

Submission  
No 27

**INQUIRY INTO GOVERNMENT'S MANAGEMENT OF THE  
POWERHOUSE MUSEUM AND OTHER MUSEUMS AND  
CULTURAL PROJECTS IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Organisation:** Local Government NSW

**Date Received:** 30 April 2020

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# **Draft Submission to the Select Committee on the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales**

April 2020

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## Opening

Local Government NSW (LGNSW) is the peak body for local government in NSW, representing NSW general purpose councils and related entities. LGNSW facilitates the development of an effective community-based system of local government in the State. This is a draft submission awaiting review by the LGNSW Board and any revisions made by the Board will be forwarded in due course.

LGNSW thanks the Committee for the opportunity to respond to the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry into Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects. This submission builds upon the LGNSW August 2016 response to the Inquiry into Museums and Galleries in NSW.<sup>1</sup>

### Role of local government in the museum and cultural institution sector

Local government's roles and responsibilities are providing and/or supporting both professional and community-based museums, galleries, arts groups and volunteer groups and their associated exhibitions, programs and research. Increasingly, councils also provide major cultural facilities with professional staff and to professional standards.

In the context of this Inquiry it must be noted that local government is also the core provider of NSW's extensive network of public libraries, many of which are associated with cultural precincts and co-located arts and heritage services. Many libraries also hold and own extensive historical collections. The local government sector notes the success of multipurpose spaces in connecting culturally and age diverse communities to local culture.

Historically, local council operations have focussed on infrastructure and service provision. In recent decades, the importance of culture to communities has been recognised more and arts and culture service and infrastructure delivery by local government has increased.

Local government often collaborates with the State Government in the creation of cultural infrastructure and in ongoing recurrent funding and project funding. Alongside the State Government, local government is a key funder and facilitator of Regional Arts Boards, and has a strong relationship with the State Government through the activities and devolved funding of Museums and Galleries NSW.

Local government itself invests heavily in the arts. 2018 research by KPMG<sup>2</sup> showed that there was \$520 million invested in NSW arts, screen and culture by NSW local government over 12 months, on par with the \$549.1 million invested by the NSW Government in the same period.

In regional areas culture and history infrastructure is highly valued where often few other cultural destinations are available. Moreover, as local government usually provides low cost or free entry to its museums and galleries, they are seen as highly accessible for all, and as a community space.

In the case of the extensive Aboriginal collections and keeping places managed by local government, the location of objects and stories on country makes them highly accessible and

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<sup>1</sup> Available online at [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/submissions/56000/0032%20LGNSW.pdf](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/submissions/56000/0032%20LGNSW.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> KPMG, The Economic Value of Arts, Screen and Culture to NSW, 13 July 2018, available at <https://www.create.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Economic-Value-of-Arts-Screen-and-Culture-2018-Report.pdf>.

provides the opportunity to meet, share and explore history and culture for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

In summary, local government has an extensive network of arts related infrastructure and services that reach grass roots levels in all areas of NSW and partnerships with state and federal governments are vital to the health, reach and excellence of these services.

## **Purpose**

The Committee is required to inquire into:

- a) the proposed move of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the Powerhouse Museum, from Ultimo to Parramatta,
- b) the Government's management of all museums and cultural projects in New South Wales.

This submission will focus on responding to Term of Reference b) as it is most relevant to councils across the state.

## Response to the Terms of Reference

### i. *current Government policy, funding and support for museums and galleries across regional NSW*

#### Policy and planning

##### Museum Strategy

Councils resolved at the 2019 LGNSW Annual Conference:

*“That Local Government NSW lobbies the NSW Government to devise a museum strategy for NSW with sufficient resources to ensure cultural heritage led vibrancy, collection care and local storytelling initiatives are supported, developed and maintained for communities throughout the State.”*

The resolution calls for a NSW Museum Strategy and there are suggestions that this strategy could include galleries and artist run initiatives (ARIs).

