

Submission
No 118

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

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Date Received: 17 May 2020

Partially
Confidential

Inquiry into the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Submission from Tom Lockley

#1: Introduction and fact sheet

This submission addresses the whole matter of the proposed move of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the Powerhouse Museum, from Ultimo to Parramatta.

This is the first of eight separate submissions, as follows:

1. This submission: Introduction and fact sheet.
2. 'Finding' response: the Government's inadequate, irrelevant and severely flawed response to chief criticism outlined by the earlier Inquiry.
3. Heritage considerations of the whole project, which have been severely underestimated.
4. Finances: implications of the destruction of the museum at Ultimo (notes only, not a full analysis).
5. Consultation shortcomings throughout the whole process.
6. Move risks: case study of moving a major object, illustrating a lack of care for exhibits.
7. Miscellaneous matters: general points indicating other areas of Governmental ineptitude.
8. An alternative project: quick notes on a possible alternative.

Full responsibility for these submissions all facts therein is taken by the writer as listed. However, the material often comes from an informal email group that has been functioning since 1 May 2016. Over 100 members include present and past MAAS employees and volunteers, other Government employees and contractors, a wide range of other people with skills in engineering, architecture and the arts, and general museum members and supporters with many relevant skills and experiences. I am happy to provide all possible supporting evidence but will not divulge the names of many sources of information: volunteers and employees have in the past been ordered to present a favourable view of the 'move' of the magazine, and employees feel that if they express dissident view they will be discriminated against for future employment Museum jobs are scarce and highly sought after, so this fear is understandable. Other correspondents who have Government jobs or ties to Government projects have similar concerns. In a rational democracy, such fears should be groundless, but the irrational and arbitrary decision-making that is demonstrated in these submissions cause people to lose confidence in democratic processes.

Throughout these submissions 'I' indicates action taken by me alone, and 'we' indicates action taken with help from email group members, who remain unnamed throughout.

As a general rule, these matters have been raised with the relevant authorities, challenging them to provide any factual countervailing evidence and no such evidence has been forthcoming. These submissions are online on the private website <http://maasbusinesscase.com/>.

Summary fact sheet developed 2015-2020

The following FACTS have been consistently asserted over the past four years, not just from the enormous Inquiry into Museums and Galleries, and no contradictory material has emerged. On Monday 21 January 2019, for example, the Premier, the Arts Minister and other politicians received, by registered mail and by email, a copy of these facts, with a covering letter formally requesting comment or refutation, but again there has been no valid response.

The contents of this sheet were also presented in a 1:1 interview with Ms Havilah at PHM at 12 noon on Wednesday 6 November 2019 and she was invited to present any evidence of error in any point. She has not been able to do so, and neither has any Government politician or agency. It is agreed with Ms Havilah that any communication with her is equivalent to direct communication with the Arts Ministry. The sheet has continually been presented through the normal channels to INSW, Create Australia and MAAS Museum, requesting that all errors be reported to us, with no response,

Full references supporting each fact are available: check

<https://powerhousemuseumalliance.com/> or [email tomlockley@gmail.com](mailto:tomlockley@gmail.com).

1. The idea of moving the Powerhouse Museum was not researched. It was an announced political decision in late 2014. CIPMO, Infrastructure NSW and MAAS museum authorities have clearly stated that their actions have resulted from this announced decision, and there was no pre-announcement research into alternative strategies for the laudable objective of improving the cultural facilities of Western Sydney.
2. There was no consultation with stakeholders. Even the trustees of the museum and Parramatta Council learnt of the idea from reading about it in the newspapers.
3. This state of affairs has continued: There has never been any later consultation or research into alternatives to moving the Powerhouse Museum to the site chosen by the Government in Parramatta. A sham consultation effort in mid-2017 consisted of asking people what they wanted to see in the new museums and asking for suggestions about the use of the Ultimo site.
4. 'Moving' the Powerhouse is a very bad idea. Of all possible projects for enhancing the cultural facilities of Western Sydney, it is hard to find one that is more expensive, more destructive and more inefficient: The largest objects have to be the last out of Ultimo and the first into any new building at Parramatta, with consequent massive costs for storage and transit. There will be a considerable resultant time delay, unnecessary with almost any other project. The specially strengthened floors (for supporting heavy exhibits) and ceiling (for suspending aircraft and other similar items), as well as the extensive steam reticulation

network, will be wasted at Ultimo and have to be replicated at considerable cost at Parramatta.

This process wastes, at the very least, some hundreds of millions of dollars above what would be required for any other cultural / educational project.

5. The magnificent soaring galleries of the existing building cannot be replicated in Parramatta within the proposed new building. The proposed site is smaller than the Ultimo site, and is further compromised by the current plan to build at least one commercial / residential tower on the site and by the unanimously expressed desire of Parramatta Council for the retention of heritage buildings on the site. The unresearched decision to include a Planetarium within the museum added further difficulties.

6. The currently planned process involves a massive degradation of the Ultimo site, again for the purpose of building commercial / residential towers to assist budgeting. There is a calculable value of heritage in institutions such as the Powerhouse Museum, and this has been totally ignored by the Government.

7. The proposal has been the subject of almost universal criticism. The Government was forced to hold a Legislative Council Inquiry which attracted over 150 relevant submissions. Apart from the Government submission, all organizational submissions, including those of the National trust, only two gave qualified support for the move, and all others completely opposed it. Of the over 100 individual submissions, some from very highly qualified people, none supported the 'move'. Non-Government witnesses were universally condemnatory of the idea. The *Save the Powerhouse* Facebook page exemplifies the views of the general public with over 20,000 people involved in active support. Mr Baird, asked at the Inquiry to name one arts group in favour of the move, did not do so even when given three weeks to research the topic.

8. The site chosen by the Government had been specifically rejected by the elected council prior to its dissolution to enable forced council amalgamation. The land deal was finalised by the unelected administrator, and has not been approved by the re-elected Parramatta Council.

This is Australia's only museum dedicated to the important interface between the applied arts and sciences and it is an act of cultural vandalism to move it from its present magnificent building on its present site, site, most accessible to the state, the country and the world.

Edited by Tom Lockley, PO Box 301, Pyrmont 2009.tomlockley@gmail.com 0403615134.

Inquiry into the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Submission from Tom Lockley

This submission addresses specifically Terms of Reference 1 (a) (viii):

Government's response to the previous recommendations of the Portfolio Committee No. 4 in Report 40 entitled 'Museums and Galleries in New South Wales'.

#2: Analysis of the 'Finding' response

Introduction

After the major Inquiry into Museums and Galleries, a Final Report was issued on 28 February 2019 after over two years of proceedings. It was supported by massive evidence, many submissions and facts elicited during over thirty hours of sittings. Only Government members of the Inquiry demurred.

The report was headed up by a Finding, not a mere Recommendation, as follows:

Finding 1

That the Final Business Case for the Powerhouse Museum in Western Sydney Project did not comply with NSW Treasury's Guide to Cost-Benefit Analysis.

On 17 July 2019 the Government's response was received, as follows:

Response: *Not Supported. Since February 2016, Infrastructure NSW has undertaken six independent reviews of the New Museum in Western Sydney project, conducted by more than 30 independent reviewers including specialists in design, planning and economics.*

The Final Business Case for the project demonstrates the expertise, time, detail, rigor and due diligence underpinning the planning of this project. Highly qualified consultants in cultural infrastructure, museum logistics, urban planning, construction and operations contributed via peer review processes and governance panels. The document includes an economic appraisal for the project, produced in accordance with NSW Treasury's Government Guide to Cost-Benefit Analysis.

The key parameters of the Economic Appraisal were endorsed by the Project Steering Committee which included a representative from NSW Treasury. The INSW Business Case summary indicated that it provided a sound basis for government decision making.

This scanty (131-word) response is very similar to statements made in the so-called *Final Business Case Summary* (page 2) issued a year before (2 July 2018). (red underlining: exactly the same wording as the response; black underlining similar meaning, different words)

Since February 2016, no fewer than six external reviews have been undertaken as work on the New Museum has evolved. The Gateway process managed by Infrastructure NSW involved extensive independent review by multiple experts in cultural infrastructure, urban planning, economic analysis, construction and operation. In addition, as part of the Business Case's development, CIPMO has sought advice from multiple experts in cultural infrastructure, museum logistics, urban planning, construction and operations through peer review processes and expert advisory panels. Infrastructure NSW's review of the Business Case for the relocated Powerhouse Museum, completed in February 2018, concluded that the Business Case had successfully demonstrated the case for change.

There were still four more sitting days before the end of the Inquiry when this travesty of a Business Case summary was issued, and it seems that the minister was not taking his 2019 response seriously – just submitting something that would fill the statutory requirement of making a response.

After the release of the report there was a debate in the Legislative Council¹ in which the Government members simply took the same line as the response, without addressing any issues. If it existed, for example, it would surely be easy to simply list the process by which the alternatives were assessed.

The remainder of this submission will dissect this response to demonstrate the response's lack of validity.

Comments on 'Six independent reviews' – paragraph 1 of the Government response

The Government was forced to release the current Business Case in April 2018. They had been under severe criticism for failure to secure expert advice and it is strange that the six independent reviews were not released as part of the Business Case. It is even stranger that there is no mention of these reviews in such documents as the *MAAS Stakeholder Engagement Register*.

As preparation for this submission we sought information about these reviews by emailing Infrastructure NSW, the Minister for the Arts on 12 April. Ms Havilah passed responsibility for replying to the email to INSW and an unnamed person stated that the information could not be provided because it was 'cabinet in confidence'.

¹ Hansard transcript: Wednesday, 7 August 2019 Legislative Council- PROOF Pages 26-29: Committees: PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 4 - LEGAL AFFAIRS, Report: Museums and Galleries in New South Wales, Debate resumed from 8 May 2019.

We then asked for metadata: who were the members of the review groups, what were the terms of reference, when did they meet and so on. Again this was refused: even this information was 'cabinet in confidence'².

We assume, despite the absence of evidence, that these six independent reviews must exist, otherwise the minister would be guilty of perjury.

We do not concede that the release of the assessments of the review panels can possibly be against the public interest: either they are positive, which is to the credit of the Government enterprise, or they are negative, in which case the information needs to be publicly known. In any case, we need proof that the process exists as described.

We also want to clarify a few other issues. We believe, from other sources, that any review process at this stage does not include the assessment of the basic soundness of the original 'move' idea. We also have information that no people with museum qualifications or significant experience have been involved in any review process. We do not understand how INSW can conduct an independent review into its own actions. INSW, MAAS museum and the Arts Minister have repeatedly been asked to supply evidence that there has been any assessment of alternatives to the original 'move' idea and we are proceeding on the assumption that this has still not been done.

However, in an attempt to achieve more definite knowledge about the procedure, and because we had exhausted the normal communication channels, INSW received a GIPA request from us by registered mail on Tuesday 5 March. An email from the Information and Privacy Commission has confirmed that we are entitled to seek this information and that *INSW is, for the purposes of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, an agency.*

We await the result and if there is additional relevant information we will submit an addendum to this submission.

[Peer Review and Governance Panels- paragraph 2 of the Government response](#)

Key point: The statement in the Government's response to the Finding, that *Highly qualified consultants in cultural infrastructure, museum logistics, urban planning, construction and operations [have] contributed via peer review processes and governance panels' is inaccurate.*

On 11 February 2020 emails were sent to INSW, the Arts Minister, the Premier and the CEO of MAAS including the following:

As regards the 'Highly qualified consultants in cultural infrastructure, museum logistics, urban planning, construction and operations [who have] contributed via peer review processes and governance panels referred to in Mr Harwin's rejection of the Inquiry Finding, no Government entity has been able to produce evidence that they exist.

² an email received on 29 April from Infrastructure NSW, no signature.

We believe that our website <http://maasbusinesscase.com/> has every relevant document from the business cases and Government publications that has been released and 'peer review' has only two sets of relevant mentions:

- *Firstly, the so-called Expert Guidance Group /Panel mentioned in Inquiry evidence by Ms Torres and Mr Harwin July / August 2017 has been shown to be a sham, details as below, pages 4ff.*
- *Secondly Attachment EE - Consultations and Peer Review Schedule is listed as part of the released business case but apparently does not exist.*

If this statement is in error, please inform us urgently.

