

Submission
No 152

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Organisation: Orange and District Historical Society

Date received: 14 August 2016

Inquiry into museums and galleries - NSW Legislative Council

Submission by Phillip Stevenson - Orange and District Historical Society

Mr Chairman and members of the committee

I would like to make the following submission on behalf of myself and the Orange and Distinct historical society in relation to the terms of reference outlined below. I have been a member of the society since 1990 .president for a number of years .I am an office bearer on the Central Tablelands chapter of Museums Australia and have been for the Marsden Historical Research Centre. I am also a long-term member of the Golden Memories Museum Millthorpe and participant in local museum networks. I am a member of Orange City council's Orange Regional Museum committees in their various iterations since 2007. Museums and the preservation of heritage have been close to my heart since first being taken to the Ultimo "Tech." Museum, (now MAAS) as a young child in the late 1940's

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

This is crucial. I am familiar with upwards of 30 local museums in the central west most of them entirely run by volunteers who put in untold years of dedicated service. They operate on a shoestring and government assistance greatly enhances their ability to properly display and research items and stories of local and national significance

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

As mentioned above funding greatly assists local museums.

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

In my experience all societies and museums could do far more given more resources. Great opportunities, objects, and stories are often lost forever for lack thereof.

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 resources of local museums are severely limited and the assistance of the Powerhouse outreach programs and travelling exhibitions have enabled them to mount displays that would have been impossible otherwise.

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

As a country person this seems a very illogical move particularly as our access will be much more difficult. As a voter it looks like a rapacious and cynical land grab. Surely

there is a case for an additional and separate museum at Parramatta or elsewhere in the vast western suburbs. All people with interests in Museums are voters; they are numerous and are in my experience very suspicious of the motives of governments in situations like this. They take consolation in that the ballot box is always there.

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

I understand that as of the present none of the documents relating to the move of the Powerhouse to Parramatta have been made public. This is hardly transparency.

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

We have seen negative impacts on the Powerhouse and Australian museums and on the amount of funding available to Museums in the city and country.

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

I cannot speak for Sydney but you will be aware of the ongoing decline of many country towns and regions. Tourism is of paramount importance and you have only to look at the tourism brochure of all country towns to see that the museum will be one of the most important drawcards from a tourism perspective.

i) any other related matter.

Phillip Stevenson