

Submission
No 23

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Organisation: Millthorpe & District Historical Society

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Golden Memories Millthorpe Museum

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NSW Legislative Council
Inquiry into Museums & Galleries

August 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached a submission on behalf of the Millthorpe & District Historical Society for the Inquiry into Museums & Galleries to be held soon.

Although we are only a relatively small organisation we have a very strong interest and support for all levels of museums and galleries in this state and wish to add our voice to all those who share our concern for the future of these institutions in NSW as outlined in the specific terms of reference.

While our submission only briefly outlines how important government support and funding is to our continued activities it is the welfare of the whole sector that we are also wanting to see preserved.

We hope that we provide for you an example of a small, local museum that is an integral part of the community in our district in terms of both cultural & technological heritage, the economic viability of a small town in attracting tourism and the social well-being of all the volunteers involved in maintaining our museum.

Yours sincerely,

Jaqueline Irvine
Secretary GMMM

NSW Legislative Council Inquiry into Museums & Galleries

Submission on behalf of Golden Memories Millthorpe Museum (GMMM) Owned & Operated by the Millthorpe & District Historical Society Inc.

August 2016

- a) GMMM has been operating since 1965 as a fully volunteer owned & operated museum showcasing the social & rural history of Millthorpe & District. Over that period of time it has expanded from one historic building, the 1881 Good Templar's Hall, to include nine buildings to house its collection, a large percentage of which is machinery that relates to the rural technology of the district. In 2015, as part of its 50th anniversary celebrations, GMMM opened the latest building, The Trevor Pascoe Pavilion, which showcases Australian Inventions and displays a number of working rural machines that were originally of Australian invention. This pavilion completes our site as there is no more room but it adds to the Museum of Rural Technology (2005), which again has many operating machines relating to the rural heritage of the district, and the Spring Grove Pavilion (1995) which houses a large collection of tractors and our prize exhibit, the 1911 Clayton & Shuttleworth Steam Traction Engine. These exhibition spaces add to the earlier Exhibition Shed on site that has been recently refurbished and now houses an operating pea viner machine.

- b) The growth of the GMMM has been due to the hard work of the members of the M&DHS in originally raising debentures for the opening of the museum in 1965, collecting donations from local individuals & businesses for specific projects over the past 50 years and of course with the financial assistance of grant monies from a variety of government sources. The 2015 Trevor Pascoe Pavilion attracted state government funding through its Communities Building Partnership grants and without it the project would have not been the great success it has been. GMMM is consistently successful in attracting grants because its applications have demonstrated that it meets appropriate standards and has sound management & administrative practises.

- c) GMMM is opened to the public every weekend and school holidays and opens for group bookings on a regular basis as well as for school excursions. There are no paid staff so all these hours are donated by our volunteers but with the success of our museum and its growing popularity we are concerned about the future of operating the museum only on this volunteer model. GMMM is constantly on the look-out for means by which it can make the museum more accessible and better run and if that is to employ specialist assistance then government funded programs are essential. Being part of the Sustainable Collections Project has been very important and beneficial to our organisation and we see the increasing need for this type of support in the future.

- d) The proposed amalgamation of local councils in our area is of concern to GMMM as we have had a very good relationship with Blayney Shire Council (BSC) over the years. GMMM has been the recipient of a number of council loans and grants that have benefited our museum and the local community. GMMM has grown to become a

recognisable tourist attraction for the shire and the support of BSC with both funds and expertise in helping us run our museum has been crucial. Our relationship with BSC has been very positive and we are concerned that in a larger council with many more heritage and cultural institutions we will not be able to readily maintain this relationship which gives us such invaluable support.

- e) GMMM is able to maintain a lot of its machinery in working order because it has a strong membership of local people with the skills to maintain this machinery. This group of people are part of our aging population and their skills and memories are being lost and not replaced quickly enough by a younger generation who do not have the time to devote. For GMMM to continue to maintain its collection into the future there will need to be external support structures in place so that this heritage does not just rust through ignorance. It may be currently housed in one place for future generations to look at but its real value is that can be operated and demonstrated and that requires constant support.
- f) GMMM sees the preservation of knowledge and artefacts for future generations as the most important part of its mission statement and to that end the collection of oral histories that broaden the understanding of the collection and the history of the district are integral. The collection of oral histories requires support in both training and updating technologies and while GMMM has benefited from such in the past it is imperative that this support continues if we are to capture the stories of men & women in our district now in their 70's and older.
- g) In summary we would like to reiterate our key concerns:
 1. It is vital that access to adequate funding is maintained if not improved.
 2. There should be no reduction in resources available to organisations such as GMMM.
 3. Access to curatorial, managerial and marketing support and training is ongoing without being unreasonably constrained by bureaucracy.
 4. Recognition that institutions such as GMMM delivers benefits beyond cultural tourism in the form of local community involvement, preservation of specialised trades and skills and the ability to train new generations in heritage trades and skills.
 5. The importance of being able to exhibit items in working condition in order to demonstrate their true significance.
 6. Amalgamation of councils must not be allowed to affect the long-term viability of community museums and organisations.