No response has been received. As a matter of interest, we have on 17 occasions asked the Legislative Council office, the Arts Minister, INSW and MAAS for copies of Attachment EE.

At the outset, a very important point must be made. The people organising the Business Case and therefore the 'move' itself, are not experienced or indeed qualified, in museology. The most, indeed the only, capable experienced person we have been able to find in the process is Peter Root, of Root Partnerships, who played a valued part in the commissioning of the present museum. He has of recent years produced plans for removing the exhibits from the museum, and they are probably as efficient as possible for this huge project³. In his Inquiry evidence he was careful to emphasise that he was following instructions rather than originating, or necessarily supporting, the project⁴.

He is an exception to the general rule that people with museum qualifications and experience have taken no part in the process. A 2016 *LinkedIn* search of the local Johnstaff employees, for example, did not find that any of the 114 local employees had significant museum-related experience or qualifications, and this firm has the responsibility of preparing the Business Case.

On 11 July 2019 in an interview with _____ of MAAS, he mentioned to me that Johnstaff did indeed have a qualified and experienced museum person working on the project. He promised to get me the details but did not do so even after a reminder email on 22 July. I rang his office several times during late 2019. When he was on holidays his PA said she would endeavour to find these details but did not make further contact with me. Early in 2020 we heard that _____ left MAAS for a position at the _____. On 4 December 2019 I also raised this matter with Ms Havilah, but she had no information to hand on any employees of INSW or related bodies that had museum qualifications or experience.

³ Available online at the private website [maasbusinesscase.com](http://maasbusinesscase.com/business%20case/Blue%20attachments/Root%20Projects%20all%20drafts/list%20of%20all%20root%20drafts.htm)
<http://maasbusinesscase.com/business%20case/Blue%20attachments/Root%20Projects%20all%20drafts/list%20of%20all%20root%20drafts.htm>

⁴ Inquiry evidence, opening statement, Friday, 17 February 2017 page 30

All these employees charged with making the 'move' happen are further constrained by having to adhere to Government policy which means that they have to defend the indefensible. This puts great strain on them.

The Expert Advisory Group.

In Inquiry evidence 29 August 2017 Mr Harwin advised us of the membership of an Expert Advisory Group, (which we take to be the same entity as the Expert Advisory Panel mentioned by Ms Torres on 30 June 2017). He said that this group had 'provided guidance throughout the process.' He made this statement when refusing an offer of consultation with former Director Lindsay Sharp. Here is the exact transcript:

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I want to take you back to the \$1.5 billion claim that you dispute, involving Dr Lindsay Sharp. I know Dr Lindsay Sharp made this offer: that he and a number of senior figures in the arts administration community would sign confidentiality agreements with you, would take you through the costings as to how they arrived at that \$1.5 billion figure, and would give you binding, signed confidentiality agreements. What is your response to their offer?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: My response to that would be that we have established an expert advisory committee to look at this. We have a wealth of knowledge and a solid project focus track record across many critical aspects of the project, including: the design and delivery of major arts and cultural projects; government relationships; subject matter expertise across museums, collections, science and the arts; major project planning and delivery; operations and management of museums; and philanthropic and sponsor relations. They provide their knowledge and guidance directly to the project committee. The members of that include the following: Dr J. Patrick Greene, previously the chief executive officer of Museum Victoria; Professor Graham Durant, the Director of Questacon; Mr Mark Carnegie, well-known as an arts philanthropist; and I think you have been advised previously of Doug Hall's role⁵. He has a continuing role.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Point of order—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am answering the question.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You are not. I was asking what your response is to their offer to provide the costings and to go through it with a signed confidentiality agreement.

⁵ Doug Hall was previously mentioned in evidence to the Inquiry on June 6, and is noted as 'Independent Advisor' in a subsequent response to questions on notice. He is not mentioned in the submissions to the Inquiry and only otherwise, as far as we can see, appears once in the released records as below. In the uncorrected version of the transcript he was listed here as *Director of the Art Gallery and GOMA, Queensland*. On 20/06/2017 he took part in a workshop at Arts & Culture NSW, Level 5, 323 Castlereagh Street, Sydney Workshop, with Craig Limkin (CIPMO), Mark Curzon (FKM Architects), Stephanie Brancatisano (FKM Architects), Raymond Berger (River Levett Bucknall), Anna Cuthbertson (Johnstaff) and Nicholas Lawler (Johnstaff) discussing an 'Area Schedule', no further details available, and this is the only mention of his name in the *MAAS Stakeholder Engagement Register*, (entry for 20/06/2017). Mr Hall was director of the Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art 1987-2007.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Peter Root, the Managing Director of Root Partnerships who has had an extensive involvement with the Powerhouse Museum; Penny Hutchinson, previously the head of Arts Victoria; and Edmund Capon as well, who I am sure is well-known to all of you. My response would be we are getting the expert advice and we are able to go forward on the basis that the best advice is available already to the project and we have locked that in to ensure that we have a good outcome.

There are many problems with this assertion.

- In the Business Case documents we have not found evidence of any influence that the panel has had. It is only mentioned in the business papers twice – in the Engagement Register listing the two meetings mentioned below.
- The group was not formed until over 2½ years had elapsed since the project was inaugurated and there is no trace of such process before this time.
- The group first met on 7 September 2017 at The Mint, Macquarie Street, attended by Peter Root, Penny Hutchinson and Graham Durant with a group of senior people from MAAS and CIPMO.
- A second and final meeting, on 25 September 2017 at Parramatta Council buildings, had the same attendance plus Patrick Greene. Doug Hall attended neither meeting.
- Edmund Capon and Mark Carnegie have never attended meetings of the group and do not appear in the involvement register⁶. They are reported as saying respectively that they would not attend and did not know anything about it.
- Graham Durant told us in a phone conversation on 17 September 2018 that he had given some advice to various people on the establishment of Questacon facilities for a few hours in November 2017 but had no further interaction with MAAS.
- Edmund Capon, Mark Carnegie and Patrick Greene are not mentioned in any other context in any released documents we can find.
- In the academic world, peer assessment involves the examination of the relevant material by outside experts. In this case, Root Partnerships has been paid considerable amounts for professional involvement in the project and thus Mr Root should not take part in peer review, nor should Penny Hutchinson, then a director of Root Partnerships⁷.

Thus, the total legitimate involvement of this group is attendance of one person (Professor Durant) at two meetings and one person (Dr Greene) at one meeting. There is no possibility that any legitimate assessment could be done in this short time.

We have, in February / May sought details of the six independent reviews referred to in Mr Harwin's response to the Inquiry finding in emails to Ms Havilah, MAAS museum

⁶ MAAS Project Communications and Engagement Strategy for the New Museum in Western Sydney (attachment O).

⁷ <https://rootpartnerships.com.au/people/>, retrieved in July 2018. She does not appear in the current listing.

consultation, the Premier, INSW and the Arts Minister, and included in at least two emails to each place the following statement:

We have previously confirmed that there has been no proper peer review of the 'move' project, and no mention in any documents of peer review processes since the two poorly attended meetings of a so-called Peer Advisory Group in September 2017. If you have any countervailing evidence in this regard, please advise and we will correct our records accordingly.

No such rebuttal evidence has been received.

Expert involvement since the Government's response to the Inquiry

On Thursday December 5 2019 I had a formal discussion with Ms Havilah, and one area canvassed was our perception that there had been no, or very little, involvement of people with museum experience and qualifications in the whole process, despite Mr Harwin's statement referred to above, and no independent assessment involving people with museum experience and qualifications.

Ms Havilah told me that this need is met by a process called 'Deep Dives' conducted by Infrastructure NSW. Internet searches describe the process but we cannot find any examples of the process in action. So on 11 December we emailed MAAS museum (, Ms Havilah), INSW, the Arts Minister Mr Harwin and INSW asking for more information:

We would like as much detail as is readily available on this process. For example, since September 2017, how many such investigations have been carried out? What topics have been covered? How is the membership of such investigatory processes been determined? How is it assured that the assessors do not have pecuniary interests in the projects being assessed?

More importantly for our purposes, how many 'Deep Dives' have been carried out regarding the 'move' of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta?

Please confirm that no such process was carried out before the end of September 2017. We have been seeking this information for the past 3½ years and have demonstrated that the proposed 'move' has never been researched.

A reply from INSW, received on 11 February⁸, simply referred us to the so-called *Final Business Case Summary* of 2 July 2017 and stated that the material was 'cabinet in confidence' and could not be divulged. We then asked for details of the establishment of these groups, names of participants, dates of meetings and subjects of these reviews but again we were told that these were 'cabinet in confidence'. As we were not happy with this, a GIPA form was submitted, received by INSW on Tuesday 5 May, and if it elicits any further relevant information this will be forwarded to the Inquiry.

⁸ This reply was received two months after the formal request for information, but the fact that we did eventually receive a reply was pleasing as typically such requests have been ignored or a response has been a standardised letter from Create NSW on behalf of the Government simply saying that the 'move' was a wonderful thing.



Fig 1: the reluctantly released Business Case had only one copy, black and white printouts, with many A3 pages reproduced on A4 and completely illegible. It was available by appointment only during office hours at the Legislative Council offices.

Tab 26	Attachment Y – Flood Study	November 2016	JohnStaff, contributor Taylor Whitting
Tab 27	Attachment Z – Traffic and Transport Assessment	November 2016	JohnStaff, contributor Taylor Whitting
Tab 28	Attachment AA – Geotechnical Investigation	2 September 2016	JohnStaff, contributor Peter Maynink
Tab 29	Attachment BB – New Museum Rationale	14 February 2017	MAAS
Tab 30	Attachment CC – Commissioning and Launch Plan	21 February 2016	JohnStaff
	Attachment EE – Consultants and Peer Review Schedule	12 January 2018	

Fig 2: We have repeatedly sought from all possible sources the release of Attachment EE, not released in the Business Case documents as can be seen from the above index sheet.

Paragraph 3 of the response

To recapitulate: this paragraph is as follows:

The key parameters of the Economic Appraisal were endorsed by the Project Steering Committee which included a representative from NSW Treasury. The INSW Business Case summary indicated that it provided a sound basis for government decision making.

This is less significant than the previous paragraphs, so only a few comments are relevant.

The Project Steering Committee is part of INSW. Members are generally:

- Deputy Secretary, Department Justice, Arts & Culture,
- Chief Executive, Justice Infrastructure (or nominated Delivery Agency),
- Executive Director, Arts NSW,
- Director, MAAS,
- Representative MAAS Trustee,

- Senior Analyst, Arts & Cultural Institutions, NSW Treasury,
- Director, Cities Branch, Department of Premier & Cabinet,
- Executive Director, Infrastructure NSW, and Project Director.

All but the MAAS Trustee are believed to be SES public servants charged with carrying out the Government's wishes, and the recently appointed Trustees are almost all from finance or law fields, with no experience in the museum field. Basically the PSC may have checked that the numbers added up, but in terms of providing an independent assessment one could not expect much.

The final sentence simply is INSW evaluating itself and saying that it had done a good job.

The paragraph does not do anything to restore confidence in the process.

Other relevant comments

For the record, the 'move' idea has been specifically opposed by two former directors of MAAS, at least two directors of other comparable institutions, four former trustees, nine professional curators and at least five other museum experts of similar standing. There are also many experts in other art-related areas, including the architect who designed the museum conversion and at least two other (younger) architects who are practicing at a very high level.

It is disappointing, but typical, that these former senior employees, curators and trustees are not respected at all, even though many of them still work voluntarily in arts / sciences / educational / museum fields, have dedicated their lives to these pursuits and have contributed many well-researched documents to the 'move' debate.. One of our email correspondents, discussing the Business Case papers, puts it well:

Notably absent from the list of stakeholders are the museum's own community of supporters, notable donors, former trustees and sponsors. Not to mention Life Fellows.

Also not a single museum or heritage group in Parramatta or western Sydney is a stakeholder, nor worthy of being consulted. Not even Old Government House, Parramatta Park, or Parramatta and District Historical Society, the first local historical society in Australia, founded just 12 years after the RAHS in 1913. They must think that Parramatta is the museum equivalent of terra nullius, with no museums in Parramatta or western Sydney.