LGNSW co-hosts with Museums and Galleries NSW (M&GNSW) the Local Government Museum Managers’ Forum which meets twice yearly. At the most recent forum, the museum managers discussed what they would be seeking in a state-wide museum strategy. Local government seeks for the strategy to include a strategic direction for:

- the importance of museums to communities, resilience and the economy
- the importance of local government to museums
- collections, including digitisation and touring
- funding, including financial sustainability
- on-the-ground support
- priority actions from the NSW Government
- connections across government and education sector
- asset management
- de-accessioning principles
- managing pressures on museums, such as when the population ages and young people move from regional Australia.

Since the 2016 Inquiry into Museums and Galleries in NSW the State Government has released a comprehensive Cultural Infrastructure Plan up to 2025. This plan recognises that local government is an important stakeholder in cultural infrastructure and the plan has assisted councils to align their proposed projects with the Plan’s objectives.

A state-wide museum strategy does not need to be as in-depth as the Cultural Infrastructure Plan, instead it is a strategic document to establish the broader direction of the sector. The United Kingdom Museums Association has examples on its website at [www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/government-strategy-and-support-for-museums](http://www.museumsassociation.org/campaigns/government-strategy-and-support-for-museums).

A NSW Government led museum strategy is essential to guide the prioritisation of infrastructure developments, projects and resources to make museums sustainable (keep the doors open), and to provide vibrant programming, ensuring that local stories are documented and made accessible both in museums and online.

**Recommendation 1:** That the NSW Government establish a Museum Strategy for NSW. Such a strategy will be used by stakeholders (including local government) to guide decisions about matters such as collections, infrastructure, education initiatives and more.

### Reform of planning regulations to encourage cultural activity

The NSW Night Time Economy Councils' Committee (NTECC) was formed in late 2016 and is a committed group of council staff, and a representative from LGNSW, who meet monthly to raise awareness of the value of Night Time Economies (NTEs); advocate to state and federal governments; share information on the best-practice management of NTEs; and build partnerships and networks around NTE initiatives.

The NTECC delivered a masterclass free of charge to council staff in June 2019 on the topic of Making Space for Culture. The Making Space for Culture Masterclass focused on cultural curation by local governments to develop and maintain a diverse mix of spaces and facilities for cultural production and consumption. The key levers and important factors that support creation of spaces for culture were discussed.

The guest speaker was global thought leader and culture specialist Tim Jones (Artscape) from Canada. Tim has been providing expert advice to the World Cities Cultural Forum and authored the seminal *Making Space for Culture* handbook for City Leaders. One successful project of ArtScape, which the NSW Government could look to, is the redevelopment of the Historic Distillery District in Toronto. ArtScape transformed the District using arts and entertainment, after numerous retail-based revitalisation projects had failed. The ArtScape Distillery Studios are now leased to over 60 artists and this vitality has led to new residential developments on the site. The district is now a major draw for tourists, leading to improved social and economic outcomes.

The masterclass also heard from the City of Sydney which in May 2019 updated its planning controls with provisions to encourage live music and performance, a new category for trading hours to allow some businesses in the city centre to trade for 24 hours and provisions for a new cultural precinct in Alexandria with arts, culture and entertainment in a heritage warehouse (drawing parallels to the Toronto Distillery District referred to earlier).

**Recommendation 2:** The NSW Government should look at cultural curation examples from Toronto and City of Sydney to make planning and regulatory changes, in consultation with local government, to enable cultural and creative spaces.

### Policies to address contemporary issues

Museum staff are seeking government policies about responding to the climate crisis for museums, and for some the response so far is ad hoc and confusing. Delicate museum collections can be impacted by heat especially. Climate change policies for museums need to have specific advice for regional NSW which is struggling through drought. There is a need for operational funding for museums and cultural institutions to increase their environmental sustainability such as installing energy saving technology and reducing packaging. Furthermore, museums and cultural institutions are seeking exhibitions about the issue of climate change.

Current policy objectives will need to be reviewed after restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic have eased. We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the cultural sector (and others) and expect that governments at all levels will need to look at what policy levers can be used to support the sector's recovery. It is important that this work look not only at how the sector can recover, but also how the sector can be re-established to become more innovative, agile and resilient to future crises. This will largely depend on available funding to enable transformation of business models, continued delivery of excellence, employment and career development opportunities. In a post-pandemic environment, communities will need to reconsider their relationships with

public place including public galleries and museums, possibly by moving to more online delivery models to be prepared for future pandemics.

