

Naseema Sparks Supplementary Questions:

1. The HHT or SLM is a much-loved Sydney institution. How would a merger be able to preserve that goodwill? Particularly with volunteers and donors?

As part of a 'soft preparation for a closer working relationship between SLM and SARA, we have conducted a small amount of stakeholder research to determine the sentiment of bringing the two organisations together. This stakeholder research has shown us that there is a lot of excitement amongst all stakeholders, including volunteers and donors, about the prospect of a closer working relationship. There is also a sense of pride and anticipation

Whilst the research is not exhaustive, I do not believe either organisation will suffer from diminished goodwill. In fact, I believe the opposite will be evident, as a result of improved depth of programming and exhibition material

Both SLM and SARA have thriving volunteer programs. SARA has pioneered flexible working for volunteers, allowing them to work from home. The proposal under consideration opens up more opportunities for volunteers to have even more interesting and exciting day-to-day work, and more properties at which they can welcome visitors, give talks and conduct tours

SLM has many important donor relationships, many of whom are involved in other areas of the organisation such as being a volunteer or serving on board sub-committees. Feedback from many of them on the proposal to create a new cultural organisation is highly positive. In fact, our current Annual Appeal has attracted several donations from lapsed supporters. All of this is a good sign of a positive sentiment to the future of SLM and SARA, and shows that donors are engaged in the vision and direction of the organisation

It is important to note, as was covered in our presentations to the Committee, that the fundamental legislated roles of HHT and SARA will continue unchanged. It is the engagement with the public that will be enhanced by coming together under a single umbrella

2. How do you respond to claims that both SA and SLM are too Sydney centric? Will the proposed merger respond to this perception?

I can only answer for Sydney Living Museums, and I agree that the 'public name' gives the impression that the organisation focuses in and around Sydney

The rebranding exercise from Historic Houses Trust to Sydney Living Museums was carried out in late 2013, before I became a Trustee, and the preparatory market research indicated what many already know, that the city-brand "Sydney", is a very powerful, global drawcard, particularly for international and interstate visitors. At that time, the SLM name was considered much more contemporary, exciting and attractive than Historic Houses Trust

That said, SLM Trustees and Management are acutely aware that the word Sydney is misleading, and as part of a 'soft preparation' we are working with branding experts to create an identity which communicates a much broader appeal for the organisation, with the aim of elevating our properties, spaces and activities which are outside Sydney to the same status of those held in the City.

I am confident the issue of perceived Sydney-centricity will be addressed as we go forward

Finally, SLM runs a fund called The Endangered Houses Fund, which is a conservation program that works across the State to ensure significant properties are preserved. Projects undertaken by the Endangered Houses Fund include those in several locations outside Sydney, such as Moss Vale, Newcastle and Glenwood.