Inquiry into the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Submission from Tom Lockley

This submission addresses specifically Terms of Reference 1 (a) (v) the impact on the heritage status of the site at Ultimo and heritage items at Willow Grove and the Fleet Street precinct at Parramatta

#3 Heritage matters

Summary

This submission demonstrates that matters of heritage have had little bearing on the process of planning for the so-called 'move' of the Powerhouse Museum from Ultimo to Parramatta.

It is divided into four sections:

- (a) a mention of academic work on the financial values of heritage: this has been ignored in this project
- (b) discussion of the heritage to be lost at Ultimo: it will be shown that apart from being a wanton act of destruction the current proposal simply wastes money.
- (c) a discussion of the destruction of heritage buildings on the (as yet only 'preferred') Parramatta site. The site has never been approved by an elected Parramatta council and the dominant wish is for retention of the heritage buildings. The Government has consistently issued misleading statements in this regard, and the public record needs to be amended.
- (d) a discussion of the potential for the Fleet Street site in Parramatta.

The financial values of heritage

Throughout the world great museums and galleries are often housed in historic buildings – the Louvre, the Hermitage, the Uffizi, Quai d'Orsay, and indeed the Powerhouse Museum. The key point to be made here is that even for people who do not appreciate great workmanship and wonderful history, heritage aspects of a building do have a commercial value. Copious studies exist regarding this matter: a typical example is *Valuing the Priceless: The Value of Historic Heritage in Australia*¹. Throughout the Business Case, and all other documents, the Government has stressed the appeal of new buildings but there has been no consideration at all of the cash values of heritage buildings in attracting visitors and in visitor impact. For this reason alone the plan to move the Powerhouse Museum is deeply flawed. The installation of the magnificent steam engine collection in Australia's first industrial power station makes an impact that cannot possibly be replicated in an ultramodern setting.

In Business Case Attachment G, *Heritage Advice, The Ultimo Presence Project*, Weir Phillips Heritage make the valid point (page 3) that in the early stages of development of the plan,

¹ Research Report 2 November 2005 Prepared for the Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand <https://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/info/pubs/valuing-priceless.pdf>

heritage values were only mentioned as an afterthought, whereas Weir Phillips Heritage believed it should have had much higher priority.

Heritage considerations at Ultimo.

The first stage of the building housed Australia's first industrial-scale powerhouse, built in 25 months, (finished December 1899), to very high construction standards. Ten kilometres of tram tracks were laid and 100 trams put on the line, simultaneously training everyone concerned in completely new technology. No comparison is made with the current situation in regard to light rail construction!

Over the next 40 years many additions were made to the original building, to the same superb standards of construction. By 1960 the Powerhouse was unused and derelict, but as part of the bicentennial commemorations of 1988 the buildings became a museum. The National Trust commented as follows:

The Powerhouse Museum opened on March 10, 1988. The challenging design by NSW Government Architect J Thompson and Design Architect Lionel Glendenning for the Powerhouse Museum converting the shell of an industrial building into one of the world's most up-to-date museums was deservedly given the 1988 Sulman award for architectural merit ... The Trust strongly opposes the sale by the NSW Government of the Powerhouse Museum for redevelopment and would also strongly oppose any demolition of the existing historic structure, the purpose built 1988 extension and extant components that demonstrate the Powerhouse's original use.^[40]

Heritage values are not assessed, and, we believe, not even mentioned, by the Government in their preliminary investigations, their submissions to the Inquiry, or even in the Business Case². Basically, the Business Case merely summarises the present position in regard to heritage listing.

No heritage classification was sought for the Powerhouse Museum when it was erected as no-one could have believed that this magnificent building could ever be under threat. Graham Quint, National Trust advocate, applied for Powerhouse Museum heritage listing in November 2015³, and eventually action ensued: Tim Smith OAM, Director Operations, Heritage NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet as Delegate of the Heritage Council of NSW, in an email dated 25 February, 2020 advised that an application had been made for the preservation of the *Ultimo Tramways Power House* and comment was invited.

On examination, this government-sponsored application sought the retention only of the basic structure of the original Power House buildings. It was, in effect a licence for destruction of the Harwood building and the 1988 conversions to allow for the construction of four high-rise towers.

² The Business Case documents *New Museum for MAAS at Parramatta Final Business Case Heritage Report 25 November 2016 Appendix X and Attachment G, Heritage Advice, The Ultimo Presence Project 2 October, 2017* do nothing more than summarise the present situation as regards heritage. The monetary value of the attraction of heritage buildings is not mentioned.

³ National Trust submission to Inquiry, no 46, page 2

This application was supported by a so-called independent assessment by

. It is of staggering ineptitude. To take one example among many, the assessment states that there is no *persons or group of persons with which the building is associated*⁴ ... *and is important for its associations with an identifiable group ... at a local level only.*⁵

This statement is so wrong that it must be caused either by complete incompetence or a conscious desire to mislead. Pages 5ff give an incomplete list of such persons or groups. It is not included here so as not to disturb the flow of the narrative.

Similar analyses may be made of any of the criteria (a) (ii) to (vi), (b) (i) to (vi), (c) (ii) to (ix), (d) (i) to (iv), (e) (i), (ii) and (iv), (f) (iii) to (vii), (g) (i) to (iii), (vi) to (x), and all sections of *Social Significance*.

(a) The heritage situation at Parramatta.

This is related to the matter of the site choice. It is a matter of record that the democratically elected Parramatta City Council (to 12 May 2016) was steadfastly opposed the use of the recently 'acquired' site for the relocated museum (see Resolution 16308, 14 December 2015; Resolution 16353, 14 January 2016; and Resolution 16646, 9 May 2016)⁶. The 9 May 2016 meeting was the last meeting of the elected council, thus showing the importance placed by the elected council on the views expressed.

In June 2017 an Expert Steering Committee, none of whom had museum experience or qualifications, was formed by the administrator, They very quickly approved the purchase plan in a letter dated 20 July⁷ with no apparent recognition that it contradicted the views of the elected Council.

The Inquiry hearing of 29 August had several wrong statements about this matter.

For example, Ms Chadwick, Parramatta Administrator (transcript page 7): ... *in this matter the views and the resolutions (my underlining) of the former Parramatta City Council are the most important. The previous Parramatta council had in December 2014 endorsed the redevelopment of the Riverside Theatre ... I see that this agreement delivers that upgrade together with the cultural precinct that was anticipated there.*

The Hon Shane Mallard supported the witnesses by such comments as (page 8) *the previous council already endorsed that position and was already a decision the council had made prior.*

⁴ *Assessment of Heritage Significance, Ultimo Tramways Power House*, page 26

⁵ *Ibid*, criteria (a) (i) and (d) (i); others, eg Social Significance (iii) are also relevant.

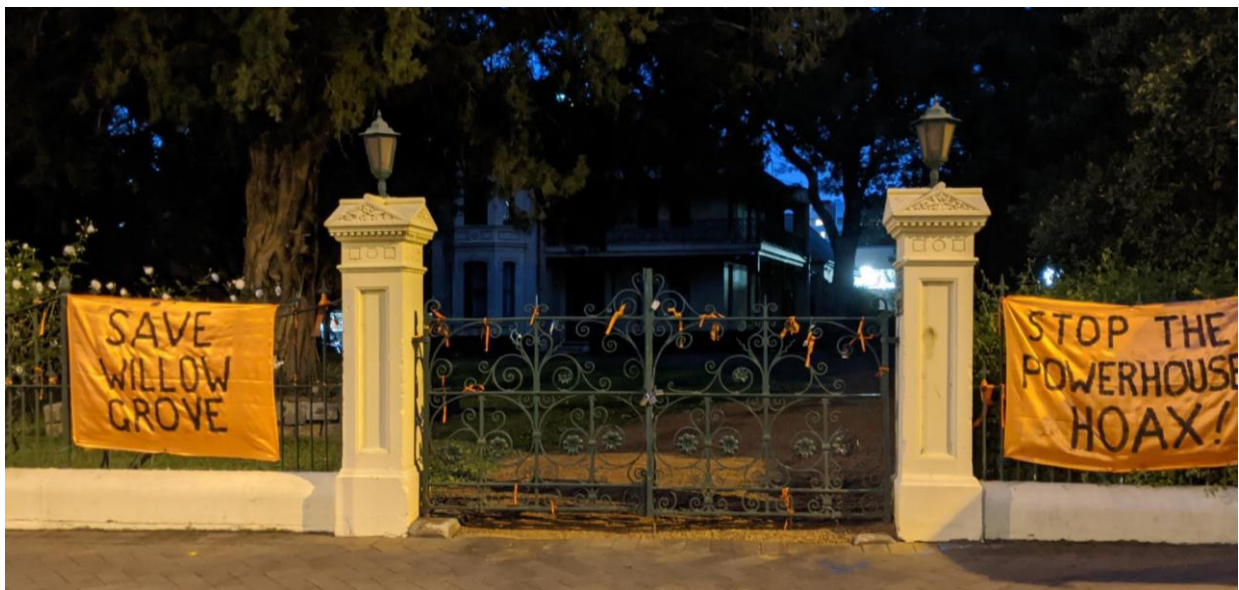
⁶ Details are on page 6ff.

⁷ <https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/sites/council/files/2017-07/Letter%20%26%20Advice%20Committee.pdf>. This group required the agreement to be executed quickly, but without giving a reason for this. The elected government was due to take over in less than two months. From the Panel's letter: *The NSW Government has advised the Committee that after an extended period of negotiation with the Council, it is critical to the success of the Museum project that the Heads of Agreement is executed before August 2017.*

The Hon. Don Harwin said (page 21) *We have now got extensive material back to us on exactly what sort of museum presence the people of Western Sydney want. I am confident that we will be able to deliver on that response.*

The Hon. Scott Farlow said (page 21) *The council has been telling us that since 2014 (ie, stating that the previous council had supported the ‘move’)*

The only thing that the Council has agreed on is the desire to keep the Willow Grove building and the Macquarie Terraces on the riverbank site. This was ignored by the design competition judges who agreed to the demolition of the heritage buildings. As the proposed ‘move’ has been declared a State Significant Project there are no legal actions available to prevent this totally undemocratic action.



Strong feelings remain: 3 May 2020

⁸ Inquiry transcript, Monday, 28 May 2018, page 12:

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: *But there was a council resolution of a previously elected council in support of the sale and the Powerhouse project?* **Mr DYER:** *Yes, that is right.* **The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** *So that was guiding Ms Chadwick in her deliberations.* **Mr DYER:** *This process had been aligned with the council policy from the previous council—* **The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** *That is right.* **Mr DYER:** *—and all the way through to the administration period, yes.*

As forecast on page 3, we now move to an incomplete list of *persons or groups of persons with which the building is associated*⁹, typically at far wider than a local level, that are NOT mentioned in the Cracknell document *Assessment of Heritage Significance* criteria (a) (i) and (d) (i); others, eg Social Significance (iii):

Associations: (a) Affiliated Societies of the Powerhouse Museum

The following have been traditionally associated with the museum. However, since the 'move' idea has been proposed in 2014 there has been a decided lack of interest from the Museum in promoting relationships with these societies. This changed with the appointment of Ms Havilah, and at a meeting called by Ms Havilah on 4 July 2019 had representatives from 17 societies, and while the attendees indicated that they were not favourably disposed to the 'move' idea they were still keen to work cooperatively with the museum for mutual benefit. I propose that at least 20 of the following 43 societies or their successors still maintain a strong attachment to the museum. Eight societies have members who are long-term regular volunteers bringing specialist knowledge to the museum at no cost. The underlined societies have had involvement with the museum in the past eighteen months.