COVID-19 has highlighted the tenuousness of small to medium cultural spaces. Inner West Council's 2019 [Creative Spaces and Venues Discussion Paper](#) suggests that once cultural spaces become unviable through cashflow, rent issues or changing circumstances at the site, these spaces will often close permanently as it is too costly to re-establish the necessary infrastructure in a new site.

**Recommendation 3:** That the State Government reviews the support it provides to museums and cultural projects in response to contemporary issues including climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Policies for volunteer-run museums and those with less capacity

When museums rely on a high number of volunteers, as can occur in some council-owned museums, the ability to respond to opportunities like the Regional Cultural Fund can be limited. Volunteers often cannot compete with a full-staffed museum when it comes to these opportunities. Defining the different categories of regional museums by scale and capacity (such as those in regional centres, those funded by councils, those run by volunteers etc.) and adjusting policies, application processes and funding accordingly will promote equality across the sector.

**Recommendation 4:** That the State Government recognise the diversity of regional museums and cultural institutions, and to provide support to those most in need, by adjusting policies, application processes and funding support for institutions according to different categories.

#### Museums and Galleries NSW

Many councils report that they have a strong relationship with M&GNSW and engage with the sector via this organisation regarding policy, funding and support. Local government staff and volunteers continue to express appreciation for the advice, support and networking of Museums and Galleries NSW over many years and welcome this organisation's offering of Museum Advisor and Standards Programs.

#### Local government knowledge

As local government is comprised of paid council staff and elected members who understand the needs of the community, it should be recognised as the key source for consultation on approaches to planning and policy that relate to local government. Local government is an excellent source of information from the grass roots level that can assist other spheres of government to better deploy policy and funding strategies.

**Recommendation 5:** LGNSW calls upon the NSW Government to consult local government and Museums and Galleries NSW in all arts and culture policy and strategic planning and implementation processes including the revision and rollout of the strategies listed above.



## Funding and support

### Distribution of funding

Often grants for capital funding of arts institutions have been restricted to facilities in regional areas only. Capital costs of council-run museums and galleries in the Sydney metropolitan local government areas should also be eligible for state funding as these institutions are overlooked. There is also an historic tendency for the State Government to fund its assets in Sydney CBD to the detriment of other areas in Sydney surrounds and the state.

The Create Infrastructure Office in Create NSW primarily funds infrastructure in the Sydney CBD including the Walsh Bay Precinct and the Sydney Opera House. Only one regional project sits in the Create Infrastructure Office: the Regional Cultural Fund. Yet almost 70% of museums and galleries in NSW are outside of the Sydney metro area.

**Recommendation 6:** That a greater proportion of funds from the Create Infrastructure Office are allocated to council-run museums and cultural projects outside of the Sydney CBD.

### Pressing funding needs

The arts sector was one of the first industries to largely cease due to public health restrictions limiting gatherings in March in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite being one of the first sectors to be negatively impacted, the arts and cultural sector has received little in the way of industry-specific funding from government.

On 24 April, the NSW Government announced a **\$6.3 million** COVID-19 support sector for small and medium arts and screen sector. This funding will be distributed via accommodation assistance, pilot funding, skills development, small project grants, fellowship opportunities between artists and groups, and state-run institutions. On 26 April, the Victorian Government announced a **\$16.8 million** funding package for the arts industry to help during the coronavirus pandemic. Of this, \$13 million will go to 100 non-government arts and cultural organisation and \$2.2 million will be offered to individuals and micro organisations in the form of small grants. The NSW Government should increase the value of their arts industry package to match that provided by the Victorian Government.

Now is the time, while the arts and culture sector has largely ceased operations, to fund the sector to work on programming, venues and cultural infrastructure so that the sector can quickly rebound once restrictions are lifted. The NSW Government is called upon to release an Arts Industry Rescue Package consisting of:

- *New round of the Regional Cultural Fund:* The latest round of the \$100 million Regional Cultural Fund closed in September 2018. A new round of this popular funding should be fast-tracked for implementation now.
- *New round of the Local Government Authorities (LGA) Arts & Cultural Programs Multi-Year funding:* This new funding package recently closed its first round for projects commencing in the 2020/21 year. We urge Create NSW to offer a further round of funding for the 2020/21 year but with expanded eligibility criteria to allow councils to support infrastructure building and renovation projects, in addition to the applications for art programs which were allowed in the previous round.

