

**REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS BEFORE**

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE GOVERNMENT'S  
MANAGEMENT OF THE POWERHOUSE MUSEUM AND  
OTHER MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL PROJECTS  
IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

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

**UNCORRECTED**

**At Sydney on Wednesday 29 July 2020**

**The Committee met at 9:30.**

**PRESENT**

The Hon. Robert Borsak (Chair)

The Hon. Ben Franklin

The Hon. Rose Jackson

The Hon. Trevor Khan

The Hon. Walt Secord

Mr David Shoebridge (Deputy Chair)

**The CHAIR:** Welcome to the hearing of the Select Committee on the Government's management of the Powerhouse Museum and other museums and cultural projects in New South Wales. The inquiry is examining issues surrounding the proposed relocation of the Powerhouse Museum and Government support for the State's museums and cultural sector more broadly. Before we commence I would like to acknowledge the Gadigal people who are the traditional custodians of this land. I would also like to pay respect to the Elders past and present of the Eora nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginals present.

Today is the first of several hearings we plan to hold for this inquiry. This morning we will hear from the Government witnesses from the Arts portfolio including the Hon. Don Harwin, MLC, the Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts. In the afternoon session we will hear from the witnesses from local government, including the Lord Mayor of Sydney, as well as peak bodies and professional associations in the museums, galleries and cultural heritage sector.

Before we commence I would like to make some brief comments about the procedures for today's hearing. Today's hearing is being broadcast live via the Parliament's website. A transcript of today's hearing will be placed on the Committee's website when it becomes available. In accordance with broadcasting guidelines, media representatives are reminded that they must take responsibility for what they publish about the Committee's proceedings. It is important to remember that parliamentary privilege does not apply to what witnesses may say outside of their evidence at the hearing. I urge witnesses to be careful about any comments you may make to the media or others after you complete your evidence as such comments would not be protected by parliamentary privilege if another person decided to take an action for defamation. The guidelines for broadcast proceedings are available from the secretariat.

All witnesses have a right to procedural fairness according to the procedural fairness resolution adopted by the House in 2018. There may be some questions that a witness could only answer if they had more time or with certain documents to hand. In those circumstances witnesses are advised that they can take the question on notice and provide an answer within 21 days. I remind everyone here today that Committee hearings are not intended to provide a forum for people to make adverse reflections about others under the protection of parliamentary privilege. I therefore request witnesses to focus on the issues raised by the inquiry's terms of reference and avoid naming individuals unnecessarily. Witnesses are advised that any messages should be delivered to the Committee members through the Committee staff. To aid the audibility of this hearing, may I remind both Committee members and witnesses to speak into the microphones. The room is fitted with induction loops compatible with hearing aid systems that have telecoil receivers. In addition, several seats have been reserved near loudspeakers for persons in the public gallery who are having hearing difficulties.

All witnesses from departments, statutory bodies or corporations will be sworn prior to giving evidence. Minister, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn as you have already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament. For all other witnesses I ask that you each, in turn, state your full name, position title and agency and swear either an oath or an affirmation. The words of both the oath and the affirmation are on the cards on the table in front of you.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN**, Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts, before the Committee

**SIMON DRAPER**, Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure NSW, affirmed and examined

**KATE FOY**, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet, affirmed and examined

**The CHAIR:** Minister, would you like to make an opening statement?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Thank you, Chair. I would like to start by thanking you for the opportunity to appear this morning. I would like to make a few remarks across the broad terms of reference as well as, obviously, the core projects that your Committee is concentrating on. Our Government's commitment to the arts and cultural funding in the State is without recent precedent. We are absolutely committed to a once-in-a-generation investment in our cultural infrastructure. When people think about where to go in Australia for arts and culture I want them to be thinking about New South Wales. A particular focus, of course, is the Powerhouse project. I would, of course, remind the Committee that already the Powerhouse is operating on three sites, including the Powerhouse Ultimo, the Museums Discovery Centre at Castle Hill and also the Sydney Observatory.

