

Submission
No 25

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Organisation: NSW Government

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NSW Government submission: Inquiry into museums and galleries

a) NSW government policy, funding and support for museums and galleries, museum and gallery buildings and heritage collections, including volunteer managed museums and museums managed by councils

The NSW Government is committed to growing arts and culture across NSW and in February 2015 launched *Create in NSW: the NSW Arts and Cultural Policy Framework*, the first NSW cabinet endorsed policy for arts and culture. It established a 10 year strategic framework focusing on increased access for audiences, organisational strength and artistic excellence across Western Sydney, Regional NSW and metropolitan Sydney and sets out the NSW Government's plan for arts and culture in NSW, including the museums and galleries sector.

The NSW Government provides program, project and devolved funding to support the small to medium museums and galleries sector. This includes funds for capital projects, volunteer managed museums and heritage collections, and museums and galleries managed by councils.

The NSW Government also invests in the State Cultural Institutions and Sydney Living Museums. From 2012/13 to 2015/16 the NSW Government invested over \$428.4 million into the Australian Museum, Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences and the Art Gallery of NSW. A further \$62.5 million was invested into Sydney Living Museums across its twelve museums.

Over the period 2012/13 to 2015/16, Arts NSW provided over \$8.35 million in direct program and project funding to galleries and museums across the State. This included 34 NSW galleries, museums and/or keeping places.

Arts NSW also provided over \$30.5 million to art centres, festivals, and the two State Significant Organisations, Carriageworks and the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, over the same period. These organisations include gallery spaces and museum/heritage spaces within their venues and programs.

As well as its direct investment in museums and galleries, the NSW Government provides support for service organisations. From 2012/13 to 2015/16, the Government provided over \$5.78 million to service organisations that provide support to small to medium museums, galleries volunteer-managed museums and historical societies that manage heritage collections. This support includes small grants, professional development opportunities, assistance in developing touring programs, advice on interpretation, display and collection significance assessment, and strategic planning. The key service organisations delivering this support are:

- Museums and Galleries NSW (M&GNSW) which provides leadership, research and professional development support for museums and galleries and administers a devolved funding program on behalf of Arts NSW. Since 2012 the devolved funding program has delivered over \$1.54 million in small grants to over 350 NSW museums and galleries
- Royal Australian Historical Society which delivers devolved funding to support historians in remote areas to document history across NSW.

Arts NSW has also assisted collaboration and strategic networks between galleries and museums to ensure the vitality of the arts and culture in regional NSW by providing an additional \$11.1 million over the past four years to the Regional Arts Network, which includes

Regional Arts NSW and the 14 Regional Arts Organisations. This includes \$1 million for the Country Arts Support Program which provides small grants to the sector.

The NSW Government also provides funding opportunities to arts and cultural facilities in local communities across New South Wales, including museums and galleries, through the ClubGRANTS Category 3 program administered by Liquor and Gaming NSW. From 2015/16, up to \$2.5 million per year over 4 years will be allocated to arts and cultural infrastructure projects across the State.

b) Potential funding impacts on museums and galleries affected by council amalgamations

The NSW Government invests in cultural facilities, such as museums and galleries, through a competitive funding process. Changes to the governance arrangements for funded facilities due to council mergers will not affect levels of NSW Government investment.

Between 2012/13 to 2015/16, the NSW Government delivered over \$7.33 million in program and project funding through the Arts and Cultural Development Program for council cultural facilities that house galleries or museums.

