

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Name: North Parramatta Residents Action Group Inc.

Date received: 5 September 2016



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Residents' Action Group Inc.

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Date: 05/09/2016

Resolved to publish Yes / No

**Supplementary Submission from the North Parramatta Residents' Action Group Inc. to the
N. S. W. LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 4
Parliamentary Inquiry into Museums and Galleries**

Thank you for this further supplementary opportunity to submit our views on the value and impact of museums, galleries and heritage in greater western Sydney in particular.

Our brief comment on the proposed Powerhouse Museum relocation process is that we believe that it should continue to fulfil its purpose and potential where it is currently located. We should not be "robbing Peter to pay Paul" in the rebalancing of the gross funding inequity between eastern Sydney and greater western Sydney. The Powerhouse is existing infrastructure. It is economic and social vandalism to destroy it. A much more sensible alternative would be to use the approximately \$450 million set aside for a proposed incursion of the Art Gallery of NSW into the Botanical Gardens to fund the construction of museums and galleries in greater western Sydney.

We submit that there should be a more integrated, whole of government approach to infrastructure development for museums and galleries and their operations throughout NSW.

NPRAG submits that there should be a regular annual forum of representatives of the full range of not for profit museums and galleries to review and develop strategies and policies for the sector. If possible all local government areas (LGA's) should have representation.

NPRAG submits that this is a critically important time in our history for the capture and retention of our earliest European history and heritage, especially including artefacts and stories. The basis of this submission is that the citizens of the so called "baby boomer" generation are now moving into their 65th to 70th years and downsizing from houses to much smaller dwellings and much smaller properties. As this happens very great amounts of artefacts that they have safeguarded for most of their lives are literally being sent to landfill. As they pass away many of their stories are being lost forever. These are stories of the foundations of European settlement in Australia. These are the key to much of our identity as a nation. This generation is the grand children of the last colonial Australians.

Others such as CAMD have provided submissions on how we might reach our full potential for our NSW museums including suggestions such as ensuring that:

- the government and museums have full knowledge of the shape and size of the museum sector (including major, regional and community institutions) in order to understand its full reach, impact and potential
- it supports research and strategic planning on the role of museums and their relationships with their visitors – on the ground and online – and those who use museums for research
- a state-wide, cross-portfolio policy framework and strategy is developed which optimises the multifaceted roles played by museums in relation to culture, education, research, tourism and community
- museums are supported by State Government to enhance digital access and the use of digital technology in relation to museum collections
- appropriate funding, on a cyclical basis, is invested in museums and consideration given to rescinding the efficiency dividend in relation to cultural institutions.

NPRAG supports all of these submissions.

There is valid and reliable evidence that in the last five years museums and galleries were visited over 9.3 million times by members of the Australian public and tourists. They reached another million or more people through regional tours of exhibitions and programs. They also presented formal education programs to over 1 million students. They also had in excess of 40 million visits to their websites. These figures are conservative evidence of the economic and social value of museums and galleries to the NSW and Australian economies.

Museums and galleries are also very important catalysts for further research in all of the social and technical sciences...and therefore for the overall advancement of society.

Museums and galleries have a core role to play in inspiring our nation's future scientists and countless other professions. Their roles in this regard should not be undervalued; it is progress in the broad range of sciences that will be a key factor in the growth of our nation's economy in the future. This will also be a key factor in addressing globally critical issues such as increasing climate volatility.

The economic impact of museums and galleries in NSW should also not be underestimated. In addition to employing almost 600 people directly each and every museum and gallery attracts visitors who total hundreds of thousands of people. These visitors purchase goods and services from a wide range of local merchants (eg. petrol, publications, food, beverages, etc.). The steady flow of such visitors is often the key factor in the sustainability of many small businesses. Moreover these visitor contributions are spread throughout greater Sydney and throughout regional and rural and even remote parts of NSW. Conservatively in excess of \$50 million annually was contributed to the NSW economy by museums and galleries in recent years.

While NSW is one of only two States/Territories which charge the public for entry to their State museums there is a good argument for continuing to charge entry fees but perhaps at a lower rate to increase accessibility while maintaining cash flow. It is reasonable to expect that for example a 25% reduction in entry charges could result in a commensurate increase (at least) in visitations. The popularity of free entry days to the Australian Museum and Powerhouse Museum in June this year amply demonstrated the potential for this to occur.

Clearly another way of increasing accessibility would be to provide additional gallery and museum infrastructure in greater western Sydney, eg. Parramatta. It needs to be emphasised that this should not be a process of removing infrastructure from, for example, the inner city (such as the Powerhouse Museum) but it should be the provision of additional museum and gallery infrastructure.