Antique Arms Collectors Society of Australia, Art Deco Society of NSW, The Asian Arts Society of Australia Inc, Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (NSW Division), The Australian Ceramics Association, Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society (Ku-ring-gai) Inc, Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society (Sydney) Inc, Australian Association of Musical Instrument Makers (NSW Branch), Australian Flute Society Inc, Australian Lace Guild NSW Branch Inc, The Australian Numismatic Society, The Australiana Society Inc, The Aviation Historical Society of Australia (NSW) Inc, Ceramic Collectors Society, Ceramic Study Group Inc, The Colour Society of Australia (NSW) Inc, Design Institute of Australia, NSW Chapter, The Doll Collectors Club of NSW Inc, The Early Music Association of NSW Inc, The Embroiderers' Guild NSW Inc, The Furniture History Society (Australasia) Inc, Jewellers and Metalsmiths Group of Australia NSW Inc, The Knitters' Guild NSW Inc, The Metropolitan Coin Club of Sydney, National Space Society of Australia Ltd, Object – Australian Centre for Craft and Design, Oral History Association of Australia (NSW), Oriental Rug Society of NSW Inc, Philatelic Association of NSW Inc, The Phonograph Society of NSW Inc, Pymont Ultimo Historical Society, The Quilters' Guild Inc, Royal Aeronautical Society, Australian Division, Sydney Branch Inc, Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain, NSW Chapter, Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (NSW Chapter), The Silver Society of Australia Inc, Sydney City Skywatchers Inc, Sydney Space Association, The Twentieth Century Heritage Society of NSW Inc, Walter Burley Griffin Society Inc, Watch and Clockmakers of Australia (NSW Branch), The Wedgwood Society of NSW Inc, Woodworkers' Association of NSW Inc,

Associations (b): Life fellows of the museum

⁹ Assessment of Heritage Significance, Ultimo Tramways Powerhouse Museum, page 26

There are also about 50 life members of which at least 12 are actively resisting the 'move' idea and 14 honorary associates of whom at least 6 are actively resisting the 'move' idea. Not one of the people listed have supported the 'move' in its present form

Associations (c): Organisations making submissions to the first Inquiry

The following organisations were so supportive of the museum that they made strong submissions to the Inquiry requiring retention of the museum at its present site:

Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials, Australian Society for History of Engineering and Technology Inc. (ASHET), Ceramic Society of Australia, Engineers Australia, Engineers Australia NSW Division - Engineering Heritage Sydney, Greater Western Sydney Heritage Action Group, Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society, Historic Houses Association of Australia, Jacksons Landing Community Association, Orange and District Historical Society, National Association for the Visual Arts (*NAVA), National Trust of Australia, North Parramatta Residents Action Group Inc., International Council for Museums; Australia, Powerhouse Museum Alliance, Public Service Association, Pyrmont History Group, Save the Powerhouse Campaign, The Design Institute of Australia (DIA).

And even more associations ...

- 20,000 signatories to the petition presented to NSW Parliament, 25 Feb 2016
- 178 signatories to the Powerhouse Museum Alliance 's 17 Feb 2016 open letter
- authors of the 133 submissions to the Upper House Inquiry who oppose the Powerhouse move – representing 94% of all the submissions about the Powerhouse; these include the National Trust of NSW, Museums Australia, the International Council on Monuments and Sites and many other professional, artistic and historical groups
- some 100+ volunteers who regularly work at the museum, many of whom travel long distances for this purpose: 'local' volunteers are a small minority
- countless museum visitors and supporters from across NSW, around Australia and overseas
- and members of many organisations including
 - The Save the Powerhouse Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/savethepowerhouse/>
 - The Powerhouse Museum Alliance <https://powerhousemuseumalliance.com/>
 - North Parramatta Residents Action Group <http://nprag.org/>

As a matter of interest, at least 15 of the strong supporters of the protest movement have CVs equivalent to, or far more impressive than, _____, the author of the 'independent' appraisal of the Heritage Application.

Details of land 'preferred choice' at Parramatta

These are from the minutes of council meetings of the elected council prior to its forced dissolution on 12 May 2016 to allow for the process of amalgamation carried out by the Government.

Resolution 16308 (Minutes, 14 December 2015)

***That** Council receive and note the draft minutes of the Riverside Theatres Advisory Board meeting held on 26 November 2015, however Council wishes to disagree with comments in the Minutes under Item 3, Parramatta Culture Arts and Entertainment Plan as it is not necessarily the view of Council that the Riverbank Site would be supported as the preferred site for the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum in Parramatta.*

Resolution 16353 (Minutes, 14 January 2016)

... included the following recommendations in Suspension of Standing Orders, re the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum, where' The Lord Mayor ruled that the matter was one of urgency'. Resolved:

1. ***That** the Lord Mayor write to the relevant Ministers expressing our community's concern about the possible relocation of Powerhouse Museum.*
2. ***That** Parramatta City Council, through the Lord Mayor, commence a campaign supporting the possible relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to be at Parramatta Golf Course located near Parramatta High School or at Old King school or the Parramatta Jail site and the reasons therefore.*
3. ***That** the campaign consist of a meeting to be arranged via the state members between the Lord Mayor and the Minister, appropriate correspondence to the relevant local Members of Parliament and an appropriate media campaign.*
4. ***That** the community be made aware of the state government agenda on the Powerhouse Museum.*
5. ***That** it be noted it is imperative that the state government understand that Parramatta City Council has policy and budget approved for the part of River.*
6. ***That** Parramatta City Council outline the money invested through purchase of properties for Parramatta City Council to achieve our vision for our River foreshore.*
7. ***That** it be noted if the government insists or force the location of the Powerhouse Museum on our River foreshore, it will result in a negative impact on Parramatta City Council and its vision as a River City and this is the only parcel of land that our Council can develop and invest in a public domain that will be beneficial to our local residents and business.*
8. *Further, that the option of Powerhouse Museum being located on the Riverbank Foreshore will lead to a financial implication for Parramatta City Council and the City.*

Resolution 16571, Minutes 11 April 2016 (p22)

'The Lord Mayor provided details on the State Government's recent selection of the Parramatta River Foreshore as the preferred site for the new Powerhouse Museum together

with advice on the recent meeting held with the Minister for Infrastructure. Councillor Chedid raised concerns that the footprint of the proposal may eliminate Council's vision for the Riverbank Foreshores and may have an impact on the current Expression of Interest for this area.'

Resolved: *That Council staff provide a report on the action that has transpired to date in relation to the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum.*

Resolution 16646, Minutes, 9 May 2016 (p22)

At the very last meeting of the elected council The Lord Mayor ruled that a motion to suspend standing orders to consider the Powerhouse Museum and the Riverbank was one of urgency. It was resolved:

(a) That Council write to the relevant Minister referencing the agreement, in principle, that the State Government would design the new Powerhouse Museum within the appropriate Council footprint to ensure that the Museum does not disadvantage Council in achieving its vision for the river and not disadvantage Council's strategic asset on the site.

(b) Further, that a report be prepared outlining the discussions that have taken place to date.

(There is no evidence that any such report has ever been made as part of the assessment process.).

Inquiry into the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Submission from Tom Lockley

This submission addresses specifically Terms of Reference 1 (a) (vi) the use of proceeds from the proposed sale of the site at Ultimo.

#4 Finances

General comments

The consensus is that the destruction of the Powerhouse Museum will cost more than will be gained from sale of the site. Therefore the most economical use of the proceeds of the sale of the site would be to not seek them.

Financial experts in our email group have also commented on

1. The amount of redaction, particularly of financial details, in the released Business Papers. This is typically explained by the catch-phrases *cabinet in confidence* and *commercial in confidence*. Our experts submit that legally, no financial arrangement for actual work on the sites can be entered into before the necessary preliminary investigations are complete. Thus there can be no commercial advantage gained by any potential commercial partner by knowing the estimates made. Similarly, in a democracy, people are certainly entitled to have enough financial detail available to indicate that the project makes financial sense.
2. The 'wooliness' of the figures: there seems to be no major research behind many of the estimations. One ex-CEO of a major enterprise commented that the figures often seemed to be made up to meet a desired target rather than based on reality and proper research. Many forecasts of attendance and income were regarded as 'heroic'¹.

A major financial investigation is not undertaken in this submission, partly because of our experts' opinion of the documents provided. Only three other matters are briefly addressed:

1. The initially announced financial arrangements.

The maximum value of the cleared site was estimated by a leading real estate expert, (January 16) at \$250 million using comparison with other available sites²; the Government value is similar; (one estimate was \$190 million).

Powerhouse Museum Alliance experts calculated the cost of removing and storing the material from Powerhouse Museum at at least \$200 million and demolition costs about \$10 million. Land alone at Parramatta cost \$140 million so the project is notionally in debt already.

¹ Our experts believe that the only way visitation can reach 2 million (*Executive Summary, Gateway 2 Review 140217*, page 32) is if counting includes café patrons, market partners etc as was done at Carriageworks. My own work at PHM indicates that a sizable proportion of overseas visitors are in Sydney for only a brief period (eg cruise ship stopovers), so the assumption that overseas visitation rate will only drop by 19% (*New Western Sydney Musuem 23 Economic Appraisal, Attachment C* page 44) is another very optimistic assumption

² For example, the block of land bounded by Fig, Wattle and Jones Street owned by Sydney Council, is larger, a similar distance from the CBD, overlooks Wentworth Park and could be purchased and decontaminated for around \$120 million at the time of Mr Baird's announcement. (knowledge from a confidential source)

The amount realised from sale of site for development has since been reduced by commitments to maintain an arts presence at the Ultimo site so the initial finance arrangements are even more ridiculous.

The Government's cost estimate for the new Parramatta building was about \$1 billion in the so-called *Final Business Case Summary*, 2 July 2017 (p 7).

Mr Baird's notion was backed up by the Deloitte document *Building Western Sydney's Cultural Arts Economy* (2015) sponsored by Sydney Business Chamber (Western Sydney) which supported the 'move' and stressed that the full sale proceeds of the existing Powerhouse site in Eastern Sydney being quarantined to establish the new Museum in Western Sydney — with any surpluses used to fund future Powerhouse Museum programs in Western Sydney. This ridiculously low estimate of the costs involved in moving the museum indicates the incompetence of both the Premier and of Deloitte in this matter.

2. Inconsistency between the Design Brief and the published financial status of the project.

The financial arrangements as approved³ in 2018 demonstrated a Benefit Cost Ratio of 1.02, in other words the benefits to be achieved by the project was only just above the costs. Leaving aside the 'heroic' estimates that many critics perceived in the quoted figures, the plans involved the erection of one, or even two, large towers on the Parramatta site⁴.

Yet the Design Brief for the new museum at Parramatta proposed that the whole site was available and the winning design uses the whole site and also the site of the heritage buildings. A new Business Case is now overdue on its promised date, and it will be interesting to see how the Government resolves this inconsistency.

3. Risk Profile of the Project⁵

The currently available documents do not include provision for dealing with the costs of civil disobedience and other direct methods of protest that will result if the Government does not take account of the current financial situation, the other compelling reasons for retention of the Powerhouse Museum as is where is and the anti-democratic measures utilised by the Government in pursuing this project. The opponents of the 'move' have almost completely exhausted every democratic means of suasion, and it is not unreasonable to expect that some methods of protest / direct action would be initiated.

³ *Final Business Case Summary: Powerhouse Museum in Western Sydney* April 2018, Page 9

⁴ *Final Business Case: The New Museum in Western Sydney*, January 2018, Page 34 ff and the supporting documents *New Western Sydney Museum Development Options Assessment - Commercial Options Study* and *Residential Options Study*.

⁵ *The Ultimo Presence Project: Ultimo investment Case*, Johnstaff, page 74

Inquiry into the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Submission from Tom Lockley

This submission addresses specifically Terms of Reference 1 (b) (iii) whether comprehensive consultation with communities and experts has informed cultural policy and projects across New South Wales, such as that applying to heritage arms and armour collections.

#5 Consultation shortcomings

The Government's aim of improving the cultural facilities in Parramatta, the approximate population centre of Sydney, is universally applauded.

This submission examines the 'consultation' processes involved in the 'move' of the Powerhouse Museum.

More than five years of research by email group members have found no evidence of consultation into the basic idea of 'moving' the Powerhouse from Ultimo to Parramatta.

Infrastructure NSW did recommend urgent consideration of the idea, but there are no recorded meetings where alternatives were discussed prior to Mr Baird's announcement. There is no indication why this project was chosen above any other alternative.