- *Smaller grants program for simple facility upgrades:* Councils have reported that there is a lack of funding for existing venue infrastructure including:
  - Smaller grants to fund simple upgrades,
  - funding to re-purpose heritage listed venues for the arts, and
  - ongoing funding to subsidise affordable spaces for art development e.g. studio, rehearsal and creative industries workplaces.
- *Funding for regional touring programs:* A touring schedule for state-funded performances in regional NSW should be prepared to be ready once social gathering restrictions are lifted. Through negotiation, councils may be willing to offer council-owned venues free of charge for state-funded performances to occur so that the arts industry receives an immediate kick-start at the end of this crisis. Existing performance programs including *Live and Local*, *Monkey Baa Youth Theatre* and the *Festival of Small Halls* could be supported quickly. New programs such as a regional Vivid roadshow should be considered.
- *Further funding for the digitisation of collections and stories:* particularly vital for resilience against Covid-19. In 2018, Museums & Galleries of NSW received funding under the NSW Government's Regional Cultural Fund to complete a prototype state-wide collection online portal. Further funding is needed to support the ongoing digitisation of collections. The Regional Program delivered by the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences is a model to expand the digitisation of regional collections.
- *Funding specifically for Australian artists:* particularly whilst international art, collections and performances may continue to be restricted due to the coronavirus pandemic.

**Recommendation 7:** That the State Government increase their industry-specific funding package to match the funding provided by the Victorian Government's COVID-19 arts support package. This funding package should also include funding specifically for council-run museums and cultural projects.

#### Competitive nature of the funding

The system of funding is currently extremely competitive given the small amount of funds available. While the system of funding has been streamlined in the last year, there is still significant complexity around the application process. A more effective distribution of funds, other than competitive grant processes, should be considered.

Councils need to be able to make forward plans to invest in arts and cultural projects and depend on a reliable funding stream from State Government to support the planned operations of these major facilities. NSW Government multi-year program funding for arts and culture is characterised by onerous grant application processes and frequent acquittal.

**Recommendation 8:** To contribute to stability and forward planning, the State Government should deliver a reliable funding stream for local government-run museums and cultural institutions, and reduce the complexity of funding applications.

## Access to collections

### ii. *whether there is equitable access to collections across NSW, including at the Powerhouse Museum and the Australian Museum.*

In responding to this term of reference, the Committee should not only consider equitable access to collections, but also equitable access to expertise. The valued Museum Advisor program administered by Museums and Galleries NSW, and funded by Create NSW, requires councils to match \$7000 funding. Council staff, and those volunteers which assist in council venues, would welcome further sharing of expertise from well-resourced museums.

**Recommendation 9:** That state-run museums offer an increase in the availability of mentorships, free advice, professional skills training and internships to council-run museums.

### A framework to access and display state and national collections

While the scale and quality of state and national collections is significant, access to these collections is limited. As an example, the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) contains almost 160,000 works of art but access to these works is limited to those who can travel to the NGA or when the NGA loans them to another institution.

A national framework for access to state and national collections could:

- lift the profile of lending institutions and borrowing institutions
- improve the accessibility of collections to regional and rural Australia
- consider differences in capacity and capability across regional institutions
- lift the overall capabilities of the sector through minimum practice requirements (e.g. professional development), and
- incentivise innovation through the bespoke display of significant collections across multiple institutions/locations.

Local government calls upon the state to consider revitalised funding and touring programs from the major institutions, tailored for local government that includes physical and digital touring of collections and access to advice, research and training from these institutions.

**Recommendation 10:** A framework for regional institutions to access and display state and national collections to improve equitable access to collections across NSW.

