

Supplementary  
Submission  
No 66a

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

**Name:** Mr Lionel Glendenning

**Date Received:** 17 May 2020

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

16 May 2020

The Hon Robert Borsak MLC

Chair

Re Terms of Reference: Item 1 a (ii)  
1 b (i)

Dear Mr Borsak,

Overview: **NSW: ARTS AND CULTURE:**

**GOVERNANCE.CULTURAL PLANNING.FINANCIAL SECURITY**

**Culture and Arts in NSW is a short term political domino game that eventuates in poor overall State Arts and Cultural Policy:**

edifice complexes - ministerial interventions - blatant political distortion of priorities - capture by agenda-driven groups - ineffective financial oversight - poor maintenance and operating budgets - low morale - high staff turnover - head-hunted appointments of non-professional dilettantes - departmental capture of policy and plans in SES systems by ministers' inadequately trained 'cultural advisors' & rich 'culture vultures.'

Too often a vote-buying program by political parties developed from amateur - compromised (bankers, property developers, collectors, lawyers, social gadflies etc) or political party affiliations.

Cultural planning that has only a four year horizon in NSW has for many years been ad-hoc and politically manipulated at worst (Tammany Hall) or, as is so often the case, arbitrary 'seat of the pants' a la the 'sports rorts'.

In a strange way this ad-hockery, this confusion, this crises planning, has become a political manifestation of the increasing failure of most cultural initiatives - ironically adding to the Party Ministerial dominance in the 'bull-pit' of arts and cultural debate this has led to 'Artz czars' - obsequious tribunes with backgrounds that reinforce the Arts as only Art Galleries (perhaps protecting their private collections, social networking, Arts bodies (influence pedalling), Contemporary Art galleries (woke, ephemeral, control freaks.)

Where these distortions have produced vastly expensive galleries and venues – massive distortions of funding: two major contemporary Art Galleries – Sydney Modern and MCA - 2.3km apart essentially covering the same content; failed Carriageworks and proposed Parramatta PHM 23km apart, essentially offering the same experience. Add the endless turbulence for day to day operations and erratic funding leaving regional NSW museums and art galleries bereft of dynamism, adequate funding and professional operations.

All of this chaos moves from 'crisis to crisis' never recognising the failure of underfunding, 'efficiency dividends' (non existent), poor management training in the cultural sphere, the appointment of too many lawyers, cultural warriors or woke individuals - all of whom from either ignorance or malevolent intent attempt change that leaves institutions damaged (to wit, PHM – Casey, Hiscock, Merrilees – etc).

Too many buzz words, too many fashionable causes, too many poorly developed long term directions without sustainable funding sources and coherent financial plans nor actual professional experience. (PHM failed fashion Ball; Carriageworks debt)

Australia's record of philanthropic largesse is not encouraged by government distortion, either political interference or Ministers and Departments with little capacity and resources to effectively put in place long term programs, especially for regional cultural initiatives and needs.

Trustees and Boards have been loaded by Ministers with crony political inexperienced government supporters becoming playthings for bankers, merchant bankers, nouveau riche celebrities, faceless political apparatchiks, carpetbaggers and sycophants, lawyers and company directors with little real interest, often only ensuring that their own agendas, art collections are increased in value – this is especially so in the case of contemporary art and fashion – MCA – Sydney Modern.

Long term planning, (beyond the 4 year life of most politicians), is almost unknown in the field, unlike models in the USA and Europe where major effort is invested in the growth of business investment in culture is encouraged. In Australia, the rich are not encouraged enough by government with generous tax incentives or other arts or honours incentives for philanthropy. This needs to change as does our long term planning.

### **Better Investment for Culture in NSW**

Because of this and previous NSW Governments – O'Farrell, Baird, Berejiklian – the sale of assets that have almost reached rock bottom of the barrel – ie none left – its time to realise – State debt is new-fashion debt – not backed by assets.

This red ink is accompanied by continuing State budget deficit into infinity. A debt loaded on to future generations that will have deep repercussions on high city and regional cultural unemployment, on living standards, lifestyles, housing and services into the future – all less able to deliver.

Will this current Berejiklian/Perrotet Government attempt to 'cover its arse' by selling the last of the State's assets, increasing taxes or promoting extra GST or other short term fixes rather than abandoning its wasteful, obsessive pursuit of big pointless Sydney-centric toll roads, like the over-budget tunnels; privatised rail and bus; cultural and sports projects - 'Move the Powerhouse to Parramatta' for no benefit other than some misguided political payback or developer boondoggle with the 'Dodgy Bros'; stadiums for sports that are now revealed to be financial basket cases which only fill stadiums once a year.(\$500m lost over 4 years).

Stop the waste – don't continue with business as usual – no more privatisation of public assets. Rethink the absurd move of the people's Museum from its home in Ultimo to Carriageworks Lite at Parramatta.