We are absolutely committed to establishing an iconic, vibrant, interactive, world-class cultural institution in Parramatta to further grow and promote an accessible and diverse arts and cultural environment across Western Sydney. Powerhouse Parramatta will be the first New South Wales Government State cultural institution to be located in Western Sydney. It will be the flagship museum of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. At 30,000 square metres with 18,000 square metres of exhibition and public spaces, it will be the largest museum in New South Wales and the leading science and technology museum in the Southern Hemisphere. Western Sydney is Australia's fourth largest economy and one of the fastest growing and most culturally diverse regions in Australia. Its population is projected to grow by 3 per cent per annum to 2041—over double the rate of Greater Sydney and nearly triple the national rate over the same period.

The New South Wales Government's recently released 2040 Economic Blueprint recognises the role creative industries play in creating vibrant, dynamic places that attract, develop and retain economic talent in New South Wales and help drive economic growth. The opportunity for the Powerhouse Parramatta to harness this growth to contribute to the productivity and livability of Western Sydney, Greater Sydney and New South Wales more broadly is transformational. The exhibitions will be supported by a cross-generational education program that will set a new benchmark in cultural participation by the growing communities of Western Sydney. In August 2019 the New South Wales Government endorsed the vision, design and operational principles for Powerhouse Parramatta. This vision has driven the design competition process, design development and operational planning of Powerhouse Parramatta and marks a significant uplift to service levels for the benefit of the communities of Greater Sydney and New South Wales.

On 4 July I was absolutely delighted to announce, with the Treasurer, that the New South Wales Government is committed to keeping the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo open. It is a decision, I am sure, that the Committee is going to welcome. The decision to retain and renew the Powerhouse Ultimo, in addition to establishing the new flagship Powerhouse Parramatta, will allow us to provide two world-class museums for the communities of New South Wales and significantly increase access to, and exhibition of, the internationally renowned collections of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. Powerhouse Ultimo will be Australia's leading museum of design and innovation. Its home in the Ultimo Power Station will provide the context to tell the stories of the age of industrialisation and its ongoing impacts which continue to shape our world. The iconic Powerhouse objects—the Boulton and Watt engine, Locomotive No.1 and the Catalina flying boat—frame periods of extraordinary innovation and creativity that influenced design, architecture, fashion and visual communication.

A key driver of Powerhouse Ultimo is supporting the continued productivity of the New South Wales creative economy, which has been significantly impacted by COVID-19. Plans for the site will support jobs in the creative and cultural sectors with the creation of a cultural and creative industries ecology at its core, while ensuring the site contributes to a vibrant, active and connected place. Over and above the Powerhouse, the New South Wales Government is custodian and manager on behalf of the people of New South Wales of large and diverse Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal collections with local, national and international significance. In addition to creating new cultural infrastructure, this Government has also set about revitalising some of our unique cultural icons. The New South Wales State cultural institutions manage significant cultural heritage collections and provide services and programs throughout the State. The State cultural institutions are custodians of 29 million collection items valued at \$4.5 billion.

In addition, the NSW State Archives and State Records Authority manages a collection of over 14 million items valued at nearly \$1 billion. In 2018-19 almost seven million people visited the State cultural institutions. Together these institutions provide a unique and irreplaceable archive of our history and contemporary culture. The Government is undertaking large-scale projects to extend the quality and access to these important assets for the community. At the Australian Museum the Government has committed \$50.5 million to Project Discover, the Australian Museum's stage one redevelopment. Combined with a \$7 million contribution from the museum this funding is repurposing existing storage space within the museum to create a new, flexible 1,500 square metre touring exhibition hall and to provide dedicated educational and retail experiences.