We have been assured on several occasions that no land deal has been done, so we assume that there has been no collusion with developers.

There are strong indications that Mr Baird and Ms Macgregor did confer before Mr Baird's announcement. Some details possible timing of informal meetings are to hand but these are not reliable so are not included in this submission. We concede that some joint conferences were held between Ms Macgregor and Mr Baird, and that is the total of all prior investigation into alternatives that has been found¹.

The Government did not consult with any major stakeholder before announcing the 'move' on November 26 2104. Even the Trustees of the museum² and the Parramatta Council³ read about it in the newspapers.

¹ In Legislative Council *Hansard* for Wednesday, 7 August 2019 page 22 the Hon. SCOTT FARLOW is quoted as saying *On several occasions the committee heard that the proposal did not come out of nowhere. Liz-Anne McGregor conducted the analysis of the need for a cultural institution in western Sydney and the suitability of the Powerhouse Museum to move, rather than creating a new cultural institution or transferring any other cultural institution. We have on numerous occasions asked for a copy of, or details of, this analysis but have received no response. Refer to Ms Macgregor's interactions with the Western Sydney Arts and Cultural Lobby as outlined on pages 4ff in this submission, which is the total information that is publicly available.*

² Inquiry evidence. 14 November 2016 page 34: Professor Shine

³ Inquiry evidence, Monday, 28 May 2018, page 25, Mr Dyer

Summary of this submission:

This submission examines:

1. Research, support and consultation claimed by Mr Baird

Mr Baird: Could not name one organisation supporting the 'move'. See below.

2. Research, support and consultation claimed by Ms Macgregor

Ms Macgregor: consultation only with the Western Sydney Arts and Cultural Lobby, now non-existent.

3. Consultation before the advent of Mr Harwin

Virtually none, and that was biased.

4. Consultation done under Mr Harwin's ministerial tenure

No attempt to deal with basic issues, deliberate obfuscation and leading questions

5. 'Consultation' carried out by the Parramatta Council under Government-appointed Administrator

This was not a major effort, and was clearly predicated on the inevitability of the 'move'.

6. A bias towards business?

7. The new round of consultation -2020

The tradition of downgrading the basic issues continues!

And a contrast – samples of unprompted expression of popular opinion.

1. Research, support and consultation claimed by Mr Baird

From the Inquiry evidence, 28 May 2018, page 35:

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Which cultural groups that you met with supported the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum? You were telling us about your consultation. Tell us about the cultural groups that you consulted with that supported the relocation?

(short passage omitted)

Mr BAIRD: I am not going to go through every person or group that I met.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Not every one; I just want one. Tell me the cultural group you met with in Parramatta that said it supports this?

Mr BAIRD: I can get those details for you.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You are sitting there and telling us about your consultation but you cannot think of a single resident group or a single cultural group that supported it?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It was three years ago.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: He has taken it on notice.

On 22 June Mr Baird responded as follows:

I no longer have access to my full diary from the period in question, but know that in my time as Premier I made over 100 visits to Western Sydney where I had the privilege of meeting with many people and groups. All were appreciative of our record investment in Western Sydney more broadly, including the cultural groups.

We accept this as an accurate reply, but the truth is that, with the possible exception of the Western Sydney Arts & Cultural Lobby, who had then not had a meeting for at least a year, no art or cultural group specifically supported the museum 'move' in preference to other options. We agree with Mr Baird's later statement in his short reply, *Western Sydney deserves its own world-class cultural institution and one the community can proudly call its own*. The Powerhouse move does not deliver this.

2. Research, support and consultation claimed by Ms Macgregor

The only record of consultation prior to the announcement came from the Inquiry testimony of Ms Macgregor, director of the Museum of Contemporary Art and designated 'cultural ambassador to the west' during 2014. Because this consultation forms a major influence in her initial support for the 'move' it is analysed in depth.

In her corrected inquiry evidence she stated: *I was very pleased to discover initially that the arts in Western Sydney had come together. It can be rare in the arts that people come together and lobby for one cause rather than everybody asking for their own bit of the pie. So I met regularly with one group—the Western Sydney lobby group⁴. We assume she meant the **Western Sydney Arts & Cultural Lobby**.*

The inference from her evidence is that the group recommended, or at least strongly supported, the museum 'move'.

There are two aspects of all this that must be elucidated: who is this group, and what did they say?

The Western Sydney Arts & Cultural Lobby⁵ included *Artists, Arts Workers, Bankstown Arts Centre, Bankstown Youth Development Service, Blacktown Arts Centre, Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Cultural Arts Collective, Curiousworks, FORM Dance Projects, Information and Cultural Exchange, Parramatta Artists Studios, Parramatta Riverside Theatres, Peacock Gallery and Auburn Arts Studio, Penrith Performing & Visual Arts, Powerhouse Youth Theatre, Westwords, Writing & Society – UWS, University of Western Sydney and Urban Theatre*

⁴ Ms Grasso Inquiry evidence Monday, 5 September 2016 Page 28

⁵ This information comes from their submission to the first Inquiry, Submission No 36, Date received: 12 August 2016.

Project. In this submission it stated that *not all views expressed may necessarily be those of all members of the lobby.*

The lobby has never had a website and does not have an ABN. The most significant member groups are closely associated with the University of Western Sydney, and the major media releases by the WSA&CL were made by Medianet, the same organisation used by UWS.

These were:

1. Nov 25, 2014 - *WESTERN SYDNEY ARTS AND CULTURE LOBBY WELCOMES GOVERNMENT FUNDING INITIATIVES FOR THE WEST*, (the day before the Premier announced the Powerhouse 'move').
2. Dec 16, 2014: *The Western Sydney Arts and Cultural Lobby has welcomed the release of the NSW Government's long awaited metropolitan strategy 'A Plan for Growing Sydney'*. This includes (page 91, our underlining) the statement that *the possible relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta may create further opportunities for enhanced arts and cultural facilities'* but the Premier, over three weeks before, had already announced that the 'move' would take place. The timing of this release, almost at the same time as the Government document, suggests that it may be part of a collusive strategy designed to demonstrate public support for Government projects, with the support of the University of Western Sydney.
3. Feb 26, 2015 - *The Western Sydney Arts and Cultural Lobby today endorsed all recommendations contained in a ground-breaking new study commissioned by Deloitte ...* (this report has been shown to be thoroughly incompetent, see our submission #1, *Introduction*, page 2, point 2. As to timing of this release, similar comments apply as with the previous paragraph).
4. Apr 6, 2017: Media Alert *It's Time: The NSW Government must look West when funding cultural Infrastructure*. The main point is the imbalance of funding and there is also again support for the Powerhouse 'move'. This was the latest statement from WSA&CL that we can find.

On February 26, 2015⁶ David Capra, as spokesperson for the WSA&CL, is also reported as calling for the Australian Film, Television & Radio School and National Arts School to be relocated to Parramatta. This is a clear recommendation from WSA&CL.

However in their submission to the first Inquiry (12 August 2016) they only support the move of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta (they do not recommend it). Even this support is conditional: the State Government must ensure that the Powerhouse Museum is funded to a standard of its international peers and is of a higher standard than the facility at Ultimo. A key point, also consistently made, was that the commitments to the 'move' project *must not involve the reduction of funding for the operations, artistic and capital programs of cultural organisations in Western Sydney*⁷.

⁶ Sydney Morning Herald, article by Andrew Taylor.

⁷ Submission, fifth page.

So, who is this group? As mentioned previously they have no ABN, no website, and since early 2018 seem to have disappeared. In February 2019 we phoned all institutional members for whom we could find phone numbers, seeking contact details and / or information of meeting times and places. We contacted, by phone, email and letter, the Museum of Contemporary Art, asking Ms Macgregor and her office people if they had contact details. We also phoned the Sydney Business Chamber (whose offices also serve the Western Sydney Business Chamber) and sent an email through the website contact form seeking any information they had. No-one provided any information.

This is the only group that we can find who may have been consulted on alternatives at the outset of the 'move' idea and we submit that the facts as stated raise various questions about the motivation, independence and research processes of the group. We make no judgement on these matters but compare this group to the North Parramatta Residents Action Group (discussed on page 11 and in other submissions) which has been functioning vigorously since well before the museum 'move' was announced, has conducted many successful events and is still flourishing, with contact details readily available. NPRAG has consistently opposed the 'move' of PHM, seeking community involvement in heritage preservation in Parramatta and the use of the Female Factory as a cultural campus. The addition of a relevant Parramatta museum to this area could make the basis of a world class cultural centre,

Incidentally we have on several occasions tried to contact Ms Macgregor, former 'cultural ambassador for the West', to ask her if she still supported the 'move'. These included a registered letter delivered on 16 August 2018 but have had no reply.

3. Consultation before the advent of Mr Harwin

There was almost no consultation with the public.

The first indication of any attempt at consultation that we are aware of occurred on the evening of 14 November 2016 when a firm called 'Instinct And Reason', 420 Elizabeth Street Surry Hills, conducted a focus group research activity into the 'move' to Parramatta. The participants were told that the museum was moving to Parramatta and then asked what they would like to see at that site. This set the pattern for future so-called consultation that continues to this day.

This firm is mentioned in *Stakeholder Engagement*, part of the Business Case, page number not available, 'Meeting with Mr Parry and others at PHM 14/10/2016'.

4. Consultation done under Mr Harwin's ministerial tenure

The appointment of Mr Harwin as Minister was soon followed by announcements that there would be consultation, initially restricted to asking what features the public wished to see in the Powerhouse Museum at Parramatta. The many people opposing the 'move' were heartened on 19 April, 2017⁸ when Mr Harwin announced that the process would be extended to 'consider other options', and the New MAAS museum website was set up,

⁸ Press release 19 April 2017

ostensibly to facilitate communication and consultation and many questions were addressed to this website seeking information on such matters as the issues raised in our submission #2, 'Fact sheet'. No relevant responses were ever received.

On 24 July at Parramatta and on 27 July at Ultimo rehearsals for the 'consultation' meetings were held⁹. We are informed that the facilitators at each table were briefed on techniques for handling the discussion: allow negative comment on the 'move' and ignore it in their report.

The meetings themselves were held on 25 July (Parramatta) and 30 July (Powerhouse Museum). Chairperson / MC was Mr Brian Elton of Elton Consulting. Elton Consulting had been hired to *demonstrate the benefits of the project*¹⁰.

After an introductory session outlining the 'move' and proclaiming its virtues, participants at each table were presented with two questions – what features were wanted at the new Parramatta museum, and what could participants suggest for the remaining cultural institution at Ultimo. Our information indicates that at every table people expressed dissent about the whole 'move' idea but these sentiments were ignored in the published summary, which purely dealt with answers to their stimulus questions. SMH writer Linda Morris published a good account of the Parramatta meeting¹¹. At Ultimo, former trustee and benefactor Trevor Kennedy tried to speak about the larger picture but this was rejected by Mr Elton.

Elton Consulting's report stated that they had 1153 respondents to a questionnaire (not made public), reached 545 people at 'pop up' displays at shopping centres, received 16 written submissions, reached 272,515 people by Facebook posts and had 177 people at the two major stakeholder meetings¹². We have sought more information on the written submissions and the Facebook figures with no success. Unlike the Save the Powerhouse Facebook site, which is going from strength to strength, we cannot find the site referred to by Elton.

In summary, during the time that Mr Harwin was Minister for the Arts there was some pretense at consultation but it was all predicated on the inevitability of the 'move' idea. The Government has typically exaggerated the amount of support that the 'move' idea has and downplayed the massive resistance to the 'move'.

⁹ MAAS Stakeholder Engagement Register, Business Case, 2017.

¹⁰ Communications and Engagement Strategy Business Case attachment O, 2017, page 6

¹¹ <https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/support-from-western-sydney-to-keep-the-powerhouse-20170726-gxjhbr.html>. eg Among resident groups, however, there seemed to be little mood for the downgrading of the Ultimo site. One attendee said: "I wouldn't like to see it diminished in any way. The whole thing is constructed to sell off the site to their mates, to developers, so they can make squillions. I'm dead against that." Heritage activist Phil Bradley said it should not be case of either or. The United States' Smithsonian Institution consists of nineteen museums and galleries as well as a zoological park. "Western Sydney residents don't support the wholesale removal of a world class museum from Ultimo just as western Sydney residents recognise that we deserve to have one as well," he said.