NPRAG submits that funds that are already set aside for a proposed extension of the NSW Art Gallery that would significantly alienate part of the precious and irreplaceable Royal Botanical Gardens (a museum and gallery in itself in the broadest sense for 'nature's works of art') should instead be used to construct gallery and museum infrastructure in greater western Sydney. This would partially redress the gross imbalance of such funding between the City of Sydney and its environs on the one hand and Parramatta and greater western Sydney on the other. Moreover it would not be done by removing existing infrastructure ... it would not be **"robbing Peter Powerhouse to pay Paul Parramatta"**.

The development of additional museum and gallery infrastructure in Parramatta should in our submission be done by the revitalisation of the Cumberland Hospital Heritage Precinct in Fleet Street North Parramatta (the Fleet Street Heritage Precinct). This Heritage Precinct could be transformed into an **"economic goldmine"** for greater western Sydney if it was transformed and repurposed in a similar way that **Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia in the USA** has been transformed.

Colonial Williamsburg is now one of the greatest economic assets of the State of Virginia. Colonial Williamsburg has an uncannily similar history to the Cumberland Hospital Heritage Precinct. The following will give an indication of the potential for the Cumberland Hospital Heritage site as a fantastic economic asset for NSW. It is an outline of the operations of Colonial Williamsburg:

Colonial Williamsburg's mission is to be a centre for history and citizenship, encouraging national and international audiences to learn from the past through the preservation, restoration, and presentation of 18th-century Williamsburg and the study, interpretation, and teaching of America's founding years.

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation operates it as the world's largest living history museum — the restored 18th-century capital of Britain's largest, wealthiest, and most populous outpost of empire in the New World. It interprets the origins of the idea of America, conceived decades before the American Revolution. The Colonial Williamsburg story of a revolutionary city tells how diverse peoples, having different and sometimes conflicting ambitions, evolved into a society that valued liberty and equality. Americans cherish these values as a birthright, even when their promise remains unfulfilled.

In Colonial Williamsburg's 301-acre (122 hectare) Historic Area stand hundreds of restored, reconstructed, and historically furnished buildings (in Parramatta the state government through Urban Growth NSW proposes to demolish dozens of similar buildings in the Heritage Precinct). In Colonial Williamsburg costumed interpreters tell the stories of the men and women of the 18th-century city—black, white, and native American, slave, indentured, and free—and the challenges they faced. In this historic place, we help the future learn from the past. It employs many thousands of people directly and indirectly.

Williamsburg was the thriving capital of Virginia in colonial America. From 1699 to 1780, Williamsburg was the political, cultural, and educational centre of what was then the largest, most populous, and most influential of the American colonies. It was there that the fundamental concepts of the emerging nation were nurtured under the leadership of patriots such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Near the end of the Revolutionary War, the seat of government of Virginia was moved to Richmond. For nearly a century and a half afterward, Williamsburg was left to wither and decay. Similarly, Parramatta's Heritage Precinct was nurtured under the leadership of our early governors. Similarly it fell into neglect and decay for many decades.

In Colonial Williamsburg in 1926, the Reverend Dr. Goodwin, rector of Bruton Parish Church, shared his dream of preserving the city's historic buildings with the wealthy philanthropist John D. Rockefeller Jr., and the restoration began.

Founding benefactor John D. Rockefeller's sense of progress in the adaptive reuse of Colonial Williamsburg's decaying heritage buildings began, however, with a feeling of loss. Seeing "beautiful and historic places and buildings disintegrating had long caused me very real distress," he wrote.

But the process of restoration led to a broader consideration of purposes. How do you make the most of bringing the past back to life?

That central question finds an evolving answer. The constructive good we derive from Colonial Williamsburg has to be realized in the context of the current era. "That the future may learn from the past" remains the objective.

Colonial Williamsburg is as inspirational in the present moment as it was when first conceived. This is also our challenge, and our opportunity regarding Parramatta's - and Australia's "Fleet Street Heritage Precinct".

Dr. Goodwin feared that scores of Colonial Williamsburg structures that had figured in the life of the colony and the founding of the nation would soon disappear forever...victims of neglect. We share the same fear now about the Fleet Street Heritage Precinct..

Rockefeller and Goodwin began a modest project to preserve a few of the more important buildings. Eventually, the work progressed and expanded to include a major portion of the colonial town, encompassing approximately 85 percent of the 18th-century capital's original area.