Kane Constructions has been contracted to build Project Discover and construction is progressing very well, with anticipated completion later this year. The Art Gallery of New South Wales expansion, the Sydney Modern Project, will deliver an outstanding global art gallery for New South Wales. The Government has provided \$244 million, which, together with over \$100 million in donations from Art Gallery of New South Wales benefactors, is supporting this significant expansion. Construction is well underway on this project, which will serve generations of New South Wales, interstate and international artists and visitors. The project is on track to be delivered within budget by 2022, with the gallery remaining open during construction.

The New South Wales Government is also proud to be supporting the iconic Sydney Opera House and is proud to be investing \$228 million in its renewal project. Sydney Living Museums has also just completed a major renewal of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Hyde Park Barracks museum, which reopened to the public on 21 February to much acclaim. While the Powerhouse program is a significant part of this inquiry, I welcome the additional focus it has on the regions. The Government is also committed to areas outside of Sydney. I might say that I am now particularly focused on the regions, given that I have had to move back to them just recently. Anyway, we will leave that alone.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** You introduced it.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Regional museums are of great importance in the regions as they provide cultural experiences, opportunities for volunteering, and the collections underpin and shape local stories and identities. As Minister I am absolutely determined to ensure that regional New South Wales gets its fair share of arts and cultural funding. In 2018 the \$100 million Regional Cultural Fund supported 136 projects, \$42 million of which was allocated to 42 museums and art museums—or, as we often call them in Australia, art galleries. In closing, I am proud of the New South Wales Government's decision to build an iconic, fit for purpose museum in western Sydney that will be recognised around the world. I am proud of our Government's record cultural infrastructure spend, particularly in these challenging times when the State needs economic stimulus. Two world-class museums in Parramatta and Ultimo will provide a significant boost for the cultural and tourism sectors in New South Wales. What a great outcome for New South Wales.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, in reference to your opening statement where you said you are now going to have two museums—western Sydney and Ultimo—what is the new price tag? The previous price tag hanging off the project was \$1.5 billion. What is the budget now?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Mr Secord, just because you and others repeat the \$1.5 billion figure over and over and over again, it does not make it true. The facts do not change. The fact is that the cost of the project has never been \$1.5 billion in total—never. Certainly the total Government contribution has never been anywhere near \$1.5 billion. In fact it has always been well below that. When the project received its approval to proceed at the end of 2019 I made it very clear that the net contribution of the taxpayer would be \$645 million. On 4 July this year the Treasurer and I announced that there was going to be a change to that figure, simply because we are now keeping the Powerhouse at Ultimo. Therefore a previous position that the Government had, which was to require the sale of some land in part of the Powerhouse precinct at Ultimo, was no longer operable. The Government would be making an additional contribution, on behalf of the taxpayers, of \$195 million. Therefore the total cost—the net cost—to the taxpayer of the Parramatta Powerhouse project is \$840 million.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Minister, was \$190 million—

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I think the figure was 195, Mr Shoebridge.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Was \$195 million the assumed revenue from the Ultimo site, from the initial Ultimo creative industries precinct strategic business case?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Yes. That was the target that was set for us. It was expected that we would try and work with that site, such as to achieve a \$195 million contribution to the cost of the Parramatta project. That no longer is the case. That is specifically what has changed. As a result of keeping the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo that is no longer a consideration that needs to be taken into account, in terms of also proceeding with the Powerhouse project at Parramatta.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, on 18 April 2018 your office provided a report to *The Daily Telegraph* saying that, in fact, it would cost \$500 million to refurbish the Powerhouse Museum at the Ultimo site if the move to Parramatta did not occur. How does that factor into the cost? If you were saying on 18 April 2018 that it would cost \$500 million—and I refer to the article by Anna Caldwell from 18 April 2018, where it says it will cost \$500 million on top of everything to bring the Ultimo site up to scratch.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I am familiar with the article you are referring to.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** You provided it.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** The article that you are referring to was focusing on the 2014 final business case produced by the Powerhouse Museum and endorsed by the trustees of the Powerhouse Museum on what, in their opinion and in the opinion of the staff at the time and the experts they had working for them, would be the cost of [inaudible]. They in fact put the net cost at \$350 million. I think it was assumed by the journalist that in current dollars it would be the higher figure. That is, as I understand it, the basis of that figure in *The Daily Telegraph* article.

