon Dominic Perrottet MP, NSW Premier, inviting him to give evidence on 17 March 2022
- 7 March 2022 – Letter from the Chair to Hon Ben Franklin MLC, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Regional Youth, inviting him to give evidence on 17 March 2022

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Harwin: That the committee authorise the publication of the Dharug Strategic Management Group correspondence dated 15 March 2021, with the exception of potential adverse mention which is to remain confidential, as per the recommendation of the secretariat.

5. Extension of inquiry and reporting date

The committee noted that it previously agreed via email that:

- the inquiry be extended into 2022 with a further hearing to be held early in the year; and
- the reporting date be extended from December 2021 to June 2022.

6. Answers to questions on notice

The committee noted that the following answers to questions on notice were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee:

- Ms Lisa Havilah and Mr Peter Collins AM QC of the MAAS, received on 30 March 2021
- Cr Donna Davis of Parramatta City Council, received on 22 March 2021
- Minister Harwin and Mr Simon Draper of Infrastructure NSW, received on 19 March 2021
- Ms Kate Foy of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, received on 12 April 2021

7. Submissions

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Secord: That the committee authorise the publication of submission nos. 119b, 119c and 119d.

8. Committee to write to the NSW Premier

Mr Secord moved: That, on behalf of the committee, the Chair write to the Hon Dominic Perrottet MP, NSW Premier, seeking potential dates on which the Premier would be available to give evidence to the committee.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Borsak, Mr Secord.

Noes: Mr Harwin.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Mr Harwin left the meeting.

9. Communication with Mr Craig Limkin

Mr Secord moved: That the committee make no further invitations to Mr Craig Limkin to give evidence to the inquiry.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Borsak, Mr Secord, Mr Shoebridge.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Mr Harwin joined the meeting.

10. Request by Ms Foy to give evidence

Mr Shoebridge moved: That the committee agree to the request from Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet, to appear alongside The Hon Ben Franklin MLC, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Regional Youth and Ms Annette Pitman, Acting Chief Executive, Create NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet, for the hearing on 17 March 2022.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Harwin, Mr Secord, Mr Shoebridge.

Noes: Mr Borsak.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

11. Allocation of questioning

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the allocation of questioning be left in the hands of the Chair for the hearing on 17 March 2022.

12. Public hearing

Witnesses were admitted.

The Chair made an opening statement regarding the broadcasting of proceedings, adverse mention and other matters.

The Chair noted that Members of Parliament swear an oath to their office, and therefore do not need to be sworn prior to giving evidence before a committee.

The Chair reminded the following witnesses that they did not need to be sworn, as they had been sworn at another hearing for the same inquiry:

- Ms Kate Foy, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Ms Annette Pitman, Acting Chief Executive, Create NSW

The Hon Ben Franklin MLC, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Regional Youth and departmental witnesses were examined by the committee.

The evidence concluded and the Minister and departmental witnesses withdrew.

The Chair reminded the following witnesses that they did not need to be sworn, as they had been sworn at another hearing for the same inquiry:

- Ms Lisa Havilah, Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences
- Hon Peter Collins AM QC, President, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences

The witnesses were examined.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The Chair reminded the following witness that they did not need to be sworn, as they had been sworn at another hearing for the same inquiry:

- Mr Troy Wright, Assistant General Secretary, Public Service Association

The witness was examined.

The evidence concluded and the witness withdrew.

The Chair reminded the following witness that they did not need to be sworn, as they had been sworn at another hearing for the same inquiry:

- Dr John Macintosh, Flood/Hydrological Engineer, Water Solutions (via WebEx)

The following witnesses were sworn:

- Mr Richard Dewar, Technical Director, WMA Water
- Mr Tom Gellibrand, Head of Projects, Infrastructure NSW
- Mr Greg Rogencamp, Associate Principal, Surface Water Engineering Leader, ARUP

The witnesses were examined.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The Chair reminded the following witnesses that they did not need to be sworn, as they had been sworn at another hearing for the same inquiry:

- Cr Donna Davis, Lord Mayor, City of Parramatta
- Ms Suzette Meade, North Parramatta Residents Action Group

The witnesses were examined.

