

**Submission
No 138**

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

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Supplementary submission to Upper House Inquiry into Museums & Galleries

1. This is a brief supplementary submission to the *Upper House Inquiry into Museums & Galleries (General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4)* and should be read in conjunction with my submission to the Inquiry of 10 August 2016 and the evidence I gave to the Inquiry on 11 February 2019.
2. As a former President of the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences (**Trust**) between 2003-2010, and as a trustee for some twelve years (1999-2010), I had hoped that the stark failings of the Trust that I (and others) had identified in representations to the Inquiry would have been heeded by those charged with the heavy duty of acting in the Museum's best interests. To the contrary, the cavalier & dismissive attitude to informed and respectful calls for caution and reflection on the merits of the proposed move to Parramatta seem to have persisted. And this despite the severe budgetary impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic which make the proposed relocation of the Museum seem all the more wasteful and wanton.
3. I do not intend to repeat here my earlier complaints about the lack of due process by the Trust. So obsequious, indeed otiose, has this important statutory forum become that it almost defies historical comparison in NSW. Some examples of the Trust's more recent failings are warranted:
 - a. In contravention of the Act, recent Trust minutes reveal a further sidelining of the Museum's governing body, with a minority of interested trustees who stand to benefit from the relocation by virtue of the 'other hats' they wear, dictating the Trust's silent stance;
 - b. Just as relevantly, in the aftermath of recent resignations or non-appointments, 6 of the 7 current trustees are appointments from as late as 2019, making the Trust all the more beholden to the current President, one of the non-independent minority. The lack of any collective corporate memory within the Trust is certainly no surprise in such a setting; and
 - c. In 2019, the Trust met a mere 5 times, in disregard of established corporate governance principles – and when they *did* meet, minutes reveal that they skirted around the pros and cons of relocation during their deliberations, in the process revealing scant museum experience.
4. Others more qualified than the writer have revealed the patent failings of the Parramatta move and the inherently dangerous path the NSW Government is walking in obstinately pursuing a proposal that carries the real risk of bringing it undone. I will not repeat their compelling arguments here.

5. For the sake of brevity, but also emphasis, I have kept this supplementary submission short and to the point. But that brevity should not be read as any understatement of my central proposition. This remains a deeply flawed proposal which should have been interrogated and dismissed by a robust Trust that understood and obeyed its statutory charter to protect the Museum's precious heritage and collection on behalf of the people of NSW.
6. I am content for this supplementary submission to be published in full on the website of the Inquiry.

Dr Nicholas G Pappas AM
President, Board of Trustees (2002-2010)
Trustee (1999-2010)

24 May 2020