Obviously, since we are retaining the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo, we do need to look at what it is going to cost to keep that museum open. That stands to reason. Now, let us be quite clear: There has been in place work being done on an Ultimo final business case for some time—in fact, since it was authorised back prior to the last election in 2018, just after I became the Minister. You will recall, Mr Secord, that prior to my becoming Minister the position was that there would be no continuing cultural presence at Ultimo.

When I became the Minister I was absolutely determined that I would keep a cultural presence at Ultimo and that is why I have consistently said, ever since the announcement that the Premier and I made in, from recollection, April 2018, that the Ultimo Power Station would remain as cultural space and that we would be investigating a continued presence of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences with the fashion museum and other possible cultural uses. That work is not finished on that final business case. What has happened now is that we have given a preferred option for the cultural uses and that cultural uses is our commitment to keep the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo. So the work on the business case will conclude by also looking at what needs that site has so that it can be a world-class museum.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, you have talked a business case. You said—this is your figures and the figure I quoted was \$1.5 billion—

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Excuse me—sorry, okay, I will let you finish. Apologies.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** The figure I quoted of \$1.5 billion, I was referring to the findings and deliberations of this Committee. My colleague Mr David Shoebridge reminds me that it is \$1.6 billion. You are claiming—

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** Pick a figure, any figure.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** That is the total cost, not the net. The Minister has been talking about net.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** The Minister now says that it is going to be \$840 million to retain and to do—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Net.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Net—to do the Parramatta site. Now you are talking about a business case.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** For Ultimo.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** This \$840 million—

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** The \$840 million figure is for Parramatta.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Oh, it is for Parramatta. So what will be the cost to retain the Ultimo site, taking into consideration the 2004 report that said it would cost a half a billion dollars—

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** The 2014 report I think you are referring to.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Yes, the 2014 report—it would cost a half a billion dollars. So it is \$840 million for the Parramatta site. What is the cost now to retain the Ultimo site?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Well, of course there is no cost with retaining the Ultimo site because the Ultimo site is in public ownership.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** You are telling me zero—zero dollars.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** No, I am saying there is no cost in keeping it. In terms of what work gets done on making sure that it is, going into the future, a world-class museum, that work is being done right now in the context of the final business case for Ultimo.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** The trustees of the Powerhouse Museum put the figure at somewhere between \$350 million and \$500 million to bring that site up to a standard that they as trustees of the museum considered acceptable. You have said that is their figure so what is your figure? What is your Government's figure?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Sorry, may I just go back—and I will deal with that—and just correct the record slightly. The amount of \$840 million is in fact the cost for Parramatta and the work that is being done at the Museums Discovery Centre at Castle Hill—okay?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So the \$840 million is for Parramatta and Castle Hill.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** The \$840 million is for Parramatta and Castle Hill, yes.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Okay. So what is the cost for Ultimo? You are telling me zero dollars. I do not believe you, Minister. Minister, come on.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** No, no. If I may I would like to go back to the Hon. Rose Jackson's question since I did not answer it and at least give her the courtesy of an answer. With that final business case that was done in 2014, it is important that we understand what all of the elements of that were. It involved the demolition of the Wran building, the demolition of the Harwood Building and a whole series of elements that might not be actually what we consider six years on is the best use of that site. In fact the trustees at that time were not only wanting to demolish the Harwood Building; they were wanting to dispose of the Harwood Building. If you have read the 2014 final business case, it is all in there. So please let us be fair about this. I would encourage the Opposition members to remember, if they are talking about that is what the trustees said was the cost, they should be honest and say the trustees at that time wanted to demolish the Wran building and wanted to quite radically reconfigure the existing museum. If they are going to quote those figures, please understand what they are actually advocating.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Well, you give us an alternative figure. You are saying that might or might not be the plan moving forward but that is all we have—