Ms Meade tendered the following document:

- Photographs of flood debris in Parramatta, various dates in February and March 2022

Cr Davis tendered the following documents:

- Letter from the City of Parramatta to the Department of Planning and Environment in response to the Notice of Exhibition of Modification Report No. 1 for the Parramatta Powerhouse, dated 1 March 2022
- City of Parramatta Submission to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment in response to the exhibition of the State Significant Development Application for the Powerhouse Museum, dated 2 July 2020

Mr Shoebridge tabled Figure 2: Comparison of Flood Model Results from the report entitled 'Parramatta Powerhouse EIS: Flood Risk Review' by Molino Stewart Environmental Consultants, dated July 2020.

The evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

The public hearing concluded at 2.48 pm.

13. **Tendered documents**

Resolved, on the motion of Mr Shoebridge: That the committee accept and publish the following documents tendered during the public hearing:

- Photographs of flood debris in Parramatta, various dates in February and March 2022, tendered by Ms Meade
- Letter from the City of Parramatta to the Department of Planning and Environment in response to the Notice of Exhibition of Modification Report No. 1 for the Parramatta Powerhouse, dated 1 March 2022, tendered by Cr Davis
- City of Parramatta Submission to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment in Response to the exhibition of the State Significant Development Application for the Powerhouse Museum, dated 2 July 2020, tendered by Cr Davis
- Figure 2: Comparison of Flood Model Results from the report entitled 'Parramatta Powerhouse EIS: Flood Risk Review' by Molino Stewart Environmental Consultants, dated July 2020, tendered by Mr Shoebridge.

14. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 2.51 pm *sine die*.

Anthony Hanna
Committee Clerk

Draft minutes no. 9

Friday 23 September 2022

Select Committee on the Government's Management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Room 1043, Parliament House, Sydney at 10.02 am

1. Members present

Mr Borsak, *Chair*

Ms Faehrmann, *Deputy Chair (via WebEx)*

Ms Jackson

Mr Martin *(via WebEx)*

Mr Poulos *(via WebEx)*

Mr Rath

Mr Secord

2. Change in membership

The committee noted that:

- Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC replaced Mr David Shoebridge MLC as a substantive member and Deputy Chair of the committee from 30 March 2022.
- The Hon Chris Rath MLC replaced the Hon Don Harwin MLC as a substantive member of the committee from 29 March 2022.

3. Previous minutes

Resolved, on the motion of Ms Jackson: That draft minutes no. 8 be confirmed.

4. Correspondence

The committee noted the following correspondence:

Received:

- 5 April 2022 – Email from Dr Peter Phelps, Executive Director, Office of the NSW Premier, to the committee secretariat, declining the committee's request for the Premier to nominate potential dates to give evidence
- 14 April 2022 – Letter from Hon Ben Franklin MLC, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Arts and Regional Youth, to the Clerk of the Parliaments, enclosing the Minister's answers to questions on notice from the hearing on 17 March 2022
- 27 June 2022 – Email from Ms Kylie Winkworth, private individual, to the Chair, raising concerns about the future of the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo.

Sent:

- 22 March 2022 – Letter from the Chair to Hon Dominic Perrottet MP, NSW Premier, seeking potential dates on which the Premier would be available to appear before the committee.

5. Extension of inquiry and reporting date

The committee noted that it previously agreed via email that the reporting date for the inquiry be extended until the end of September 2022.

6. Answers to questions on notice

The committee noted that the following answers to questions on notice were published by the committee clerk under the authorisation of the resolution appointing the committee:

- Hon Ben Franklin MLC, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Arts and Regional Youth, received on 14 April 2022
- Ms Lisa Havilah and Hon Peter Collins AM QC of MAAS, received on 14 April 2022
- Mr Greg Rogencamp of Arup, received on 27 April 2022
- Mr Troy Wright of the Public Service Association, received on 3 May 2022.

7. Consideration of Chair's draft report

The Chair submitted his draft report, entitled '*Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales*', which, having been previously circulated, was taken as being read.

Mr Martin moved that:

- paragraphs 2.169, 2.170 and 2.171 be omitted and the following new paragraph be inserted instead:

'Committee comment

The committee accepts the argument that Willow Grove was unable to be retained on site, however the decision to retain Willow Grove and return it to the community will protect it for future generations. The decision achieves the best outcome by ensuring that western Sydney has access to a world-class cultural institution and retains Willow Grove in a new location that is more accessible to the local community to use it.'

