



Public Service Association of NSW

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28 August 2020

Secretariat
Upper House Committees
Legislative Council
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

ATTN: Andrew Ratchford

Museums@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Secretariat

RE: Select Committee on the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum

The Public Service Association of New South Wales appeared before the Select Committee on 29 July 2020 and took a number of questions on notice. These answers were due yesterday (Thursday 27 August 2020) and we apologise for the delay in providing them, however there have been some challenges in obtaining some of the information from the relevant employers. The questions and the responses are as follows:

- 1. Has there been any communication or consultation with employees regarding the prospect of the Powerhouse being relocated to Parramatta?**

The Public Service Association of NSW (PSA) was not aware of any proposal to base the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS) Head Quarters in Parramatta. The first time the PSA was aware of this proposal was when it was announced during the Parliamentary Enquiry.

- 2. How many employees are at Castle Hill?**

The Museum Discovery Centre stations approximately 6 employees on site in Castle Hill. These approximately six employees are predominantly in visitor services and administration.

Due to a large proportion of MAAS's collection being stored at the Museum Discover Centre however, up to 40 MAAS employees on a single day may be on site. These employees include Registrars, Conservators and Curators.

3. What is the proportion of casual employment, both at MAAS and the other cultural institutions?

Casualization at MAAS and other cultural institutions is systemic. Casuals are improperly utilised and, in many cases, work regular consistent shifts that would be expected of an ongoing employee. The PSA can point to multiple “casual” employees who have worked regular, consistent shifts for almost 20 years.

MAAS

MAAS estimates that the proportion of casual employment is approximately 13 – 15% of employees.

However, the PSA estimates that the proportion of casual employment at MAAS is **approximately 41%**¹. This is based on a May 2020 presentation from MAAS management to MAAS employees, that stated there were 143 “casual” employees. The breakdown was as follows:

143 Casuals at the Powerhouse Museum² were impacted by the closure

- 52 Visitor Services
- 22 Astronomer guides at the Observatory
- 29 Educators
- 34 Program Delivery
- 3 steam revolution
- 3 working in volunteers

Note, these casuals are only those who were affected by the MAAS Powerhouse Museum closure in March 2020. Given the systemic and inappropriate use of casual employment at MAAS, it is probable the actual number of MAAS casuals exceeds 143.

MAAS did not yet respond to a further PSA request for the total employee headcount and total casual employee headcount.

The PSA can point to multiple MAAS “casual” employees who have worked regular, consistent shifts for almost 20 years.

Art Gallery of NSW³

Art Gallery of NSW estimates that the proportion of casual employment is approximately 22.7%. There is a total of 85 casual employees out of a headcount of 373 employees.

¹ Based on presentation given to MAAS employees in May 2020, and the 2018-2019 Annual report

² Presentation given to MAAS employees in May 2020

³ Based on response supplied by Art Gallery NSW management

Sydney Living Museums⁴

Sydney Living Museum estimates that the proportion of casual employment is approximately 22.2% of employees. There is a total of 58 casual employees out of a headcount of 261 employees. This relative high level of casualisation number is likely to be reduced because of the impacts of COVID-19.

State Library of NSW⁵

The proportion of casual employees at the State Library is approximately 1.5% of employees. There is a total of 5 casual employees out of a headcount of 320 employees. During 2020 COVID-19, the State Library retained all casual staff.

Australian Museum

The Australian Museum estimates that the proportion of current casual employment is approximately 0.65% of employees. There is a total of 67 casual employees “on the books” out of a head count of 288 employees. According to the Australian Museum, of these 67 casual employees, 2 are currently active. The Australian Museum states that the other 65 casual employees are and have only ever been used as “irregular, intermittent, short-term, urgent or other work as and when required”⁶.

Based on these figures, the PSA estimates that the proportion of casual employment at the Australian Museum is approximately 19.8%⁷.

The PSA notes that during the 2019 Australian Museum closure, the PSA estimated approximately 40 casuals ceased to be assigned shifts⁸.

Once again the Association would like to express its appreciation on behalf of its members for both the Committees’ work and the opportunity to make a submission.

If there are any other queries with which the Association may be able to assist, I can be contacted through _____ at _____ or on _____.

Yours sincerely

Troy Wright
Assistant General Secretary

⁴ Figures based on response by Sydney Living Museum NSW Management. Figures are based on 2018 – 2019 SLM Annual Report.

⁵ Based on response supplied by State Library management

⁶ Based on response from Australian Museum

⁷ Based on response from Australian Museum.

⁸ Based on PSA internal notes.