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** That is right.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** —because you have not provided any alternative figures as to what the cost might be.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** No, I have come to you and I have said that those costings are being worked out as part of the final business case for Ultimo.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** When will we get the final business case? When will that be available?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** The third iteration of the final business case.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** It is expected the work will be finished this year.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Minister, could I just take you through, so as we just clear the record, just simply go through the numbers? As I understand it now, the net cost to the taxpayers for the Parramatta building and the changes at the discovery centre is now \$840 million—is that right?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Correct.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** And it has gone up from \$645 million because you have had to add in the additional \$195 million, which was money you thought you would gain from the sale or development of the Ultimo site—is that right?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Well, yes. The \$195 million was the target that was set for the project by the Expenditure Review Committee.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I know you have critiqued the \$1.5 billion figure, which was the total cost of the project. You have told us what the net cost of the project will be. What is the total estimated cost of the project for the Parramatta and discovery centre sites?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** We cannot give you a definitive cost on that for one very important reason and that is until we actually procure the company that will build the Powerhouse Parramatta we will not have a final cost. It has always been the policy of the Government not to say or put in the public domain, "This is what

we estimate it will cost," because that puts the taxpayer at a competitive disadvantage when it is dealing with the construction companies who will be bidding for the work.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Well, Minister, I am confused because if you do not know what the cost of building the project is, how can you tell us what the net cost to government will be of the project?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** There is no reason to be confused, Mr David Shoebridge, because if you have just listened to what I said we do have a figure that we are working to but it is the policy—and I will invite Mr Draper to comment on this in a minute because I am sure he will want to explain exactly why this is. The policy of Infrastructure NSW is not to put the figure that we are working to out in the public domain because it will put the taxpayer at a disadvantage in the tender process for procurement of a construction company. And I will invite Mr—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I will allow Mr Draper to give further detail in one sec, but I put this to you, Minister: You critique the analysis that says this project is going to cost in the order of \$1.5 billion or \$1.6 billion but you will not put in the public record what the actual cost of the project is and you say for confidentiality and bargaining reasons. Do you see how—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** How about we listen to Mr Draper, who was actually going to give the answer on that particular issue.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Do you see how your criticism of the \$1.5 billion—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We have got another hour. Why don't we hear the answer first, David?

**The CHAIR:** Order! Are you taking a point of order?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Do you see how your criticism of the \$1.5 billion project does not hold water, despite the non-member for Ballina?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I invite Mr Draper to make some comments.

**Mr DRAPER:** Thank you, Minister. Yes, on your point about disclosing detailed cost plans for building projects I think it is wise for the Government to not put that into the public realm when we are likely to go into a tender process. We have discussed that before in other committees, Mr Shoebridge and Mr Borsak. I think perhaps the best guide I can give you is in 2018 we published a summary of the business case. It is on the Infrastructure NSW website. There is a table on page 8 of that which gives a breakdown of the three options that were considered and it includes—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I am well familiar with that, Mr Draper.

**Mr DRAPER:** It gives a construction cost estimate of \$640 million in 2018 dollars, net present value terms at that time. We are still working completely within the budget that was set in that business case.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But that business case had a net return of 1.02, was it?

**Ms DRAPER:** That is correct.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** So if you take out the \$195 million that you were going to get from the Ultimo site, what is the current net return? How negative is it now?

**Ms FOY:** As the Minister said, there is another business case that is going to be done that will review the decision that was undertaken in retaining Ultimo. In the course of doing that business case there will be an estimate of the benefit-cost ratio arising from that,

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But Mr Draper, from the only available evidence you have of a business case, it was wafer thin. It was 1.02 positive. That was on the assumption, correct me if I am wrong, that you were going to get \$195 million from the Ultimo site. That is now taken off the table. This must be a project that has a negative rating if you were to do it now. It must be.