- Finding 1 and Finding 2 be omitted and the following new finding be inserted instead:

'Finding X

The decision to relocate Willow Grove will ensure the building is more accessible to the public and protect it for future generations.'

- Recommendation 1 be amended by omitting 'given the removal of Willow Grove has already taken place despite widespread community opposition' before 'the NSW Government commit to honouring the memory of Willow Grove by erecting a Blue Plaque on its former site'.
- paragraph 2.172 be amended by omitting all words and inserting instead the following:

'We welcome the government's decision to retain and adaptively reuse St Georges Terrace as part of the new museum. The adaptive reuse of St Georges Terrace will be a key feature of Powerhouse Parramatta and the committee expects it to be carried out in accordance with the approved State Significant Development Application and development consent conditions.'

- Recommendation 2 be omitted
- paragraph 2.174 be omitted
- paragraph 2.175 be amended by omitting 'However, in the committee's view, further unanswered questions remain especially in relation to flood risks to the museum's very significant collections' and inserting instead 'The committee now expects the NSW Government to implement in full the flood-related conditions of consent issued as part of the State Significant Development Application determination'.
- Recommendation 3 be omitted
- paragraph 2.176 be omitted
- Recommendation 4 be omitted
- paragraphs 2.177 and 2.178 be omitted
- Finding 3 be omitted
- paragraph 2.180 be omitted and the following new paragraph be inserted instead:

'In the committee's view, Powerhouse Parramatta will be a transformational cultural precinct in a region that has for too long suffered from an inequitable lack of arts and cultural facilities. With over 18,000sqm of exhibition and public space Powerhouse Parramatta will be the largest museum in New South Wales and is a once in a generation investment in cultural infrastructure to ensure equitable access to world class, innovative cultural experiences.'

- The following new finding be inserted after paragraph 2.180:

'Finding X

Powerhouse Parramatta is a once in a generation investment in cultural infrastructure to ensure equitable access for Western Sydney to world class, innovative cultural experiences.'

- paragraphs 3.91, 3.92 and 3.93 be omitted
- Finding 4 be omitted
- Recommendation 6 be amended by omitting 'museum-related, non-commercial use' and inserting instead 'primarily culture-related uses'.
- paragraphs 3.95 and 3.96 be omitted and the following new paragraph be inserted instead:

'The committee notes evidence from stakeholders who would prefer the NSW Government nominate the entire Ultimo site for listing on the State Heritage Listing. However, the committee accepts the Government's reasons for the ultimate listing of the 'Ultimo Power House' on the State Heritage Register in September 2020.'

- Recommendation 7 be omitted.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Martin, Mr Poulos, Mr Rath.

Noes: Mr Borsak, Ms Faehrmann, Ms Jackson, Mr Secord.

Question resolved in the negative.

Ms Jackson moved that:

- The draft report be the report of the committee and that the committee present the report to the House;
- The transcripts of evidence, submissions, tabled documents, answers to questions on notice, responses to the online questionnaire, summary report of the online questionnaire and correspondence relating to the inquiry be tabled in the House with the report;
- Upon tabling, all unpublished attachments to submissions and individual responses to the online questionnaire be kept confidential by the committee;
- Upon tabling, all unpublished transcripts of evidence, submissions, tabled documents, answers to questions on notice, and correspondence relating to the inquiry, be published by the committee, except for those documents kept confidential by resolution of the committee;
- The committee secretariat correct any typographical, grammatical and formatting errors prior to tabling;
- The committee secretariat be authorised to update any committee comments where necessary to reflect changes to recommendations or new recommendations resolved by the committee;
- Dissenting statements be provided to the secretariat by 10.00 am Wednesday 28 September 2022;
- The secretariat table the report on Friday 30 September 2022.

Question put.

The committee divided.

Ayes: Mr Borsak, Ms Faehrmann, Ms Jackson, Mr Secord.

Noes: Mr Martin, Mr Poulos, Mr Rath.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

8. Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 10.06 am, *sine die*.

Anthony Hanna
Committee Clerk

Appendix 4 Dissenting statements

Hon Taylor Martin MLC, Liberal Party

Hon Peter Poulos MLC, Liberal Party

Hon Chris Rath MLC, Liberal Party

This was a long-running inquiry that received significant cooperation from the New South Wales Government. This was demonstrated by the former Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts, the Hon Don Harwin MLC accepting an invitation to appear before the committee twice and the current Minister for the Arts, the Hon Ben Franklin MLC accepting an invitation to appear before the committee once.

