

**Submission  
No 2**

**INQUIRY INTO STATE RECORDS ACT 1998 AND THE  
POLICY PAPER ON ITS REVIEW**

**Name:** Dr David Clune and Mr Mark Hildebrand

**Date Received:** 19 March 2020

---

**Submission to Legislative Council of NSW, Standing Committee on Social Issues, Inquiry  
into the State Records Act 1998 and the Policy Paper on its Review**

1. We have both had a life-time of experience in libraries, historical research and working with original materials. We have considered the proposal to merge the State Archives and Records Authority (SARA) and Sydney Living Museums (SLM) and, overall, have a positive attitude.
2. The two organisations complement one another in a number of ways. One organisation specialises in government records and the other in historic properties with accompanying records. The digital age blurs such distinctions which have always had an artificial quality.
3. There is a symmetry between SARA and the Police and Justice Museum, Hyde Park Barracks, Museum of Sydney and the Mint. The material at SARA relates to all these properties and their construction, usage, functions and history.
4. A merger would provide great opportunities for SARA to promote its collection through digitisation and targeted exhibitions in SLM properties, particularly given the large number of visitors. The websites of SLM properties could feature relevant documents and the knowledge and experience of SARA staff could provide expert commentary and background.
5. There would be benefits in co-operation in collection building and conservation of materials. SLM's Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection has become a very impressive specialised research collection. Megan Martin and Matthew Stephens have done a great job in developing and promoting it.
6. Another benefit would be for SARA to re-establish a presence in the CBD. Many researchers were disappointed when the reading room moved to Kingswood. SARA could establish itself in the city by highlighting its collection through SLM exhibitions as well as establishing a reading room in one of the SLM properties. It could even be an existing reading room. Many Sydney and interstate researchers would appreciate a more central, accessible location. It would have the benefit of being closer to the Mitchell Library as some researchers need to use both collections. In the future, this may potentially offer opportunities for co-ordination of ordering and delivering of material.
7. It needs to be stressed that this should be a true merger on a basis of equality, not a take-over by one organisation of the other. The jobs, expertise and entitlements of staff of both organisations need to be protected. Staff of SARA and SLM should also be fully consulted and their input heeded. If properly managed we believe the merger could be of benefit to users and staff of both organisations.

*David Clune, Honorary Associate, Department of Government and International Relations, University of Sydney, and  
Mark Hildebrand, Curator Emeritus, State Library of NSW*