

**Supplementary
Submission
No 137d**

**INQUIRY INTO INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND
GALLERIES**

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Late submission to the NSW Legislative Council Inquiry into museums and galleries, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4.

Submitted by Tom Lockley

Demonstration of the lack of research into alternatives.

This submission presents evidence that there has been a consistent effort from Government witnesses at the Inquiry and in Government documents to imply that the idea of moving the museum to Parramatta was recommended by Infrastructure NSW. There is clear evidence that this is not so, and that the decision to move the museum was made with effectively no investigation into alternative ways of achieving the laudable aim of improving the cultural facilities of the Parramatta area.

When asked for the justification of the move, Government witnesses typically referred to the work of Infrastructure NSW on several occasions, for example:

1. Inquiry transcript Monday, 5 September 2016 page 10 Ms Merrilees, and Professor Glover
2. Ditto page 18 Ms Torres
3. On page 29 Ms Macgregor referred to the work of Infrastructure NSW supporting the general principle of improving the cultural facilities of Parramatta
4. On Monday, 14 November 2016 Ms TORRES stated 'It is uncontested that government accepted a recommendation from Infrastructure NSW to relocate the museum from the

current site in Ultimo to a site in Parramatta'. (But see the refutation of this, below).

5. On other occasions both Ms Merrilles and Arts NSW CEO Ms Torres clearly state that the 'move' idea was a Government decision in which they had no part. (Inquiry evidence Ms MERRILLEES Friday, 17 February 2017 'I think that that [the pros and cons of the move] is a question for Government and I am not here to answer questions on Government policy'. 2) Inquiry evidence Monday, 5 September 2016: SAMANTHA TORRES 'The relocation of the MAAS is a clear direction from the Government').
6. There are many other examples of Government witnesses trying to justify the move as a recommendation from Infrastructure NSW but on each occasion the witness has been forced to agree that the recommendation was for the investigation of the idea. Details can be provided on request. (As late as the Friday, 1 June 2018 hearing the work of Infrastructure NSW was again advanced by Mr Warburton Page 18 as justification for the move, but this was again proven to be wrong).

Please consider:

1. To justify her statement on Monday, 14 November 2016, Ms Torres produced a marked copy of Infrastructure NSW's document *Recommendations to the NSW Government November 2014*, with marked passages as follow: (my underlining)

Executive Summary Page 8: *As part of the Parramatta North Urban Renewal Project, a cultural precinct should be developed around the Old King's School site, potentially including a relocated Powerhouse Museum.*

Page 114 The Government should Urgently consider relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to the Parramatta Cultural Precinct

Page 117 *Infrastructure NSW recommends giving consideration to relocating the Powerhouse Museum*.

No document that states that Infrastructure NSW went beyond recommending the investigation of the idea has ever been produced

2. Expert witnesses eg at the Inquiry on Friday February 17 2017 and on other occasions have been explicit that they were never asked to investigate alternatives to the 'move'.
3. The *Business Case Summary* released April 2018 clearly states that it *takes as its starting point the Government's decision to locate the Powerhouse Museum on the Riverbank site in Parramatta*.
4. In the Business Case documents *Stakeholder Engagement* was prepared by a firm called Elton Consulting who acted as facilitator for the so-called 'consultation' meetings of July 2017. They conducted no consultation about the overall strategy to improve the cultural facilities of Parramatta: the first objective of their work is to *demonstrate the benefits of the project*. (Section 1.1, page 5 of *Communications and Engagement Strategy for the New Museum in Western Sydney*, 21 November 2017)
5. The Government has been challenged on numerous occasions eg questions to the 'consultation' meetings of July 2017 and again on 5 May 2018, to produce evidence of research into alternatives for Parramatta, and no response has been received.

Thus the assertion that this has never been done is very soundly based.