As part of the local government mergers, newly-amalgamated councils can access funding under the Stronger Communities Fund for priority community initiatives. New councils formed as a result of two councils (or parts of two councils) merging can access \$10 million, while those formed as a result of three councils or more (or parts of three councils or more) merging can access \$15 million. While the ultimate decision as to what projects are funded is a matter for each council, this funding is available for local cultural and community projects including local galleries and museums.

c) Opportunities to revitalise the structure, reach, and impact of museums and galleries, and their research and collecting priorities

Create in NSW sets out the Government's ambitions for the museums and galleries sector. Specific actions include:

- Support contemporary arts practice through the Arts & Cultural Development Program by investing in state significant organisations, significant festivals, major performing arts organisations, visual arts leaders and small to medium arts organisations across NSW
- Continue to digitise NSW State cultural collections to improve access and educational engagement
- Support the development of digital platforms to extend the reach of the State Cultural Institutions' collections, programs and events to schools, universities, family historians, researchers and artists and cultural practitioners across NSW
- Extend partnerships between State Cultural Institutions and arts and cultural organisations across NSW
- Develop a regional partnerships and a touring framework for the State Cultural Institutions to bring more of the State's cultural collections to communities throughout NSW
- Encourage people under 16 years of age to participate in the arts by exploring entry and membership conditions for the State collecting institutions, in particular free entry for under 16s to the Australian Museum and the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences

- Relocate the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta as part of the development of an arts and cultural precinct in Western Sydney.
- Promote opportunities for cultural tourism through Destination Management Planning, in consultation with the Regional Arts Network and Destination NSW
- Extend Aboriginal cultural collections and programming in State cultural institutions and recognise the significance of Aboriginal communities in artistic programs, collections, exhibitions and language.
- Work with Sydney Living Museums to identify opportunities for intersection with arts and culture to expand awareness, and enable a broader experience of tangible and intangible heritage across the State.

Our State Cultural Institutions support a wide range of activities in Western Sydney and Regional NSW, reaching around 3 million people in these areas between 2012/13 and 2014/15. Activities included:

- The Art Gallery of NSW toured 15 exhibitions to 41 locations between 2012/13 to 2014/15, which were viewed by an audience of over 585,000. Touring exhibitions include the Archibald Prize, Brett Whiteley: West of the Divide, Yirrkala Drawings and Bill Viola.
- The Australian Museum toured 27 exhibitions to 30 locations reaching 1.2 million people between 2012/13 to 2014/15. Key exhibitions toured include Tyrannosaurs – meet the family, Frank Hurley – Journeys into Papua and Wildlife Photographer of the Year.
- The Australian Museum’s Education outreach reached over 432,000 school students from programs such as Museum in a Box, Science Festival and Australian Biota.
- The Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences toured 10 exhibitions to 42 locations reaching nearly 900,000 people over 2012/13 to 2014/15. In addition, the Museum hosts an annual Regional Stakeholders Forum which provides an opportunity for the regional museums and collections sector to get together, discuss current topics and be inspired by new ideas.
- Designing Regions video conference series by the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences gave creative industry students in regional areas access to contemporary design/art practitioners and industry experts. The program included a partnership with South Western Sydney Institute – TAFE NSW.

In addition, Sydney Living Museums has delivered Unlocking Heritage, a \$1.1 million program that enables primary school students from low socio-economic status schools and from regional and rural areas to attend over 30 heritage, environment or history curriculum-linked programs at Sydney Living Museums and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service sites. In the last four years, Sydney Living Museums has toured 8 exhibitions to audiences in regional and remote centres and major cities in all states and territories. Exhibitions have visited 40 venues, and have been seen by 662,147 people (including 11 regional NSW cities with 335,720 visitors). Travelling exhibitions are a major way that SLM supports regional museums, galleries and libraries with a mix of exhibitions from photographic shows to interactive experiences.

d) Access to the collections of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the Australian Museum and any other state collections held in trust for the people of New South Wales, and programs that promote physical and online access

The NSW State Cultural Institutions are custodians of over 24 million collection items valued at \$5.3 billion. These collections are a vital part of the cultural DNA of NSW.

The State Cultural Institutions are working to ensure that their collections and programming are accessible at their primary venues in Sydney and off site.

Nearly 19 million people attended the five State Cultural Institutions between 2012/13 to 2015/16. Of these, 9.5 million attended the Australian Museum, the Art Gallery of NSW and the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences collectively.

Access to the vital collections of these institutions is further extended through loans and touring exhibitions across NSW, Australia and, to a lesser extent, internationally. Between 2012/13 and 2014/15, the Art Gallery of NSW, the Australian Museum and Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences toured 52 exhibitions to 113 locations, which were viewed by a around 3 million visitors at a venue other than their institution's key site over that time period.

