

Submission
No 68

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

Organisation: Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation

Date Received: 17 May 2020

Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation
PO Box 81
Windsor NSW 2756

13th May 2020

The Director
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Select Committee,

We are thankful of this invitational opportunity for Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation (DCAC) to make a submission to the inquiry into the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales and have prepared the following in response.

The management of Powerhouse and other museums and cultural projects within NSW aligns with Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation's strategic goals, objectives, and business capabilities. Ensuring that management continues to be led through Aboriginal custodianship while guaranteeing cultural protocol and appropriateness is maintained at the highest quality is our key driver in this submission.

Believing that education is the key to understanding and the first tool of creating a safe space for both the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people to engage positively and successfully together, DCAC trust that the select committee will safeguard the cultural elements of working in partnership to preserve cultural belief, knowledge, stories and objects in a respectful and consciously sensitive manner.

Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation allow the request of this submission be published in full on the website including name/s.

Sincerely,

Leanne Watson, Director | Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation

Erin Wilkins, Director | Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation

This submission has been prepared by Directors of the Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation (DCAC).

Our interest in the submission for involvement into this inquiry draws primarily from our cultural connection as First Nations People and custodial role in providing extensive services and advice to a wide range of organisations (including Local and State Government, Education, private, public and community sectors) across the Sydney Basin to:

1. Maintain a custodial role in the protection of Darug sites and places,
2. Maintain a custodial role in relation to Darug cultural knowledge and traditions,
3. Promote community awareness and understanding of Darug culture, and
4. Provide an open venue for Darug descendants to discuss and negotiate matters relating to Darug people, land, and culture.

Although our primary focus is on the Darug people, land, and culture we extend this respect, advocacy and acknowledgment to all Aboriginal people, their countries, and continuous connections. As traditional custodians of the Sydney Basin, having a proven history of experience and understanding in Cultural Heritage protection, conservation and preservation works our involvement we will be beneficial to not only Museums and cultural projects within New South Wales but to the ongoing education and preservation of all Aboriginal Cultures.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss any aspect of this submission further with the Select Committees.

When addressing the Terms of Reference, Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation would like to put forward some suggestions and responses associated.

1a(v) the impact on the site at Ultimo and heritage items at Willow Grove and the Fleet Street precinct at Parramatta.

At the Willow Grove site there is a tree of significance to local and surrounding first nations (Aboriginal people). This tree is significant to the connections, travel, and gatherings across Aboriginal lands. If not for the entire site, then just the tree, it is important and critical for it to remain in situ. Aboriginal peoples' connection to our environment is of utmost importance. We believe we are one (part of who we are and our identity) and united to our natural surroundings, not only the physical but spiritual level; therefore, to remove would be a devastatingly painful event for Aboriginal people.

1a (vi) the use of the proceeds from the proposed sale of the site at Ultimo.

Recommendation/s put forward include designated amounts of the proceeds be utilised or held in trust for:

- Future cultural projects and programs to increase the custodianship and/or assist in the reclamation and rejuvenation of cultural practices within Aboriginal communities.
- Assist in the establishment of community keeping places in and for local Aboriginal communities in the acquisition, maintenance and preservation of their own collections that will remain on Country.
- Assist in the repatriation of cultural objects back to the traditional people and Country.

1b(ii) whether there is equitable access to collections across New South Wales, including at the Powerhouse Museum and the Australian Museum.

Currently, we do not believe that there is equitable access to the collections across New South Wales. Whether it be through the Powerhouse, Australian or other museums including collections held by the Local Aboriginal Land Councils, access to these collections is quite hard for people to attain. Recommendation such as providing allocated days and times would open the opportunities for people to access certain areas of collections with minimal procedures without compromising security issues. In perusing this recommendation, it will also eliminate or minimise the fear of illiteracy issue that many first nations people endure.

1c) Recommendation put forward that Mr Ken Wyatt, Minister for Indigenous Australians, has a seat and invited into the committee to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to have a “voice” in legislative council and issues that directly relate to not only governmental policies but the traditional protocol and protection of cultural items/projects and their significance to Aboriginal people through connection to land, spiritual or physical, and the educational purposes of all Australians.

Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation

Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation (DCAC) is the organisation that represents the Darug People on matters of cultural heritage, culture and language, and provides a contact point for individuals and organisations wishing to engage with the Darug People on a wide range of topics and issues.

DCAC is based in Western Sydney and has been operating throughout the Sydney basin for over 30 years. We have an advisory board of Darug Elders and a seasoned operational management team with a proven track record of delivering high quality services and advice to clients. Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation actively works with Darug community members who bring special knowledge and skills to projects.

Our Services

Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation provides extensive services and advice to a wide range of organisations including Local and State Government, Education, private, public and community sectors across the Sydney Basin. Our services include maintaining a custodial role in relation to Darug cultural knowledge and traditions and the protection of Darug sites and places through:

- Cultural heritage survey and documentation
- Register Aboriginal places and ensure they are conserved and recognised
- Advisory services and working with developers on cultural heritage issues
- Advisory – public interpretations
- Research projects on Darug cultural heritage, language, and art
- Traditional ownership.

Track Record

Over the last 3 years, the Corporation has delivered services to over 300 clients. Darug Custodians has worked with these organisations providing a range of cultural heritage services:

Name	Activity
Councils (e.g. Hawkesbury City Council, Parramatta City Council and Blue Mountains Council)	Developing RAPs and advise on cultural policy Participate in events Cultural heritage and advisory services for infrastructure and planning Art interpretation and installation Welcome to Country
Corporations undertaking development, building and construction (e.g. GPT, Eather Group, RMS, Lend Lease, BMD Construction)	Advisory services on cultural competency in business Cultural awareness Cultural heritage services Archaeology Art interpretation and installation

Name	Activity
Education sector (e.g. Early childhood Australia, Western Sydney University, TAFE Western Sydney)	Educational resources and information Presentations on Darug culture and language
Public sector and not for profit organisations (e.g. Sydney Zoo, State Library, National Parks and Wildlife, Australian Museum, Museum of Contemporary Arts, Nepean and Blue Mountains Health Services, Wentworth Housing, Headspace)	Cultural advisory and consultation and mentoring on cultural interpretation Participate events Cultural training Cultural heritage surveys Art interpretation and installation Advise on and record Aboriginal sites Research programs Presentations on Darug culture and language Welcome to Country Smoking ceremonies
Private sector organisations (e.g. Mecure Hotel)	Welcome to country Art interpretation and installation Cultural advisory services Cultural training
Environmental management organisations (e.g. Ecological Australia, Heritage advisers)	Cultural heritage services and consultation Archaeology
Aboriginal organisations (e.g. Firesticks Alliance, Balarinji, Dharug Ngurra Aboriginal Corporation)	Collaboration on events Cultural advisory services

Contact Details

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