Give the people of Western Sydney (Parramatta is hardly the centre of Western Sydney) ie 3-4 focused/bespoke community-based cultural projects: Penrith, Campbelltown – Camden, Blacktown.

For the people of NSW: Regional initiatives: Central Coast; Hunter Region; Coffs Harbour; Wollongong; Cooma; Central West; North West – the opportunities are across NSW.

Keep PHM in Ultimo - 140 years of history.

Think SMART for all future infrastructure: new Regional cities – culture + heritage + collections; High Speed Regional Rail – Health- Education-Services- Affordable Housing- Landscape and Environment – Water - Energy – NBN.

We are witnessing a giant Political Ponzi Scheme that exposes NSW to endless cultural decline - 'debt servicing' without any real assets as the foundation of our common wealth and, reduced capacity to service the crippling debt into the future.

Far from culture's democratic roots, we now have, - captured by a cabal of the nouveau riche, by edifice complex ministers, by unelected, unknowing biased, ideologically driven political advisors – distorting the broader needs of our culture and our heritage, ignoring deeper cultural needs and wider seeking of professional, expert advice over 'captains calls'. The consequences are a series of disconnected over endowed city-based art galleries while the rest - including regional cultural centres with long histories (Goulburn's Leider Theatre, Broken Hill's Museum and its Art Gallery, Port Macquarie's Historical Society and Museum, Newcastle's Art gallery etc) are left fighting over the financial crumbs. Ironically, this plays into the current Government's financial 'cargo-cult' way of funding based on political and personal preference!

This is exaggerated further by the STOP-GO and splitting up of grant approvals and endlessly ridiculous review stages that again empower Ministers and bureaucrats and private advisors.

We need a new model that has **major endowments for each institution** with annual funding, based on dividends from endowments – something like a Future

Fund say \$10 billion – once only CULTURE FUND supported by Government dollar for dollar.

### **A Plan for Culture in NSW**

- Prepared by a select group of significant NSW citizens.
- Proven Directors, Curators, Masters and Professionals, Arts, Architecture, Design, Economics, Philosophy and History.

Plans for 3 years – 10 years – 25 years

One convocation/meeting a year: a grand Cultural Plan event led by Government

Governments respond to the plan with initiatives that fill-out the intent with programs and shovel-ready projects over the short term political cycle.

~

Lionel Glendenning

I am happy for my submission to be published with my name.

I am happy to appear before the Inquiry as a witness.

#### **BRIEF RESUME**

Lionel Glendenning  
Life Fellow, Powerhouse Museum

#### **Qualifications**

AA STC Hons 1964  
B Arch Hons 1, UNSW 1966  
M Arch (Harvard), 1969 Inaugural Menzies Scholar to Harvard GSD  
Dip. Environ Studies Macq U, 1973

### **Professional History**

Architect, NSW Government Architect Office 1958–88  
Principal Architect Public Buildings, NSW Government Architect's Office 1984 – 1988  
Edwards Madigan Torzillo Briggs Pty Ltd, Managing Director, 1988 – 1994  
HBO+EMTB Director Design 1994 – 2012  
Design tutor: UNSW, Syd Uni, UTS.

### **Professional Associations**

APEC Registered Architect  
Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Associate  
Registered Architect, NSW, Vic, Qld, ACT, WA, Tas  
Height of Buildings Committee, Sydney, (1984 – 87?) (PWDNSW)  
Heritage Council of NSW, (1987–88) (PWDNSW) (sub)  
Urban Design Advisory Committee (1986–88) (PWDNSW)  
Retired 2012

### **Academic Awards**

W E Kemp Prize 1963  
RAIA Prize 1966  
Byera Hadley Testimonial Prize 1966  
Joseph Auto-Hot Pty Ltd Prize 1968  
Byera Hadley Travelling Scholarship 1967  
Inaugural Robert Gordon Menzies Scholar, to Harvard University Graduate School of Design 1968

### **Architecture Awards:**

Claymore Public School, RAIA NSW Merit Award 1980  
Bicentennial Park, Homebush Bay, RAIA NSW Merit Award 1988  
  
Powerhouse Museum:  
RAIA NSW Architectural Awards 1988  
Sir John Sulman Award for Public Buildings, RAIA NSW 1988, Government Architect's Office, Lionel Glendenning, principal architect  
ACROD Award for barrier free circulation, 1988  
  
RAIA National Architectural Awards 1988  
President's Award for the recycling or new use of a building  
Sir Zelman Cowen Award: finalist  
RAIA Belle Award for Interiors  
  
IMAX Theatre, Darling Harbour, RAIA NSW Merit Award 1997; Metal Building Association Merit Award, 1997; Australian Construction Achievement Award 1998  
Caves Beachside NSW North Coast: Urban Development Institute of Australia Awards 2010, NSW Winner: NSW Regions and ACT