### Current partnerships with museums and collecting institutions

Councils note that some major collecting institutions have better accessibility systems than others. For example, the Art Gallery of NSW is active in trying to facilitate more loans of its works. Inner West Council (IWC) has demonstrated how partnerships can introduce prominent collections to local audiences, creating greater access. In 2012, IWC's History Services partnered with the Powerhouse Museum during the History of Fashion exhibition, inviting prominent curator Lindie Ward to talk about local history of fashion, attracting audiences to Balmain Library. Similar partnerships could be created with the National Trust, History Council of NSW, Sydney Living Museums, and the State Library.

Another example is Bathurst Regional Council, which through the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum has a strong relationship with the Australian Museum as the custodians of

the Somerville Collection of historically significant minerals. Other collections and exhibitions are also regularly displayed at the museum including the current Chapman Collection.

However, more flexibility is needed around types of objects, and objects that could be borrowed under less onerous environmental/security conditions (conditions which smaller institutions can struggle to meet). Local government-run museums and galleries are often denied the opportunity to host exhibitions of significant materials from the large state institutions due to space, climate control and resources.

**Recommendation 11:** That loans from major museums could be better facilitated if there were more flexible environmental/security conditions for collections or if there was more support to meet those conditions.

#### Connecting with audiences – varying types of access

Inclusive technology and digitisation are also important in creating equitable access to collections and contemporising museums and galleries, with an acceleration of interest in response to COVID-19. However, digitisation is not the catch-all for increasing access. Engagement consists of more than putting collections online, and is more than the ability to look at and read a curator's significance statement. Equitable access relies on an opportunity for deeper understanding and a chance to interpret those collections in a way that is relevant to the history of the community and its people.

Cultural content needs to be relevant and meaningful to connect with audiences, including groups that experience disadvantage, to drive greater participation and visitation. Unfortunately, there are funding and space limitations in museums and galleries which can restrict access to contemporary artists and contemporary art.

Reproductions might also be showcased in local venues. In particular, there may be opportunities to connect local communities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collections and conversations. Heritage Festival and History Week are ideal opportunities to harness and showcase partnerships and programs.

**Recommendation 12:** That access to collections does not only rely on digitisation and loans, but includes mechanisms for the audience to connect the story of the object to their local area.

## Consultation to inform cultural policy and projects

### ***iii. Whether comprehensive consultation with communities and experts has informed cultural policy and projects across NSW such as that applying to heritage arms and armour collections.***

Regarding consultation of the State Government with arts and cultural communities, there is mixed opinion from councils as to whether this is conducted sufficiently. A selection of comments from councils is included below:

- In general, best practice community and stakeholder engagement doesn't appear to have informed state government cultural policy and projects
- Consultation does occur but often consultation activities in regional locations is limited
- It is the experience of Council staff that comprehensive consultation with communities and experts to inform cultural policy and projects across NSW has occurred
- Community consultation is inherent in all aspects of public gallery operations

Regarding consultation on the specific issue of heritage firearms, councils resolved at the LGNSW 2019 Annual Conference:

*“That Local Government NSW requests the NSW Minister for Police and Emergency Services to preserve the historic value of museum collections by amending Clause 59 (4) (A) of the Firearms Regulation 2017. The amendment should remove the condition that museums must render pistols and prohibitive firearms permanently inoperable and instead state that these firearms must be rendered temporarily inoperable.*

*Due to the historical, cultural significance value of these collections, we call on the NSW State Government to allow for an exemption mechanism for museums from clause 59 4A of the Firearms Regulation Act 2017.”*

At the most recent Local Government Museum Manager's forum, the issue of heritage arms was discussed in reference to the Conference Resolution. If the Government were to establish an exemption system, those museums which did not wish to render their firearms permanently inoperable could apply for an exemption for objects of significance. Further funding for security and storage would be necessary for these collections.

**Recommendation 13:** That the State Government allow for an exemption for firearms in museums to not be made permanently inoperable, and instead allow them to be rendered only temporarily inoperable. Further funding for security and storage would be necessary for these collections.

## Budgets of museums and galleries

### *iv. The impact of the efficiency dividend on the budgets of museums and galleries over the last 10 years*

LGNSW supports Recommendation 5 of the Final Report of the 2016 Inquiry into museums and galleries in NSW:

*“That the NSW Government exempt state-owned museums from the annual efficiency dividend.”*

Whilst efficiency dividends apply to major federally and state funded institutions only, its impact flows down to the small to medium public gallery sector. The importance of well-resourced major institutions to smaller galleries is their ability to tour artworks from their collections to regional centres, and support smaller venues in other professional development roles. The efficiency dividend restricts this. If the major institutions are not adequately resourced then regional communities are not provided access to the State’s collections. Complementary to this would be rules around funding to major institutions that requires them to tour their collections and provide services to the regions.