¹² The MAAS Project Elton Consulting, Business Case page 9

5. Parramatta Council

No public consultation about the Powerhouse Museum 'move' was carried out by the Council or its administrator before November 2016¹³. Over a period of about five months, early in 2017, under the non-elected administrator, some work was done to demonstrate support for the 'move'. It included focus groups, surveys, submissions and also about 100 interviews. The survey of March 2017 engaged 528 residents¹⁴. 'The focus groups that were held in February and March 2017 included 58 people. We received 55 submissions in relation to the draft cultural plan¹⁵'. Also, 65 people attended 'wide ranging discussions about the cultural priorities'.

Though the leading questions were less blatant than those of the Government 'consultations' there was a clear bias towards support of the 'move'. It was always presented as part of a general program of positive action. We do not know the full details of these activities, but our opinion is that they were an attempt to garner, and demonstrate, support for the 'move', not to examine its ramifications.

On March 5 2017 the Parramatta City Council Manager was quoted as saying that the Council was enthusiastic about the process. As the matter had not been mentioned in council minutes, we asked him to justify this assertion and no reply was received. Our information is that the council is deeply divided, with a large majority against the 'move', but it has been decided not to openly reject the museum and an uneasy truce prevails.

The council strongly supports the retention of the heritage buildings on the museum site (resolution 6 July 2019).

Another case of exaggeration of support by the Government:

In evidence to the Inquiry on Wednesday, 12 September 2018 ¹⁶the Arts Minister gave one of the very few indications that the 'move' had wide support. My underlining:

The Hon. DON HARWIN: What is absolutely clear is that despite what is being said by some, the vast majority of those working in arts and culture in this State think we are doing the right thing too. Let me just name a few. For example, I could name Robert Love, the General Manager of the Riverside Theatre, who thinks we are doing the right thing; or I could name Craig Donarski, the head of the Powerhouse Arts Centre in Casula, who thinks we are doing the right thing; or Michael D'Agostino, the head of the Campbelltown Art Gallery, who believes we are doing the right thing; or the Manager of Arts and Culture with responsibility for the Penrith Regional Art Gallery and the Lewers bequest and the Joan (sic), she thinks we are doing the right thing; and Jenny Bisset, the head of Arts and Culture in Blacktown, she

¹³ email, Manager, City Activation Marketing and City Identity City of Parramatta, Tue, Nov 1, 2016

¹⁴ The questionnaire that formed the basis of this consultation is online at <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/other/11050/AQON%20-%20Ms%20Amanda%20Chadwick%20-%20Parramatta%20City%20Council%20-%20received%2012%20September%202017.PDF> and the single question about the Powerhouse simply asks if people want the museum to be relocated in Parramatta, with no background information and no alternative suggestions.

¹⁵ Ms Chadwick. Parramatta Administrator, Inquiry evidence Tuesday, 29 August 2017, page 9

¹⁶ Page 18-19

thinks we are doing the right thing; or Rosie Dennis, the head of Urban Theatre Projects, who thinks we are doing the right thing; or Joanne Kee, the head of the National Theatre of Parramatta, who thinks we are doing the right thing. They are all just the Western Sydney people. There are plenty of people beyond that who are excited about what we are doing. They think finally there is a government that gets cultural equity in this State and is doing something about it and they want us to keep going.

None of these spontaneously supported the cause by making Inquiry submissions or in other ways. The overwhelming majority of submissions from a who's who of artistic and museum experts and organisations and strongly opposed the 'move' idea. This is dealt with elsewhere.

We contacted by email, mail and phone, each person named and asked them to confirm their support for the Powerhouse move, but none did so. Ms Lee-Anne Hall, Manager of Arts and Culture with responsibility for the Penrith Regional Art Gallery and the Lewers bequest, pointed out that she had actually appeared before the Inquiry on Tuesday, 6 September 2016 as part of a group from Regional and Public Galleries NSW, **specifically opposing the move**. [A MAAS volunteer, highly experienced and qualified in the arts field] discussed the matter at length with [one of the other people mentioned among the names underlined] and was told that the people listed were in favour of having more money spent in the cultural field. **They were not in favour of moving the Powerhouse, but were not willing openly to oppose the government**¹⁷. (Museum volunteers and employees had been instructed that they must present a positive image of the move, and there is fear that any employees or funded institutions opposing government policy will be victimised, hence the anonymity of the previous sentence).

The Sydney Business Chamber and its Western Sydney branch

The most vocal non-Government supporters of the 'move' are the Western Sydney branch of Sydney Business Chamber, through their spokesperson Mr David Borger. In his evidence to the Inquiry on Tuesday, 6 September 2016, pages 47ff he made a compelling case for the improvement of cultural facilities in Parramatta, but a far less compelling case for moving the Powerhouse Museum. He did not appear to be aware of the particular problems involved in this action or of the waste of hundreds of millions of dollars that would occur (in comparison with the erection of a new facility in Parramatta). Over the years we have made several attempts to contact Mr Borger and enter dialogue but have had no response. Our submission *#8 An Alternative Project* would be a far better business proposition for Parramatta than the proposed museum, which will have to rely on large admission prices to cover its cost.

6. [A bias toward Business?](#)

The **MAAS Stakeholder Engagement Register** from 19 April 2017 to 30 October 2017 shows the following:

¹⁷ We are informed that the director of one of these organisations has recently publicly supported the 'move' but we cannot find details.

Meetings involving the Sydney or Western Sydney Business Council: 2 May, 8 May, 2 May, 19 May, 8 June, 15 June, 13 July, 21 July, 8 August, 30 August, 12 September, 22 September, 13 October, 20 October: total meetings 15

Meetings involving arts and museum organisations: Powerhouse Museum Alliance 21 July, 28 July, 22 August, Save the Powerhouse 21 July; total meetings 4.

7. The new round of consultation

It is necessary, as part of the building process, that INSW conducts a public consultation regarding the construction of what is now being called 'Parramatta Powerhouse'.

Parramatta residents from the email group reported that all their acquaintances were cynical about the chance of this being a genuine consultation. No notice had been taken of four years of input from many Parramatta people. As outlined above, page 6, consultation outreach typically stated that the museum would be transplanted, and comments sought were about aspects of this *fait accompli*. Ms Havilah and Ms Cochrane said that this was not so, that this round of consultation was the early stage of a new process. The project had not been 'determined' and the site was still only the 'preferred' site so all options were still on the table¹⁸.

A statutory requirement of the design competition for the new museum at Parramatta is a period of consultation. Most thought that this round of so-called consultation would be of similar shonky standard and they were correct in this thought.

Zoom meetings were held, conducted by Ms Havilah,

was deeply

involved with the pre-election destruction of the Sydney Football Stadium, and we have sought to have an undertaking that no irrevocable action will be taken to damage the Powerhouse Museum until the various statutory requirements are complete, the Covidvirus crisis is over, and the forthcoming new Inquiry is complete. There has been no progress so far.

The dissidents – and there are many – were given a chance to speak. At a Zoom meeting meeting aimed at Parramatta people on 7 May I counted 20 active participants. The chief takeaway was that no respondent was fully happy with the 'move'. The most favourable opinions were four grudging acceptances of the inevitability of the 'move'. At least 15 respondents stressed consultation deficiencies.

However, on 15 May a beautifully prepared report was issued by Aurecon. Some comments:

- Among the aims of the process are to *generate enthusiasm for the new museum and establish project advocates*. (another aim, to *correct misinformation about the process*, is clearly not being carried out!)

¹⁸ Phone call from Ms Cochrane, 5 May, and statement by Ms Havilah at Zoom meeting 7 May

- There was no mention of the general objections to the 'move' idea. Discussion of *the rationale behind moving the museum away from its current location in Ultimo* is the only mention of widespread open opposition to the 'move'
- There was no mention of the widespread dissatisfaction with the convenors selective reporting of the consultations
- an infographic demonstrates 14 benefits of the proposal but none of its disadvantages (page 4)
- There are copious lists of stakeholders to be consulted, and considerable lists of communication established, but little general information about the content and reaction. For example a Facebook site, now apparently offline, had over 100 'comment' posts but we do not know their content. We do know that at least 7 of our group posted comments that were negative in regard to the whole 'move' idea.
- A webinar consultation with the Powerhouse Museum Alliance¹⁹ is listed as occurring on April 2. I emailed ten leading members of PMA, including the webmaster and the public officer, for details. None had participated. The chief convenor has emailed: *No member of the PMA took part in a webinar on April 2 or any other day. We deliberately took no part in these consultations knowing from experience that there is never an accurate record of the discussions, especially if you disagree or dispute and, that being listed in such Consultation reports means that you are on record as having had your say.*
- One highly experienced and qualified member of our email group reported on a the public on-line 'consultation' conducted by NSW on 23 March. This person asked - *how much of the PHM's collections are significant in terms of Parramatta and western Sydney?* There was something said about how they had Parramatta Eels jerseys in the collection, but the question clearly wasn't understood. The questioner explained that significance assessment is a standard museological process and the information should be easy to extract from collection data. The question was 'taken on notice' but no response has been forthcoming.

Buried in the middle of table 4 on page 19 the key issue is mentioned. Consultation participants raised the idea to ***leave the Powerhouse in Ultimo and build a new museum and cultural complex in the historically significant precinct of the heritage listed Female Factory.*** The response was ***INSW has been tasked with the delivery of Powerhouse Parramatta in the location outlined in the EIS. Issues regarding site selection were dealt with by the project Business Case and is not a matter for the EIS.***

The only problem with this is that the basic issue has never been assessed, and, as is the theme of all the submissions in this group, this is the basic cause of the disastrous 'move' idea.

¹⁹ It appears that one member of the PMA did have discussions with Ms Havilah, making it clear that he was acting as an individual rather than as a member of any group.

²⁰ <https://www.aurecongroup.com/thinking/insights/airports/people-profile-kylie-cochrane>

There is some reason for hope: an infographic on page 6 says the final aim the consultation is *to place the final decision-making in the hands of the public. 'We will listen to you'*²¹.

This must be the outcome of the forthcoming Inquiry.

And a contrast – unprompted expression of popular opinion.

North Parramatta Residents Action Group is a civic leader in Parramatta. On 8 October 2106 they conducted a day-long seminar involving over 15 local cultural groups which recommended *the development of the authentic 'Fleet Street' area into a multipurpose precinct and local choice of arts facilities*. Details of the group are on their website, and they meet regularly and openly.

Well thought-out submissions were made to the first Inquiry. The NPRAG suggestions were supported by Inquiry Submissions 21, 117, 142, 142b and 149. Specific projects suggested include migration (13, 21, 37, 51, 149), early history (North Parramatta Residents Action Group and subs 21, 42, 119, 143), 149 with special emphasis on Aboriginal history (21, 31, 51, 149) and a Questacon or multipurpose display area (36, 51, 149, 143, 96b, 142b).

There are many other examples of Parramatta people's keenness for proposals other than the Powerhouse 'move'. For example on 10 July 2017 a public forum (*Outcomes of the Public Exhibition of the draft Development Control Plan for the Parramatta North Urban Transformation Precinct*) was held by the Administrator in which participants could express their feelings on various subjects²². Over 1000 submissions had been made supporting the development of the Fleet Street area as a cultural precinct. A succession of speakers made the basic point that this was a desirable outcome. These included Jenny Brockman, Andrew Quah, Suzette Meade of NPRAG, Ronda Gaffey (representative of the Parramatta Female Factory Friends), Brian Powyer, Auntie Kerrie Kenton, Professor Helen Armstrong of Saving Sydney's Trees, Warren Moss and planner/developer Donna Savage. There is no doubt that there is a very strong lobby favouring development of the Fleet Street area as a cultural precinct over the planned extension of high-rise, destruction of heritage buildings and alienation of open space that is involved in the current museum plans.

²¹ Source: International Association for Public Participation – IAP2 International. Public Participation Spectrum

²² This is recorded on https://businesspapers.parracity.nsw.gov.au/Open/2017/OC_10072017_MIN_409.PDF

Inquiry into the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Submission from Tom Lockley

This submission addresses specifically Terms of Reference 1 (a) (iii) the risks in the move, including damage to collections, cost overruns and the future cost of operations at Parramatta.