Rockefeller gave the project his leadership and financial support until his death in 1960. He funded the preservation of more than 80 of the original structures and the reconstruction of many buildings, and associated facilities to accommodate the visiting public.

In the preservation of the setting of Virginia's 18th-century capital, Rockefeller and Dr. Goodwin saw an opportunity to ensure that the heritage of those who helped create the nation lives on for future generations.

Today the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation is a private, not-for-profit educational institution. The Foundation:

- Preserves and interprets the Historic Area.
- Operates for-profit subsidiaries, including hotels, restaurants, convention facilities, and golf courses.
- Sells licensed products and reproductions.

Colonial Williamsburg Foundation's net assets today exceed \$900 million.

The market value of Colonial Williamsburg's endowment was \$784 million as of December 31, 2013, an increase of \$49 million over the 2012 year-end value. The endowment investment return was 16.3 percent for the 12 months ended December 31, 2013.

All principal sources of revenue were modestly higher in 2013 than in 2012. Gifts to the Colonial Williamsburg Fund increased to \$15 million, reflecting strong donor support of Colonial Williamsburg's mission. Total revenues for the 2013 calendar year, including budgeted endowment support, were \$181 million, an increase of \$4 million compared with 2012. Expenses including major one-off capital works for 2013 were \$215 million.

In 2013, individuals, corporations, and foundations committed over \$75 million to the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, representing an 18 percent increase over 2012. This was in addition to its operating income.

2013 was a year of economic uncertainty — from a 16-day U.S. government shutdown to high unemployment rates that were disappointingly slow to improve. Yet the rate of philanthropic giving to Colonial Williamsburg reflected a phenomenal rebound — 102 percent — since the economic downturn that began with the recession in December 2007. Supporters in all 50 states and beyond, affirmed their sustained appreciation for its educational, civic, and preservation initiative.

Along with the further successes of 2014, though, came disappointments. Revenues fell short of the goals — a reality that reflected visitor trends at museums and other historical sites throughout the U.S. in current economic times. Despite this Colonial Williamsburg is continuing to grow.

Changes and new programs are starting to see results. In the first quarter of this year (2015), net revenues were \$2.7 million better than they were in the first quarter of 2014.

Last year also saw a 2 percent increase in total ticket revenues, reflecting higher core ticket sales, including single-day, multi-day, and annual passes. A past trend of declining visits in peak summer season due to the severe economic downturn has been reversed.

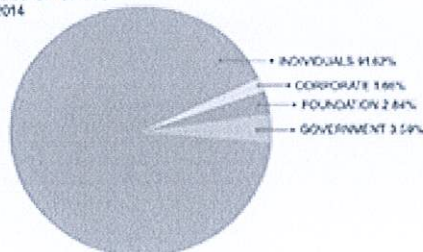
Last year also saw more than 208,000 people visited the Art Museums alone of Colonial Williamsburg for example...representing an increase of nearly 5 percent. Visits are expected to increase further once planned museum expansion becomes a reality...including a new entrance to the Public Hospital, the reconstruction of the Commonwealth's first mental institution

Financial stability is the means to preserving national treasures such as this for future generations...whether in the U.S. or in Parramatta. Colonial Williamsburg points the way to Parramatta's potential.

Happily for Colonial Williamsburg, in 2013, more than 113,000 donors representing all 50 U.S. states gave or pledged a total of more than \$75 million to support it. This represented an 18 percent increase over the previous year and included a record \$15 million for the Colonial Williamsburg Fund, the most vital source of support for daily operations. This is a most impressive endorsement of Colonial Williamsburg.

Its friends continued in 2014 to show their strong support for, and confidence in, Colonial Williamsburg as a leader in history education and historical preservation. Individuals, corporations and foundations committed a total of \$69.5 million to the Foundation, and once again supporters were in all 50 states of the U.S. and beyond.

SOURCES OF GIVING
2006-2014



By the Numbers - Sources of Giving

That level of sustained commitment was all the more inspiring as the Foundation experienced a year of significant challenges, change and transition. In November 2014 it publicly launched its \$600 million comprehensive Campaign for History and Citizenship. During this celebration the current Rockefeller family pledged \$13 million in unrestricted funds in support of the campaign.

Foundation leaders announced at the event that just over half of the campaign goal had already been raised during a "quiet phase" begun in 2009. By New Year's Day of 2015, the campaign total had climbed to \$323.4 million.

The Colonial Williamsburg Fund, a critical source of unrestricted support for the Foundation's daily operations, received \$15 million in 2014. Of the more than 110,000 donors who gave to the fund in 2014, more than 22,000 did so for first time.