Increasing demands and rate pegging have impacted local government resources and revenue streams over the last 10 years. Cost shifting from State and Federal governments has also had an impact on service provision. With current external factors including the impact of drought, fires and COVID-19, further strain will be placed on local government’s limited resources and revenue. The continuing effect of State budget cuts has led to compromises regarding exhibitions, learning and interpretative programs available to the public. With many galleries and museums relying on ticket sales, shop sales, donations and catering – often from interstate and international tourists – to supplement income, the impacts of COVID-19 are significant and will compound over time. The sector will need assistance to develop new business models to adapt over the coming years.

**Recommendation 14:** In the context of increased financial pressures on all levels of government, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee should recommend an increase in NSW Government funding across art forms to avoid cost-shifting onto local government and to ensure the larger cultural institutions can continue to support the smaller ones.

## National and state funding

### *v. funding levels compared to other states*

Nationally, museums and cultural institutions are facing increased competition for funding, particularly for funding from the Australia Council for the Arts four-year grant rounds. In April, the Australia Council announced recipients for the next four-year cycle (2021 – 2024) and the number of organisations receiving funding decreased from the previous round, albeit each funded organisation will receive more than previously. For those organisations which missed out on the new funding, the Australia Council has agreed to fund them for an extra year to assist with COVID-19 recovery but this is not sufficient for those organisations which have relied on ongoing funding for an extended period.

This means that museums and cultural institutions will be looking elsewhere for funding that they previously received from the Australia Council. Communities may also seek funding from local government, but as noted above, there is also increasing financial pressure on local government. This is compounding challenges for the regional gallery sector. Local government is also facing significant financial impacts due to COVID-19, with very limited support from the Federal Government to date.

The 2019 report *The Big Picture: Public Expenditure on Artistic, Cultural and Creative Activity in Australia* found that:

“local governments and state and territory governments have increased their per capita expenditure on culture. Local governments have increased per capita expenditure by 11.0 per cent while state and territory governments have increased per capita expenditure by 3.9 per cent. The federal government is committing 18.9 per cent less expenditure per capita to culture than it did a decade ago.”

The report extrapolates that:

“The rise in local government funding cannot be simply considered as direct compensation for the decline at other levels of government. However, the steady and sustained increase in per capita expenditure suggests local governments are seeing the relevance and benefit of creative and cultural activities in the communities they serve.”<sup>3</sup>

The report also found that whilst arts funding has been growing nationally over the past decade, it has not kept pace with per capita growth.

**Recommendation 15:** That the Committee considers not only arts and culture funding levels between states, but also examines federal funding which has been reducing per capita.

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<sup>3</sup> A New Approach, *The Big Picture: Public Expenditure on Artistic, Cultural and Creative Activity in Australia*, 2019, available at: [www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ANA-InsightReportOne-FullReport.pdf](http://www.humanities.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ANA-InsightReportOne-FullReport.pdf)

The Meeting of Cultural Ministers (a forum for the Australian, state and territory, and New Zealand arts and culture ministers to discuss areas of national and international significance and mutual interest) produces government funding data. The latest data set, *Cultural Funding by Government, Australia, 2017-18*, shows a comparison of arts and cultural funding State Governments:

State	Total arts and culture expenditure in 2017-18	Arts and culture expenditure per capita
New South Wales	\$627 million	\$79.15 per capita
Victoria	\$547.1 million	\$85.67 per capita
Queensland	\$415.8 million	\$83.78 per capita
South Australia	\$253.7 million	\$146.78 per capita
Western Australia	\$296.8 million	\$114.91 per capita
Tasmania	\$96.6 million	\$183.90 per capita

The figures show that the NSW Government has the lowest per capita spending on arts and culture compared to the other states in Australia.

**Recommendation 16:** That the NSW Government urgently invests in arts and culture to at least match the expenditure per capita of Victoria and Queensland.