**Ms FOY:** I understand why you say that, Mr Shoebridge, but what we will have to do is consider the benefits that arise from retaining the Ultimo site. There was an expectation of some financial returns from the Ultimo site. In retaining the Ultimo site we will also have to consider the benefits to the community of retaining that site. They do get quantified and included in the business case as well

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Minister, from day one we have had answers like that. Rubbery figure after rubbery figure after rubbery figure trying to justify a disastrous financial and political decision that the

Premier and this Government made to relocate it. We are now going to get another rubbery figure business case to try to strap up a disastrous financial decision, aren't we? That is what is happening again.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Look, I just completely reject that characterisation of what has happened. I am absolutely excited about the vision that we have for the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Trust. They are going to be the custodians of two of the greatest museums in the world. We are going to do what we can to ensure that Ultimo is improved to be a world-class museum. That is the commitment that the Treasurer made on 4 July. I am already absolutely thrilled with the work that is being done on ensuring that the Sydney Basin's second city, Parramatta, has a world-class cultural institution. I think that the people of Sydney and New South Wales are going to be absolutely thrilled with the result at both Ultimo and Parramatta. That is how I see it and I am not going to be distracted from delivering what I think are going to be two excellent projects.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Not going to be distracted by annoying things like telling people how much it is going to cost or coming up with robust business cases that do not get reworked every six months to deal with the political changes? Are they the kinds of things that are not going to distract you, Minister?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Are you saying that we should not have taken the decision to keep Ultimo, David?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I am saying you should not have taken the initial disastrous decision and then tried to justify it with rubbery figure after rubbery figure like you are doing now.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I understand what you are saying.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You are headed down the wrong path.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** This was a decision that was announced by Premier Baird almost three years before Premier Berejiklian became the Premier and almost three years before I became the arts Minister. I am proud of the contribution that I have made since I became arts Minister, ensuring that we have two great museums that are going to serve the people of Sydney and New South Wales very well into the future.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, you were not going to have two museums. You were going to have one until 4 July. What caused the change of heart and now has made you so proud to have two museums?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I think I addressed that earlier. I said that my approach ever since I became Minister in 2017 was to ensure that there remained a cultural presence in the Ultimo Power Station and that in the Ultimo final business case a continuing presence for the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences would be assessed. I am delighted to say that it will not be just the fashion museum that I thought it would be, it is the museum staying at Ultimo.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Minister, if I understood from your opening, you said that the museum at Ultimo will retain an age of industrialisation exhibition place and focus. Does that mean you will guarantee that the Boulton and Watt will stay, the Catalina will stay, and the Locomotive No. 1 will stay? Will you give that guarantee?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** That is the intention.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Will you give that guarantee?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** Will the Boulton and Watt engine be fired up with live steam like it was before?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I am sorry, I will have to take that question on notice. I have not been briefed on that issue.

**The CHAIR:** Okay, thank you.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, back to the \$840 million that you referred to for the Castle Hill Parramatta site. Where does the \$100 million for the Riverside Theatre fit into that? Is that in addition to it or is that part of the—

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Absolutely not. It is not in addition to it. It is part of the land purchase price. That \$100 million has been paid to Parramatta council and they are in receipt of it.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** The \$100 million according to you has already been paid?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** It was \$140 million actually, I am sorry. I was using your figure but it is \$140 million.



**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** That is in addition to the \$840 million so far?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I am sorry?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** That is in addition to the \$840 million?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** No. I have said quite clearly that it is included in the \$840 million.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** You will not say what the figure will be for Ultimo. Mr Draper, I am not asking you to reveal it but do you have a figure for the cost of the Ultimo site?