Given the immense value of the Australian Museum's collection from a scientific perspective, its holdings are also made accessible to the scientific community. For example, the Australian Museum Research Institute (AMRI) has over 120 scientists that actively use the collections to undertake important applied science, forensic testing and DNA genomics work for Government agencies such as the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, CSIRO, Civil Aviation Safety Authority, NSW Fisheries, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, and Customs and Quarantine. AMRI also has ongoing scientific relationships with all NSW Universities.

Kids free

Create in NSW commits to exploring entry and membership conditions for the collecting Cultural Institutions for people under 16 years of age. This commitment contributes to the NSW State priority goal of increased attendance at cultural venues and events.

The Australian Museum and the Powerhouse Museum introduced free general entry for under 16s on 27 June 2015 to coincide with the first weekend of the public school holidays. To launch and promote the free entry for children, both museums offered free entry for all visitors that weekend in 2015 and again in 2016, achieving visitation of around 120,000 on the two weekends.

Since introducing free entry for young people to the Powerhouse Museum and the Australian Museum, attendance by under 16s at these museums has grown from 252,382 in 2014/15 to 413,256 in 2015/16, an increase of 64 percent.

Powerhouse Museum Relocation

A key step towards broadening our cultural reach is the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta. It is a key action for Western Sydney under *Create in NSW* to achieve greater participation and access to arts and culture for the people of Western Sydney. The Powerhouse Museum will anchor an arts and culture precinct in the Parramatta CBD and will be the gateway to greater arts and cultural activities in Parramatta and more broadly Western Sydney. It will provide opportunities to partner with other Western Sydney arts, cultural and community organisations to bring arts and culture to everyday life.

This will mark the first time one of the State's five major cultural institutions will be based outside the Sydney CBD. This will enable increased participation in arts and culture in Western Sydney over time.

Target audiences will be residents of Western Sydney, traditionally underserved by cultural provision, with a particular orientation toward young and diverse communities. It will also serve as a new cultural destination for residents of Sydney, NSW, visitors and tourists; professionals engaged in innovation, technology and creative industries; and students, teachers and researchers across primary, secondary and tertiary. The goal of the new Museum will be for each primary and secondary student to attend the museum multiple times during their schooling, regularly access digital learning programs, and return with their family.

State Library

The State Library's \$3.15 billion collection, which is held in trust for the people of New South Wales, is the most valuable library collection in Australia, and the third most valuable cultural collection in Australia after the National Gallery of Australia and the National Gallery of Victoria. The collection includes countless precious and historically significant items. In addition to the information and library services it provides, the Library shares its collections through a diverse program of exhibitions and events.

The State Library's exhibition program is one of the primary ways in which the Library can provide access to the collection. The State Library is undertaking a \$15 million project to renew and extend galleries to expand public space on the ground and first floors of the Mitchell building which will dramatically increase opportunities for public access to the collection by providing additional exhibition space. The new Mitchell galleries will use the latest technologies to deliver innovative new and adaptable platforms for visitors to experience a combination of the State Library's rich digital content and unique collection items that are found nowhere else. The Library's intention is to offer a connected user experience in the new galleries which will enable deeper engagement with the Library's collections.

Further, the State Library's Digital Excellence Program is providing unprecedented, world wide access to the most iconic and historically significant documents and objects of our State and nation, enabled by a complete renewal of the Library's underlying infrastructure and systems. The NSW Government has committed \$55.1m towards the program. The Program is on track, and the digitisation component of the Program has created over 7.5 million digital objects during the first four years. The Program has delivered significant benefits to the people of NSW including access to our most historically significant cultural treasures.