This submission presents a case study of the Boulton and Watt steam engine. There are similar issues regarding such exhibits as the Catalina, the Apollo 5 rocket engine, the Beechcraft air ambulance, Locomotive 1243, Locomotive 1 and carriages and the Bleriot 9 aircraft. Details of these on request.

[#5 'Moving' risks case study: Boulton and Watt engine](#)

[Summary of this submission:](#)

This machine is unique. It has much to teach the modern world (section 1 below). It was painstakingly restored erected at Ultimo as part of the Bicentennial celebrations, with considerable difficulty, and it is very fragile (section 2 below). We fear that the plan is to move it without a proper risk assessment, notably involving an expert metallurgist. Worse yet, we believe that there are plans to install it in a 'circulation area' in the proposed new museum, which is not climate controlled, with consequent certain deterioration within a short time (section 3). This must not be allowed to happen. It is not a decoration for a theme park and must be treated as an item of major world significance, which it is.

[Section 1: Significance](#)

The Boulton and Watt steam engine, built in 1785, is the second oldest working steam engine in the world, and the oldest working rotative steam engine in the world. When James Watt proposed that he could build this type of machine, purchasers were reluctant to invest in this new technology. He promised that it would do the work of seven horses, or there would be no charge. This led to a discussion of how much work a horse could do, and the unit of power known as the horsepower was accordingly developed (550 foot pounds per second). The SI unit of power is the watt, named for obvious reasons.

As well as this, Watt designed lever mechanisms which enabled the vertical piston stroke to be transformed into an arc motion to enable the crossbeam, with its central fulcrum, to go up and down with no strain on the piston shaft. At the other end of the crossbeam Watt had the problem of transforming the vertical action to a rotary action, but the standard way of doing this – a crankshaft – had been patented by a rival engineer, so he had to find an alternative, hence the planetary gears.

Yet another pioneering innovation was the separate condenser. On each stroke of the earlier Newcomen engine the steam was cooled by water to enable the ensuing vacuum to bring the piston down, but Watt condensed the steam in a separate vessel, ensuring that the cylinder remained hot. This invention led to the later invention of double and even triple expansion engines.

The machine also pioneered the steam safety valve actuated by centrifugal force which has been used on steam engines ever since, and the principle is still used electronically by such things as vehicle cruise control and speed limiters.

Because of all these facts, this machine has a good case for being regarded as the most important early steam engine exhibit in any museum in the world. .

Another area of significance is the story of its acquisition. The engine remained in service for 102 years. In 1887, Professor Archibald Liversidge of the University of Sydney was visiting London and heard that it was to be scrapped. As one of the founders of Sydney's then Technological, Industrial and Sanitary Museum (the forerunner of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the parent body of the Powerhouse Museum), he requested that the engine be donated to that institution. The owners concurred and packed the engine for dispatch on the sailing ship Patriarch.

To make the flywheel easier to lift and less likely to break in transit, its boss was cut in half and some of the rim sections were dismantled¹. The machine was not assembled for some years, but it was eventually installed in a brick engine house behind the Museum in the Harris Street building that is now a part of Sydney Technical College. Even later, the flywheel was driven by an electric engine so that the mechanism could be seen.

This acquisition illustrates the interest in history and the enterprising spirit that was apparent in Australia in 1887, soon to be demonstrated again in the construction of the original Powerhouse and tramway, 1897-99. This was a time of huge cultural growth. Our leaders were conscious that Australia had potential for real greatness, and were intent on being a catalyst for creative expression (in the words of a MAAS slogan of 2017).

In the 1980s a Technology Restoration Society was set up to raise funds for the engine's restoration to steaming order, and staff, volunteers and contractors restored the machine to proper steam-driven operation. This involved considerable research and several major problems had to be resolved. Some cogs had to be replaced, for example, and it was hard to produce metal that was not so hard that it wore out the original cogs. The piston had formerly been lubricated with animal and vegetable fats and oils, and had leather seals, and all this had to be reverse-engineered from scraps of original material and basic engineering

¹ This and other information comes from the catalogue entry for the engine, *Boulton and Watt rotative steam engine, 1785* 2019, Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences, accessed 2 May 2020, <https://ma.as/7177> with additional material from volunteers' research.

principles. The work was carried out at the Museum's Castle Hill site and eventually solutions were found that were both appropriate to eighteenth century technology and reliable for everyday use. The engine was installed at the Powerhouse Museum in 1988, and its inauguration was a triumph for all, and a fitting symbol of the Australian bicentennial celebrations².

Volunteers also use the machine as stimulus for other narratives. It was created for a brewery, and at the time light beer was a very common beverage among the people who could afford it because the London water supply was so polluted that it was very dangerous to drink. The volunteers who follow this line go on to discuss the huge advances in water supply and sewerage that occurred in London during the nineteenth century, and also in Australia, mentioning that one of the early names of the Powerhouse Museum (around 1890) was *Technological, Industrial and Sanitary Museum*. This leads into discussion of the essential nature and complexity of water and sewerage infrastructure.

Another volunteers' talk suggests that this machine was a major symbol of the commencement of the first Industrial Revolution and also of the start of anthropogenic influences on climate change. This script explains the exponential growth of emissions that ensued and is a good lead into the museum's popular 'Ecologic' exhibition on level 1.

Yet another significant story is that in 2010 Britain printed a new fifty-pound banknote featuring the Boulton and Watt engine. Having neglected to preserve it 135 years ago, Britain would definitely go to great lengths to get it back. England, despite its current financial problems, realises the importance to national identity, and indeed to the economy, of a vigorous museum sector.

Section 2: Problems of moving this machine

When the machine was being erected, it was noted that the cast iron, particularly that of the flywheel, was developing weaknesses due to a process akin to crystallisation and that cutting the flywheel for transport to Australia had caused other complications.

A volunteer, now deceased, was the senior engineer responsible for the erection of Basic Oxygen Furnaces at Newcastle and Wollongong in the 1970s. He emigrated to Australia at the age of 80 and was a volunteer at the museum for about four years until his death in

² This sentiment is echoed by Submission No 166 to the first Legislative Council Inquiry from the Australian Society for History of Engineering and Technology Inc. (ASHET): *At the core of this collection is the 1785 Boulton & Watt beam engine, an object so pivotal in the history of industrialisation that it is beyond a dollar value. The painstaking reconstruction of this extraordinary technological treasure in the 1980s was part of a plan to relocate it in pride of place in the then new Powerhouse Museum. A key part of this process- and a 'world's first'-was the substantial investment in the creation of a permanent gallery of steam powered exhibits, a facility no doubt developed with many generations of visitors in mind. It is fitting that the Boulton & Watt engine and its associated exhibitions are located in industrial buildings that owe their existence to the steam power that James Watt harnessed for its limitless applications, not least powering tramways. It would be a great and irretrievable loss to Sydney's heritage to destroy this association*

2017. He told me of the dangers of moving the machine and of his opinion that the wooden structure would need replacing. Other engineers, both volunteers and professionals in a wide range of specialities, agree.

I raised this matter informally with former directors Ms Hiscock and Ms Merrillees, formally at the so-called 'consultation' meetings of 2017³ and also brought it to Ms Havilah's attention on 4 November 2019. She was still unable to tell me that a proper metallurgical inspection and full risk assessment have been performed. In evidence to the first Inquiry, Mr Peter Root, consultant for Longstaff and a very capable logistician, had not performed such an assessment before 17 February 2017 and was unable to say if it had been done. He stated that it was not part of his work⁴. He refused to answer many significant questions on the grounds that his work was 'cabinet in confidence'.

The most frightening aspect of all this is the statement in the design brief⁵ that there was consideration of 'placing the Boulton and Watt engine on display within one of the circulation spaces in the Museum'. This is probably because in the winning design there appear to be no climate-controlled galleries with high enough ceilings to hold the machine, which is 8.4 metres high and requires a solid foundation at and below floor level as well as steam reticulation apparatus. In any case, the machine would not be in a climate controlled area, and the consequent high variations in temperature at Parramatta raises grave concerns for the continuing structural integrity of both iron and wooden components. Such a placement also downgrades the importance of this amazing machine, to which any technological museum in the world would be delighted to give pride of place.

³ A booklet containing over 40 questions was prepared and submitted to the New MAAS museum site and handed to Mr Elton at the July 30 2017 Pyrmont meeting, but only one question appears to have been addressed and no substantive response has been received to any question asked. Details available on request. (no matter what questions are asked, no matter what objections to the 'move' have been raised, the response, if any, has almost always been statements to the effect that the 'move' is a wonderful idea).

⁴ 2016-09 Legislative Council Inquiry into Museums and Galleries testimony, Friday, 17 February 2017, page 34

⁵ *Powerhouse Precinct Parramatta, International Design Competition, Stage 2 brief*, late 2019, page 105.

Inquiry into the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Submission from Tom Lockley

This submission addresses specifically Terms of Reference 1 (a) the proposed move of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the Powerhouse Museum, from Ultimo to Parramatta, including:

- (i) the core visions behind the move,
- (ii) the governance of the project, including the effectiveness and adequacy of planning, business cases, design briefs, project management, public reporting, consultant selection and costs, project costing and cultural and demographic justifications.

#7: Public reporting and related matters

The idea of moving the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta was first officially suggested by Infrastructure NSW in the State Infrastructure Strategy Update 2014 Recommendations to the NSW Government November 2014,¹ suggesting *urgent investigation* of the idea. The decision to make the move was announced on 26 November 2014 without any significant such investigation, and it has been shown repeatedly to be a bad decision (*#1 Fact sheet*).

Yet the Government persists, and in the process a whole intertwined mass of misstatements, obfuscations and other techniques have been advanced in support of their actions, and a mass of other negative features of the process have emerged. This submission outlines some of these.

Misinformation

- Inner city elitism ('cupidity and selfishness²') were said to be behind the initial resistance to the 'move' eg characterising the opponents of the 'move' as inner city snobs³. However opposition quickly developed that was based on the bad economics of the process. The point has been constantly made that Parramatta deserves its own cultural facilities, not a transplanted and largely irrelevant museum.
- Statements were made that Infrastructure NSW had indeed researched the options – eg Ms Grasso, Inquiry testimony Monday, 14 November 2016 Page 2 *It is uncontested that government accepted a recommendation from Infrastructure NSW to relocate the museum from the current site in Ultimo to a site in Parramatta.* This is

¹ Page 6: *As part of the Parramatta North Urban Renewal Project, a cultural precinct should be developed around the Old King's School site, potentially including a relocated Powerhouse Museum;* page 10 recommendation *Urgently consider* *relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to the Parramatta Cultural Precinct;* Page 117 *To anchor the new Parramatta cultural precinct, Infrastructure NSW recommends giving consideration to relocating the Powerhouse Museum. A relocated Powerhouse could be a core asset in the Parramatta precinct and a major addition to cultural infrastructure in the west.* (our underlining).

² Mr Borger's terminology

³ Daily Telegraph, 25 January 2015 for example.

not so. INSW has stated that their involvement *takes as its starting point the Government's decision to locate the Powerhouse Museum on the Riverbank site in Parramatta.*⁴

- False statements that the 'move' had widespread support. See #7 Consultation and #4 Heritage.
- Ignoring expert advice is a feature of the whole project. Consider:
 - a. A consistent policy of not having people with museum experience and qualifications in the planning groups. See #2 'Finding'.
 - b. Neglecting such material as that presented by qualified and experienced people to the Inquiry both in submissions and in evidence. See #5 Consultation and #3 Heritage.

Secrecy

- During the first Inquiry the mantra 'cabinet in confidence' was used on over 25 separate occasions during the first Inquiry to block answers, not only on cabinet deliberations but also on the information given to cabinet to assist their deliberations. We were not even allowed to have information given to the writers of the business case to assist the preparation of their briefings, notably re the work of logistician Peter Root⁵.