Household memberships in the Colonial Williamsburg sub donor groups reached 2,550 in 2014. The donor groups continue to draw ever-closer to Colonial Williamsburg and its story through cultural excursions, on-site annual meetings, and behind-the-scenes tours and demonstrations led by the Foundation's curators, conservators, tradespeople and interpretive staff.

Donors provided significant gifts in 2014 in support of virtually every facet of Colonial Williamsburg. These included 16 commitments of \$1 million or more for programming areas, including Historic Area preservation and programming, museum collections and conservation, and educational outreach. Additionally, it received \$1.3 million from the City of Williamsburg to support destination advertising.

Gifts and commitments to expand the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg — the largest of the campaign's three capital priorities — included a \$3.5 million pledge from one couple and similarly large donations from several others. Additionally, an anonymous foundation provided \$500,000 for the museums' expansion project. Other key gifts from corporate and foundation supporters were also very large.

Educational outreach programs benefited from generous gifts from donors throughout the country. These totalled in excess of a million dollars.

Donors also made critical gifts toward various historic preservation and interpretive programmes. These included historic trades, masonry preservation, coach and livestock, and operations and programming at nearby Historic Jamestown.

Planned gifts (eg. intended bequests) continued to be an important component of the Foundation's campaign, providing \$27 million, or 39 percent of 2014 fundraising results.

Total planned gift expectancies exceeded \$300 million for the first time last year and the W.A.R. Goodwin Society, which recognizes planned giving donors, increased its membership to 1,963.

In 2014, Colonial Williamsburg's endowment benefited from realized bequests and life income gifts totalling \$9.7 million, a new campaign record.

Committee members of this NSW Legislative Council Inquiry are urged to personally inspect the Cumberland Hospital Heritage Precinct.

The North Parramatta Residents' Action Group Inc. would like to extend an invitation to each and every member of the Committee of Inquiry to participate in a professionally guided tour of the Precinct. We would like to show you some of the irreplaceable earliest Colonial European heritage in the Precinct. We would also like to take that opportunity to share our vision for the Heritage Precinct. The Heritage Precinct is right now under immediate threat of desecration if a proposal being advanced by Urban Growth NSW is approved. This Committee of Inquiry is providing us with one of our best hopes of stopping the Urban Growth NSW proposal from desecrating our heritage. To give some idea of the value of the Heritage Precinct it contains (among many other things):

- ◇ Sacred Indigenous sites including an ancient birthing site
- ◇ Captain Arthur Phillip's first landing and camping grounds in Parramatta
- ◇ Reverend Samuel Marsden's Mill and associated infrastructure
- ◇ The nation's earliest, best preserved Female Factory (far better than Port Arthur)
- ◇ Scores of other early Colonial and post Colonial buildings (many threatened with demolition)
- ◇ Remnants of Australia's earliest Botanical Gardens
- ◇ The oldest Californian Redwood in our nation
- ◇ Countless archaeological relics (Indigenous and European) that are as yet not catalogued or safeguarded

- ◊ A large colony of the endangered East Coast Grey Headed Flying Fox
- ◊ At risk remnant flora and fauna.

All of this is at risk of damage and/or destruction if the NSW Government's Urban Growth NSW proposal proceeds.

Committee members are urged to visit the website for Colonial Williamsburg to more fully appreciate the amazing potential for the Cumberland Hospital Heritage Precinct (Fleet Street Heritage Precinct). This potential is both in terms of galleries and museums and in terms of the potential "economic gold mine" of unending and ever growing income that the Heritage Precinct represents for greater western Sydney and indeed for the NSW economy as a whole.

Having stated the above it is further submitted that even a very much smaller scale Heritage Tourism Precinct in such a central position to the whole of greater Sydney and very accessible to interstate and overseas tourist would be a huge economic asset for NSW. Even on the scale of Port Arthur (Tasmania) - which is a much smaller heritage asset than the Cumberland Hospital Heritage Precinct - the North Parramatta Heritage Precinct would be a great economic asset. To illustrate the point hereunder is a brief synopsis of the economic value of tourism in Tasmania and of Port Arthur in particular.

In the 12 months to September 2014 an estimated 303,320 holiday visitors to Tasmania experienced a range of heritage attractions. Now if we assume that each tourist spent \$250 per day on accommodation, food, transport, etc. Then that amounts to in excess of \$75 million gross per year...and that is a conservative assumption. Port Arthur ALONE welcomed 272,653 day visitors and 34,097 night visitors ... a substantial increase on the previous year.

