

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL ISSUES FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S
MANAGEMENT OF THE STATE RECORDS ACT 1998 AND THE POLICY PAPER
ON ITS REVIEW – 20 August 2020**

Answers to Questions taken on Notice

1. QUESTION – What happened to the material from the Heritage Migration Centre exhibition at MAAS

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Minister, in your introductory remarks you mentioned sadly you were aware—I think it was the Powerhouse Museum—a display had been dumped. I am not sure what you are talking about, but how do we prevent that happening?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes. What it was was the whole Migration Heritage Centre concept that was set up at the Powerhouse Museum as a result of a feasibility study I worked on back in 1994. That was, I thought, a really good program, but because social history was not one of the legislated briefs of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, when choices had to be made about where to put resources, a director in the past decided that that was not needed, and therefore got rid of the staff and stopped doing programs in that area. I just think that was very sad.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: What happened to the material?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I believe it is archived. I believe that MAAS passed it on to the State Library. Although I am not absolutely sure, I think that is what I was told.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: You can take that on notice.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I will take that on notice. But I would make the point that migration heritage would fall foursquare in the mission of this new organisation and that could be progressed.

ANSWER:

The NSW Migration Heritage Centre was a virtual immigration museum, created by The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS) in 2002. Its purpose was to identify, record, preserve, and interpret the heritage of migration to Australia through online exhibitions and research programs.

MAAS agreed to transfer the NSW Migration Heritage Centre, an archived website, to the State Library of NSW (SLNSW) following a strategic review in 2014 which concluded that the project was not aligned to MAAS's mission.

The transfer was completed in 2017 and SLNSW continues to host and maintain the archived website. No physical collection items were transferred from MAAS to the State Library.