- The Government had to be forced to make public the 2017 business case, but this was done by releasing a single black and white photocopy to an office available by appointment only. It was necessary for them to be photocopied and put on line privately (<http://maasbusinesscase.com/>). Many pages were highly redacted, and many others were illegible, and a few vital pages were missing. We made many efforts to get the missing material from all relevant Government authorities with no response.
- The Government has been deluged with protests. People have written or emailed thousands of times to politicians and to INSW and MAAS, and typically get no answers. If they do receive answers, the standard response is that the matter is being referred to the Minister for the Arts, and / or a message comes from Create NSW, which completely ignores the matters raised and simply proclaims the alleged virtues of the 'move' idea. Reasoned responses to the questions asked are very rare indeed.

⁴ Final Business Case Summary: Powerhouse Museum in Western Sydney April 2018, page 1

⁵ Inquiry transcript, Friday, 17 February 2017 page 30. Mr Root's speciality is logistics. He is credited with doing an excellent job when the present Powerhouse Museum was set up, but even though his work was only input to the people organising the business case, he stated that he had been advised that 'such documents are to be considered a subject of public interest immunity and are therefore privileged'.

Relationships with lower-level staff and volunteers

- The Museum was deliberately allowed to run down in 2014 when cuts in forecast expenditure were a blow to the long-term plans of the time and caused staff reductions and reduced operating and maintenance budgets. The fact that the museum has been criticised for the dullness of the permanent collections is directly traceable to this period of austerity⁶.
- Staff and volunteers were told in 2015 that they were to present a positive image of the move when talking to visitors⁷. The result is that most employees and some volunteers were afraid to speak their minds on the subject. Employees, and even other people who do business with the Government, feared that this might result in loss of jobs or other career damage and accordingly do not want their input to such fora as our email group to be public knowledge.
- I had personal experience with this mindset after an event on Friday 15 November 2019, at the opening of the excellent *Linear* exhibition. During the function at the museum I had been in discussion with an officer of the museum about various related matters. At the end of the formal part of the evening I noticed that Mr Harwin and Professor Glover were not occupied with masses of people and sought to approach them to see if we could arrange a time when our very serious concerns could be discussed with Mr Harwin or an appropriate political officer. I had on many occasions tried to initiate dialogue with such a person with no response. The museum officer stated that in the officer's opinion this was not an appropriate time to make such an approach. We discussed the matter at some length, and though I clearly explained that I had no intention of creating any disturbance, that I had exhausted all other avenues of approach, and that I had the best interests of this museum at heart, the officer stated that if I attempted to approach Mr Harwin the officer would get someone to remove me, in public, from the premises. I was reluctant to cause disruption and did not approach Mr Harwin. Ms Havilah spoke to me about this matter later in the evening and made it clear that she would not carry on with the policy forbidding volunteers from making negative comments to visitors. She later agreed to meet with me and hear my submissions, and since that time, with joint agreement, my discussions with her have been regarded as discussions direct with the Government.
- There were several incidents of seemingly deliberate action to harm the museum and damage staff and volunteer morale in the process of moving items. One such example involved the Stuart Piano. This is a wonderful example of Australian skill, widely regarded as the best engineered piano in the world. Daily and on weekends volunteers played the piano, and it was a firm favourite, popular with staff and visitors, and an entertaining and educational feature of the museum.

⁶ We were briefed by Museum officials on this situation but do not have the exact figures and references.

⁷ Written instructions to this effect were issued.

It was necessary to move the piano to make way for the Apollo 11 display, and in February 2019 it was learnt that it was to be moved to storage. Volunteers asked that it be retained at the museum in the place of the unplayable Bechstein piano that is part of the *Icons* exhibition but we were told it could not be kept as OH&S had determined that there was no safe place to put it. We emailed the OH&S officer and **she did not confirm this**. As spokesperson for the volunteers I was called to the office and reprimanded by a museum officer for raising the matter. I was told that I had no right to question the museum's decisions and if I continued to do this I should cease being a volunteer. The piano was moved, much to the disappointment and chagrin of many volunteers.

- The brief for the design competition indicated that the full site at Parramatta was available for the new museum. However the Business Case clearly indicates that the project was only financially viable if part of the site is used for a non-museum tower building and the Parramatta Council (which has never approved the use of that site for the museum) has stated that Willow Grove and other heritage sites must be preserved. Thus it was quite dishonest to state that the whole site was available to the designers. It would also have been honest to indicate to the proposed entrants that the project did not have unanimous support, to put it mildly.

Unstable staffing and unsatisfactory Trustee involvement

1. The status of Directors and Trustees has been compromised

- Since the announcement of the project, there has been a high turnover of directors. Rose Hiscock replaced Dawn Casey, who had a five year tenure (2008-13). Rose Hiscock departed in January 2016 to inaugurate the far smaller Melbourne Science Centre. Her deputy Director Dolla Merrillees was promoted, but resigned in July 2018. Lisa Havilah took up duty in January 2019, not as director but as CEO with the direct contractual responsibility to the Government for making the move happen.
- Mrs Janet MacDonald, trustee for a total of eight years, resigned in March 2017, exposing a culture of contempt for the input of experienced and highly qualified people such as herself⁸. The group of trustees has been systematically denuded of people with experience in the museum and arts field: the new appointments to the trustees announced in February include only one – maths teacher Eddie Woo – who has relevant qualifications (in education).
- Most of the rest are financiers or property developers: Darren Steinberg, chief Executive of the property development firm Dexus later resigned, and one explanation is potential conflict of financial interest.
- The most reprehensible appointment is that of David Borger, who led the public campaign for the 'move' despite the overwhelming evidence that it will be a

⁸ See her evidence, originally 'in camera' to the Inquiry at <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lcdocs/transcripts/2175/In%20camera%20transcripts%20resolved%20to%20be%20published.pdf>

disaster⁹. He has consistently ignored requests to debate the matter, relying on polemic rather than dialogue.

The high-level professionals are fleeing. Without exception, all the Government witnesses at the Inquiry who had supervisory responsibilities for the 'move' have since left their positions.

- Samantha Torres, who at the Inquiry on 5 September 2016 said that she had overall responsibility for the project abandoned this job less than six months later and is now working for Johnstaff. She is qualified in law with an MBA and no relevant experience in museums so will fit in well.
- Michael Parry, appointed Parramatta Project Director in February 2016, seconded to Create NSW June 2017 to February 2018, returning as Parramatta Project director in September 2018, left NSW in May 2019 to take up a job in Victoria.
- Michael Brealey resigned as CEO of Create NSW after 13 months in the post and left at the end of March 2018.
- Ms Alex O'Mara was the team leader at Create NSW, in charge of creating 'a vibrant, accessible and thriving cultural sector in NSW'. She left in May 2019 to become *Deputy Secretary Place Design and Public Spaces* at NSW Department of Planning and Environment. To me, this does not sound like a promotion.
- Carolyn McNally, secretary of the New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment, announced her resignation in April of this year.
- Craig Limkin, Executive Director of Create Infrastructure since April 2017 suddenly quit in August 2019.

Within the staff of the museum, there have been at least three interesting departures:

- 'highly respected' Collections and Exhibitions Director _____, recruited from the Museum of Brisbane in October 2016, knowing full well that he would be deeply involved in the 'move', left in August 2019.
- Programs Director _____ was appointed to facilitate the 'move' and lasted from September 2016 to May 2019.
- Museum Executive director _____, recruited for the project in October 2016, departed by January 2020.

The point is that if the move program was going ahead smoothly, and we were on track to produce 'the equivalent of the Smithsonian', or was even a viable and sound project, would all these people have abandoned their chance for a wonderful career achievement?

⁹ Mr Borger is the only person who gave evidence supporting the 'move' of the museum who was not a Government employee in some form or another. One wonders about his financial acumen: he is impervious to reasoned argument that conclusively demonstrates the incredible waste involved if the 'move' process is carried out. We have asked for the reasons behind his support for the scheme over all possible alternatives with no response, and have invited him to discuss the matter directly with us, again with no response. His appointment as Trustee is therefore most galling.

(Andrew Elliot, MAAS finance director, who was acting director pending the assumption of the CEO job by Lisa Havilah, appeared at the Inquiry on 16 November 2018. His long opening statement was irrelevant to the major issues. He is a rare survivor from the group of senior people that have been involved in the project).

It is not irrelevant to note that Mr Harwin, appointed to replace Mr Grant as Arts Minister in January 2017, resigned from the ministry in April 2020 following allegations of illegal behavior during Coronavirus restrictions.

General comments

- A typical ruse of the Government is to ignore the heritage of the museum. For example to meet the statutory requirement of making a heritage assessment in such cases the Government has sponsored an assessment of the *Ultimo Tramways Power House*, a very obscure title of what is universally known as the Powerhouse Museum. The mandatory 'independent' review can thus downplay the importance of the museum. This point is further developed in our submission *#4 Heritage* page 2.
- In other areas of Government activity there seems to be a reluctance to get involved in the museum 'move' controversy. In September 2019 the Greater Sydney Commission held an 'independent' inquiry into the development of the area, including Pyrmont-Ultimo. The focus was largely on developments around the Casino, but, **spontaneously, 37 other submissions objected to the removal of the Powerhouse Museum**¹⁰. The terms of reference included examination of planning methods, and we prepared a submission on the planning deficiencies of the 'move'¹¹, and another paper on the relevance to the terms of reference as we feared that the matter would be regarded as outside the terms of reference of the consultation. I presented these at an appearance before an engagement session¹². To my certain knowledge, 'deficiencies in planning methods' was also mentioned many times in other submissions.

In the final report, (32 pages, 10373 words) all references to planning were positive or neutral. The words *Powerhouse*, *MAAS*, and *museum* were not mentioned. There were only three references to *arts* and one to *culture*. We prepared the document listing the spontaneous references to the museum referred to above, and I forwarded it to the Commission, following up with a phone call. **An unnamed spokesperson told me that the matter of the Powerhouse demolition could not be canvassed at the consultation process because it had already been determined as Government policy and the matter of the consequent use of the Powerhouse Museum site could not be canvassed because the appropriate business case had not been completed.**

¹⁰ The relevant extracts are available on <http://maasbusinesscase.com/>, link on title page to *additional documents*

¹¹ <http://www.maasbusinesscase.com/oct%2019%20bulletin%20stuff/sub.pdf>

¹² https://gsc-public-1.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/pyrmont_transcripts_website.pdf

Inquiry into the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales

Submission from Tom Lockley

This submission addresses specifically Terms of Reference 1 (a) the proposed move of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the Powerhouse Museum, from Ultimo to Parramatta, including:

- (i) the core visions behind the move.

[#8 An alternative project.](#)

This is a quick exercise in lateral thinking done in a late night email / phone hookup.

Preliminary research and rationale:

Parramatta is the population centre of the Sydney conurbation. An increasing number of Sydney children are living in apartments. Opportunities for pushing and pulling, learning practical physics, are very limited.

This is illustrated by the numbers of Sydney children travelling to Canberra on school excursions, where a great highlight is a visit to Questacon. Canberra Questacon has a catchment population of about 510,000 people, and 515,000 people attended Questacon last year. At least 40,000 of these came from Sydney (local estimate).

Project part 1: Build a Questacon in Fleet Street area: around \$400 million ('back of envelope' estimate by builder and museum expert)

Project part 2: Build a locally planned museum / art gallery in the Fleet Street area. The new V&A museum in Dundee, Scotland, cost £STG80 million, so \$AUD200 million ought to be enough. The Dundee V&A has a floor area of 8,500 square metres (2.1 acres) and includes a main hall, learning centre, auditorium, temporary exhibition galleries and the permanent Scottish Design Galleries.



Project part 3: General work in the Fleet Street area. Indicative \$400 million. To include a parking area, not provided for at present. It would become one of the great cultural precincts of the world.

Project part 4: The heritage buildings at the proposed museum site would be preserved as part of a wonderful waterside park at a cost of a few million.

Total expenditure well less than \$1 billion. We think it is far better economically, educationally, socially and in heritage terms than 'moving' the Powerhouse -and will bring more money to Parramatta. This idea took about three person-hours to prepare – we suggest that the Powerhouse 'move' is so badly planned that it could not have taken any longer!

Tom Lockley and two anonymous friends. 14/5/2020