KPIs for Port Arthur

Financial indicators	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Gross earnings (\$m)	17.9	16.5	17.2	17.8
Operating profit (\$m)	-0.556	0.327	1.193	1.205
Commercial Revenue (\$'000)	12,691	13,326	13,913	14,377
Yield per visitor	\$44.19	\$44.63	\$45.07	\$45.53
Commercial Expenses (\$'000)	11,261	12,120	12,484	12,921
Conserv'n Expen's (all sites)(\$'000)	7,162	4,040	3,531	3,654
Non-financial indicators				
Day Entry visitors	251,000	252,255	253,516	254,784
Ghost tour participants	32,780	32,878	32,977	33,075
Female Factory visitors	31,000	35,650	36,363	37,090
Customer satisfaction levels	90%	90%	90%	90%
% of annual conservation projects completed within budget, scope and on time.	90%	90%	90%	90%
% Penitentiary Precinct stabilisation project completed within budget, scope and on time over life of project.	100%			

In terms of those travelling Australians considering Tasmania as a possible travel destination (again surveyed in the September 2014 quarter), around 79 per cent said that they like to visit heritage/historical sites and attractions when they're on holiday, illustrating the fact that those visitors specifically considering Tasmania as a destination have a greater propensity to visit a heritage attraction

Tasmania's heritage precincts and landscapes are a core asset and have a strong visitor appeal. These range from the prominent Georgian and other colonial features of Hobart and Sullivan's Cove; the Victorian streetscapes, parks and features of Launceston; and notable popular historic towns and suburbs including Battery Point, Derby, Evandale, Richmond, Ross and Stanley. There is also increased recognition of the importance, value and appeal of lesser known precincts across Tasmania, like the historic landscapes of the Midlands and Meander Valley. Tasmania has a diverse array of heritage precincts that enhance interest and appeal to visitors as intact places to visit, stay and experience.

- PAHSMA (Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority) recently appointed an Australian Convict Sites – Executive Officer. Funded by the Federal Government - This is a three year fixed-term role within the Federal Conservation & Infrastructure Department to *provide support to the Australian Convict Sites Steering Committee (ACSSC) for the management and administration of the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage property (ACS) and progress actions and projects as adopted and prioritised by the ACSSC, and in line with the ACS Strategic Management Framework.*

□ While the position is located within PAHSMA, the incumbent will be responsible for engaging with the 11 Sites across Australia that together make up the Australian Convict Sites. So there is already infrastructure in place to help us to develop the fleet street heritage precinct.

There are endless options for the government to facilitate the construction of high rise apartment towers elsewhere in Parramatta and throughout greater Sydney... but there is only one Cumberland Hospital Heritage Precinct. That Precinct is unique. It is irreplaceable. It is still able to be preserved and repurposed as a heritage economic goldmine for our state. It must not be desecrated by the government's Urban Growth NSW proposal simply to gratify a greedy grab for short term funds and developer profits at the expense of everlasting and ever-growing rivers of gold from tourism.

The saving of this irreplaceable Fleet Street Heritage Precinct could be the great legacy of members of this Committee of Inquiry...and your colleagues in the Legislative Council.

Sydney competes with interstate cultural institutions. This is for the attraction of both high calibre exhibitions and attendances NSW, interstate and overseas. The Melbourne Winter Masterpieces campaign attracted 5 million visitors since 2004. The Australian Museum in Sydney has 6,500 square metres while the Melbourne Museum has some 30,000 square metres of temporary exhibition space. The transformation of existing heritage infrastructure in the Cumberland Hospital Heritage Precinct would add several thousands of square metres of floor space to the NSW infrastructure. The transformation of this Heritage Precinct without the proposed high rise apartment towers would also preserve Parramatta's irreplaceable open space which will be essential in decades to come as more people live in higher density dwellings.

Tourism Research Australia has reported that the two most popular activities undertaken by tourists (both international and domestic) were "visiting heritage buildings sites and monuments" and "visiting museums and art galleries". These tourists accounted for more than 150 million visitor nights in Australia each year and contributed strongly to regional economic growth and employment opportunities. Credible research in Australia and overseas clearly indicates that this trend will continue and increase. By failing to develop our museums and galleries infrastructure we are missing great opportunities for the creation of new jobs and the general stimulation of economic growth...as well as the preservation and celebration of our culture.

NPRAG would be happy to provide further information is required about the issues covered in this submission. Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission and appear as a witness.

Jon Hillman
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5 September 2016.