Touring Programs

The State Cultural Institutions are committed to extending loans and partnerships in Regional NSW and Western Sydney as well as developing a touring framework. The Australian Museum's outreach program includes *Museum in a Box* and the *Australian Museum Science Festival* regional tour while the Art Gallery of NSW has a Regional NSW and Western Sydney engagement plan which sets out the goals and mechanisms by which the Gallery will broaden its reach across NSW building on the 15 exhibits that toured to 41 locations with an audience of over 585,000 between 2012/13 to 2014/15.

Digital Collections

The State Cultural Institutions are also extending digital collections and programming to increase their reach. The State collections are both vast and complex, ranging from simple two dimensional images and text, to delicate three dimensional flora and fauna collections, fragile diaries and unique items which require careful protection. The delicate nature of some items means that they will never be made available for public viewing. The digital domain offers an important opportunity to significantly enhance access to collections and programming. As of 1 July 2015, the State Cultural Institutions had digitised over 8 million collection items, of which nearly 4.5 million items were digitally accessible by the public.

Under *Create in NSW*, Arts NSW with the State Cultural Institutions are investigating enhancing the digital capacity of the State Cultural Institutions and Museum of Contemporary Art to further extend their reach to schools, universities, family historians, researchers, artists and cultural practitioners, as well as the wider community.

Disability Access

In line with the National Arts and Disability Strategy, the State Cultural Institutions continue to improve access, participation and social inclusion for people with disability. Each institution has a comprehensive disability action plan. Major initiatives include:

- The Australian Museum's Crystal Hall, opened in 2015 – a new main public entry for the Museum that includes an accessible entry ramp and accessibility features such as tactile indicators in the floor, braille signage and a hearing loop.
- The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences completed the East Dome at Sydney Observatory – providing an accessible telescope viewing experience.
- The State Library has been made fully accessible for the first time in 100 years, including the provision of wheelchair access to the Mitchell Building, construction of compliant toilets and associated amenities, accessible wayfinding signage and resolution of building egress issues.

e) The sale of the Powerhouse Museum site in Ultimo and its proposed move to Parramatta, and whether there are alternative strategies to support museum development

The NSW Government has committed to relocate the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta as the anchor for the Parramatta Cultural Precinct.

Establishing the Powerhouse Museum in Parramatta will support the growth of the arts and culture sector, tourism and the visitor economy in Parramatta, Western Sydney and NSW by providing a vibrant new cultural destination that can be easily accessed and enjoyed day and night.

The 2014 State Infrastructure Strategy Update states:

NSW Cultural Institutions have remarkable collections. As part of a whole-of-sector strategy, the Government should find new and innovative ways of putting more of these collections on display. Opportunities to share and exhibit complementary collections between all institutions should be encouraged...the Powerhouse Museum is relatively remote from the proposed CBD cultural precinct. It occupies a constrained (but very valuable) site adjacent to Darling Harbour and will require significant reconfiguration to remain at its current location and comply with the exhibition and security standards of international and national lending institutions. Given the growing deficit of cultural infrastructure in Sydney's western suburbs, there is a strong case for relocating the Museum to a new cultural precinct serving the west. The Museum's educational orientation makes it a good fit for the growing population of the

area and its relocation could be partly funded by realising the commercial value of its existing site. The Museum would be a core asset – and potentially an iconic and popular one – in a cultural precinct in Sydney’s west.

Acting on this, the NSW has committed \$10m to plan for the relocation. In April 2016, the NSW Government announced the new museum would be situated on the banks of the Parramatta River. The new site will be integrated into the heart of growing Sydney, and embedded in the Parramatta CBD in close proximity to existing cultural facilities and universities, and transport nodes. Detailed planning for the new museum on the Riverbank site is now underway to realise the vision of the new Powerhouse Museum to be a contemporary museum in a smart and creative city, and a beacon of art, culture and innovation in Western Sydney. The costs and model for the new museum will be determined as part of the business case, which is expected to be finalised by late 2016.

The relocation of the museum provides a once in a generation opportunity to reimagine a museum for the future, responding to the growth and changing shape of Sydney, and to new methods of content delivery, learning, and collaboration. Accommodated within an iconic and purpose-designed building, the new facility will profile one of the world’s great collections and allow more items to be on display than ever before with the size of the collection on display planned to increase by at least 40 per cent.