## Strategies to support museum development across NSW

- vi. *whether there are more cost effective strategies than the sale of the Powerhouse Museum site at Ultimo to support museum development across NSW, including consideration of the new Parramatta site and the proposed standalone Western Sydney Museum at the Cumberland Hospital site.*

This submission has included a broad range of funding needs for museums and cultural projects in NSW. LGNSW advocates for more museums, not fewer. Any funds allocated to the proposed move should not be at the cost of funding to other NSW museums. LGNSW notes that Parramatta City Council and surrounding Western Sydney LGAs support the move as a method to redress the significant lack of a major state cultural institution in Western Sydney. LGNSW also acknowledges that the Powerhouse Museum has a significant history on and near its current site and is currently a significant local asset for residents in surrounding LGAs. Wherever the Powerhouse Museum is located, the NSW Government must ensure that there will be significant and extended outreach and advisory services for volunteer, regional and remote museums in NSW including funding programs, mentorships, networking opportunities and expert advice.

**Recommendation 17:** Any funds allocated to the proposed move should not be at the cost of funding to other NSW museums. The Powerhouse Museum should continue to provide outreach and advisory services to other museums state-wide.

## Recommendations

LGNSW makes the following recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:** That the NSW Government establish a Museum Strategy for NSW. Such a strategy will be used by stakeholders (including local government) to guide decisions about matters such as collections, infrastructure, education initiatives and more.

**Recommendation 2:** The NSW Government should look at cultural curation examples from Toronto and City of Sydney to make planning and regulatory changes, in consultation with local government, to enable cultural and creative spaces.

**Recommendation 3:** That the State Government reviews the support it provides to museums and cultural projects in response to contemporary issues including climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Recommendation 4:** That the State Government recognise the diversity of regional museums and cultural institutions, and to provide support to those most in need, by adjusting policies, application processes and funding support for institutions according to different categories.

**Recommendation 5:** LGNSW calls upon the NSW Government to consult local government and Museums and Galleries NSW in all arts and culture policy and strategic planning and implementation processes including the revision and rollout of the strategies listed above.

**Recommendation 6:** That a greater proportion of funds from the Create Infrastructure Office are allocated to council-run museums and cultural projects outside of the Sydney CBD.

**Recommendation 7:** That the State Government increase their industry-specific funding package to match the funding provided by the Victorian Government's COVID-19 arts support package. This funding package should also include funding specifically for council-run museums and cultural projects.

**Recommendation 8:** To contribute to the stability and forward planning, the State Government should deliver a reliable funding stream for local government-run museums and cultural institutions, and reduce the complexity of funding applications.

**Recommendation 9:** That state-run museums offer an increase in the availability of mentorships, free advice, professional skills training and internships to council-run museums.

**Recommendation 10:** A framework for regional institutions to access and display state and national collections to improve equitable access to collections across NSW.

**Recommendation 11:** That loans from major museums could be better facilitated if there were more flexible environmental/security conditions for collections or if there was more support to meet those conditions.

**Recommendation 12:** That access to collections does not only rely on digitisation and loans, but includes mechanisms for the audience to connect the story of the object to their local area.

**Recommendation 13:** That the State Government allow for an exemption for firearms in museums to not be made permanently inoperable, and instead allow them to be rendered only temporarily inoperable. Further funding for security and storage would be necessary for these collections.

**Recommendation 14:** In the context of increased financial pressures on all levels of government, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee should recommend an increase in NSW Government funding across art forms to avoid cost-shifting onto local government and to ensure the larger cultural institutions can continue to support the smaller ones.

**Recommendation 15:** That the Committee considers not only arts and culture funding levels between states, but also examines federal funding which has been reducing per capita.

**Recommendation 16:** That the NSW Government urgently invests in arts and culture to at least match the expenditure per capita of Victoria and Queensland.

**Recommendation 17:** Any funds allocated to the proposed move should not be at the cost of funding to other NSW museums. The Powerhouse Museum should continue to provide outreach and advisory services to other museums state-wide.

For further information, please contact \_\_\_\_\_, LGNSW Senior Policy Officer, on \_\_\_\_\_,