

**Submission
No 151**

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

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Date received: 14 August 2016

SUBMISSION TO THE NSW UPPER HOUSE ENQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS

There exists a glaring inequity in the distribution of cultural funding within NSW currently. This short submission, made by a director of the Orange Regional Museum Fund Ltd (ORMF), a charity funding organisation for the Orange Regional Museum, seeks to bring about a change to establish a more equitable distribution apportionment of State funding. This is in order that regional NSW has the opportunity to establish, preserve and maintain the heritage, culture and tourism attraction of rural collections and stories.

Orange is in the process of addressing the lack of a museum with quality infrastructure. Supported by a \$4m Federal grant, only a land grant of \$1m from the NSW Government, and Orange City Council's rate funding has succeeded in newly establishing an \$8m Orange Regional Museum. The ORMF has achieved a community contribution of \$0.5m to date. The opening is scheduled for next October. Given the historical events of the NSW gold discovery at Ophir and the continuation of mining by Cadia Valley Operations near Orange, these significant events and associated stories requires display for education and tourism.

Yet the funding support for fit-out and exhibitions, not to mention adequate storage and staffing, which is currently limited to Council funding, is a major impediment to providing for the strategic planning that has been done for exhibitions over time covering such as Aboriginal culture, the regional geological development and Mt Canobolas, Chinese history, agricultural production, and the interpretation of people settlement in the region.

Given the opportunity, the appropriate infrastructure of the Orange Regional Museum also has the potential of providing for touring exhibitions and providing a venue for those collections currently in permanent storage in the State due to a lack of exhibition space, such as the State's mineral collection.

To date there has been no indication of a active partnership in funding rural NSW museums on an equitable distribution basis. Yet the "Rebuilding NSW State Infrastructure Strategy" did promise that the State Government would actively collaborate with local governments on opportunities for cultural facilities (refer Section 4.5, page 48 https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/miscellaneous/sc000222_2014-state-infrastructure-strategy_nov24_web.pdf) such as the Orange Regional Museum. I seek that this matter for an equitable funding distribution be redressed for the benefit of all NSW.

Rodney Tonkin, ORMF Ltd Director