

**Submission
No 56**

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

Name: Mr Roderick Simpson

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Roderick Simpson Submission re: State Records Act 1998

30 April 2020

The Hon Shayne Mallard MLC
Chair, Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Chair,

I, Roderick Simpson, thank the Committee for the opportunity to make this submission in relation to State Records Act 1998 and the Policy Paper on its review.

I am a Trustee of the Historic Houses Trust and chair the Heritage and Collections Committee. Over a number of years in these roles I have directly experienced the wide range of activities undertaken by the dedicated and innovative staff of Sydney Living Museums.

I have no doubt that many submissions will have identified the benefits that are likely to result from the formation of a single agency, as proposed in the policy paper. The extensive collection of built heritage assets, architectural treasures and associated items, as well as the Caroline Simpson Research Library will be significantly complemented by Government records.

The benefits are already apparent in collaborations between staff in both organisations, but I would like to highlight the resilience that also results and is evident during the current crisis.

The range of skills, and the potential for staff to work across the organisations at a time when there have been significant changes and disruptions to work practices and roles, as well as the support that can be provided is 'living proof' if you will, of the key characteristics of a resilient organisation or system more generally: increased capacity that comes with scale, and the ability to adapt that comes with diversity. The organisations have been able to respond well.

Sydney Living Museums has also been recognised since its inception as the Historic Houses Trust as being innovative in its interpretation, exhibition curatorial practice and design, publications and outreach activities. This is of course primarily due to the expertise and enthusiasm of its excellent staff, but I would suggest that it also comes from the diversity and hybridity of its responsibilities and assets.

Innovation very often occurs in 'hybridised environments' and so it is likely that the future collaboration and melding of activities of the two organisations will provide fertile ground for more innovation in the future.

In summary the proposal will result in increased capacity, diversity, and potential for innovation.

In closing, as an architect and urbanist, I can also see how the extraordinary collection of records about city making, decisions and planning held by SARA may be brought to life. These may provide a richer contextual understanding of the historic houses and help current and future generations gain a deeper appreciation of ourselves and our city and how we got here.

Kind regards,

Roderick Simpson