More broadly, the new museum will be the anchor for an arts and cultural precinct in Parramatta and provide the ‘cultural gateway’ to Western Sydney. The new museum will also provide direct and indirect employment, volunteering and internship opportunities, and economic support for a range of allied businesses and commercial opportunities in Western Sydney and beyond.

Western Sydney is the third largest economy in the country, adding over \$90 billion a year to the nation’s GDP. In 2011-12, Western Sydney comprised around 32% of Sydney’s economy and around 18% of the NSW economy. As such, Western Sydney is identified as a priority area in key NSW Government documents including *A Plan for Growing Sydney*, *Rebuilding NSW 2014* and *Create in NSW*. Over 2 million people live in the Greater Western Sydney region, with 49% being under 35. The population is projected to increase to 2.96 million by 2036.

Significantly, the knowledge economy will grow to become an influential driver of the Western Sydney economy over the next 30 years. Parramatta is the largest hub for knowledge intensive business services jobs in Western Sydney. The museum will support research and learning in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math. It will contribute to Parramatta and its goals as a Smart City, and NSW Government’s priority sectors including digital, education, creative and health. It will also be an important hub of knowledge with intended partnerships with Western Sydney University and the Westmead health campus. The Powerhouse Museum is uniquely placed to support this growth in Western Sydney’s knowledge economy.

All proceeds from the sale of the existing site of the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo will contribute to the establishment of the new museum in Parramatta. No decision has been made on the future use or sale of the existing museum site in Ultimo. Property NSW has been engaged to advise the Government on possible future uses for the Ultimo site. This work is in its early stages, and will consider a range of possible future uses that take account of site zoning and heritage protection.

f) The development and transparency of advice to the government on priorities for NSW museums and galleries

Create in NSW provides a cabinet-endorsed strategic framework to guide the NSW Government's investment in arts and culture across the state, including its investment in museums and galleries.

The NSW Government's *Rebuilding NSW: State Infrastructure Strategy 2014* reserves \$600 million for a cultural infrastructure program. The program of strategic investment will ensure strong, viable cultural facilities are developed across NSW. This will realise greater participation and creativity in the arts, make better use of our existing state infrastructure and collections and drive growth in the visitor economy. Infrastructure NSW is currently developing a Cultural Infrastructure Strategy to guide future investment decisions.

g) The impact of the efficiency dividend on the budgets of museums and galleries over the last 10 years, and funding levels compared to other states

The NSW Government is committed to delivering savings to help improve public services and deliver a sustainable State Budget. The application of an efficiency dividend to the State Cultural Institutions is not unique to NSW. The National Cultural Institutions, for example, have applied the Commonwealth efficiency dividend since its inception in 1987 and in the *2015 Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook* were allocated a 3% efficiency dividend. The 2016/17 Commonwealth base efficiency dividend is 2.5%.

The NSW efficiency dividend of 1.5% applies across government, including the State Cultural Institutions. The State Cultural Institutions are best placed to determine how the efficiency dividend is applied. A number have undertaken organisational reviews and workforce planning processes to ensure long term sustainability and maximise efficiency.

h) The economic impact of museums and galleries on cultural tourism, and their role in supporting the visitor economy in Sydney and regional New South Wales

A strong arts and cultural sector positions NSW as a desirable place to live, work, visit and invest. It contributes to Sydney's international profile as a global creative city and provides a gateway to our unique regions.

Arts and culture play an important role in NSW's economy, with cultural and heritage tourism generating \$11.2 billion in 2015. Domestic travelers staying overnight at a destination spend 56 per cent more and stay 37 per cent longer when they incorporate cultural activities into their visit. Destination NSW statistics show that in 2015 almost 60 per cent of cultural tourists visited a museum or gallery during their stay.

Create in NSW has a particular focus on growing arts and culture in Regional NSW including through cultural tourism. Policy actions to support this focus include regional mapping to form an evidence base guiding government strategy and investment, as well as the promotion of regional arts and culture through a best practice guide to destination management planning.