Unfortunately, the report that has been adopted by the committee fails in several parts to make constructive recommendations and instead attempts to score cheap political points and even delay the project through further red tape.

As an example, Findings 3 and 4 of this report are sensationalist and based on conjecture. They do not reflect the evidence provided throughout the Inquiry and are counter to all communication issued by the Powerhouse regarding the ongoing and permanent use of the Parramatta site.

At each committee hearing, the Chief Executive Officer for the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Lisa Havilah (who appeared at four of the committee's six hearings) outlined her vision for a world-class museum.

Powerhouse Parramatta will continue to be managed by the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Trust which is responsible for exercising the functions of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Act including the control and management of the Museum, and the maintenance and administration of the Museum to meet the needs and demands of the community in any or all branches of applied science and art and the development of industry.

We expect that Powerhouse Parramatta will be a Museum and, like all international museums, will integrate commercial activity into their programs to add to the amenity of the visitor experience.

Powerhouse Parramatta is 30,000sqm. Of this vast space, 1,600sqm will be food and beverage retail space. This will contribute to, extend and enhance visitor stay. Powerhouse Parramatta will also have a dedicated event space of 607sqm.

The level of dedicated commercial space is equivalent in scale to current Australian and international museum developments including WA Museum, Sydney Modern and M+ Hong Kong.

It is our view that Powerhouse Parramatta will be a transformational cultural precinct in a region that has for too long suffered from an inequitable lack of arts and cultural facilities. Powerhouse Parramatta will be the largest museum in New South Wales and is a once-in-a-generation investment in cultural infrastructure to ensure equitable access to world-class, innovative cultural experiences.

We also find issue with several recommendations found in this report some of which we outline below.

Firstly, a common complaint from those opposed to Powerhouse Parramatta was the flood risk associated with the site. Recommendation 3 attempts to placate those concerns by suggesting that the Government complete new tests regarding flood immunity at the site. This is a blatant attempt to delay the construction of Powerhouse Parramatta through further red tape.

The reality is that flood risk was a key consideration throughout the design and development process. Extensive flood modelling was undertaken by Arup, which is an internationally recognised engineering firm. It confirms that it would take a flood event in excess of one that could occur one in every 1,000 years to enter the ground floor of the finished museum.

The recent inundations that have been observed throughout Sydney and other parts of New South Wales saw flood levels in the Parramatta River approximately 1.6m above the river's edge, which is about 4m below where the finished floor level of the Powerhouse Parramatta will be. In addition, the project has received consent through a State Significant Development Application which has been found to be valid in both the Land and Environment Court and on appeal.

Secondly, Recommendation 7 suggests that the entire Ultimo site should be subject to a nomination on the State Heritage Register.

In 2020 the NSW State Heritage Council reviewed the Powerhouse Ultimo precinct and, in that review, determined that the building was not of state heritage significance. The Wran Building is not included on any statutory heritage register for local or State significance and is not listed on the City of Sydney LEP. The Wran Building has been altered significantly since 1988. The level of alterations to the Wran Building is to the extent that it has deviated so far from the original design intent, that it is no longer representative of the original museum design. The Powerhouse Ultimo Renewal creates the opportunity for a significant new build upon the site, expanding and extending the museum's exhibition capabilities and increasing the museum footprint and presence within the city.

The word limit for a Dissenting Statement prevents us from outlining our disagreement with Findings 1 and 2 as well as Recommendations 2, 4 and 6. Our proposed changes can be found in the Minutes in the Appendixes of this report.

Powerhouse Parramatta will be the first NSW State Cultural Institution to be based in Western Sydney and as such will be a transformational cultural precinct in Australia's fastest-growing city.

Powerhouse Parramatta will be the largest museum in NSW, with over 18,000sqm of exhibition and public space attracting two million visitors annually, be a leader in science and technology and foster our future STEM leaders.

The establishment of Powerhouse Parramatta, the renewal of Powerhouse Ultimo and the expansion of Museums Discovery Centre in Castle Hill represents a major investment by the NSW Government that will cement the Powerhouse as Australia's leading museum of applied arts and sciences.