**Ms DRAPER:** No, we do not have it. We do not know what the scope of works will be at the Ultimo site. That is something that has to be explored in the business case. I guess there is a range of possible outcomes at the Ultimo site from continuing to operate in its current form, and it has been operating since 1988 so that is a possibility, through to a major redevelopment. I think the business case will have to examine a number of options there. We do not have a cost, Mr Secord.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Okay, so you do not have a cost for the Ultimo site. You maintain it is \$840 million for the Parramatta and Castle Hill sites plus \$140 million for Riverside?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** No, no, no, Walt.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** There is all this confusion.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I have answered this twice already. There is no confusion and there should be no confusion given that I have already answered that twice.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** There is no confusion.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** The \$140 million price for the land is part of the \$840 net contribution the taxpayer is making to the Parramatta process. And it has already been paid to Parramatta council.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So what is the new completion date for—you referred to it in your opening statement as the "Powerhouse Parramatta", is that the new name of the project now?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** It is the working name, if I can put it that way.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Okay.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** A final decision on the name has not been taken but that is the working name. To your question on the completion date—

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I am just trying to get into sequence. I would like to know how much for Powerhouse Ultimo, Powerhouse Parramatta, Powerhouse Castle Hill and Riverside Theatre. The four pots of money that the taxpayers are paying for, what is the sum total?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** So not the completion date?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** And then I will ask about the completion date.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** You want to know the net cost of the land purchase price, building the museum at Parramatta and building the Castle Hill Museum Discovery Centre, is that your question?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I think everyone in the community wants to know what is going to be the cost of Powerhouse Ultimo, Powerhouse Parramatta, Powerhouse Castle Hill and Riverside Theatre. The taxpayers are footing the bill and they have a right to know. This has dragged on now for coming up to 10 years.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** No, it is not, but anyway—

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Has the completion date been pushed back?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** It is not even vaguely coming near it. Rose, you know that.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** It is coming up to five years.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** It is only five years since the announcement was made by Mike Baird.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** What is the completion date if it is not—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** So you do not want the answer on the dollars now?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I want many answers.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Can I just have one question at a time, Walt? I have had four months away. I am perfectly happy to sit here and answer questions, as many as you want, but please. It is best if you only ask one at a time.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Okay, the four pots of money. I want to know Powerhouse Ultimo, Powerhouse Parramatta, Powerhouse Castle Hill and Riverside Theatre.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** For the third time, I will give answers that I have already given and which are exactly the same as answers I have previously given today. The total cost of the land purchase price for Parramatta, for the museum at Parramatta and the Castle Hill discovery centre—the net cost to the taxpayer is \$840 million.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Thank you, you have answered one. Now, Powerhouse Ultimo?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Well, the total cost of the final business case for Ultimo is \$5 million.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** For the business case?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Yes.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** You must have an indication of what the cost will be.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** No, I do not.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** You do not?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You said the total cost for the business case?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** That is right—the cost of preparing the business case.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** The cost of preparing the business case is \$5 million.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** The final business case.

**The CHAIR:** This time.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** That is, at the moment, the work that is being done to look at the scope of the new project which may result, following the decision to retain the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But, Minister, for there to be a business case, to actually be costing something, there must be a proposal. That is right, is it not? There must be an actual proposal for there to be a business case.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Well, a business case will always look at options. What there are are options.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** What are the options that are being considered in that business case? This is not a State secret, I assume; this is about the future of the Ultimo site. What are the options?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I will deal with that at a high level, and if there are additional questions you can follow up on them and I will, as best as I can at this early stage since the announcement, try to answer them for you. Basically, what the final business case will need to look at are a couple of things. First of all, they will need to look at the current museum and see—because well-intentioned, positive suggestions have been made by people who are well and truly across these issues about how that museum can be improved in terms of circulation through the museum and in terms of what are perhaps a little unfairly described as the dead areas in the museum. Obviously, this is a museum that has been retrofitted into a heritage power station. It was a great design feat during that retrofit, but—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Award-winning.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Indeed, but if you were doing a museum on a greenfield site, you would do it differently to the museum we have got there. I think everyone concedes that. So, obviously, those sorts of issues in terms of the museum functioning better—which were, by the way, also the focus of the 2014 final business case—need to be looked at. Secondly, there will be issues in terms of the storage facility at Harwood and the role of the Museums Discovery Centre and what the relationship between those two projects should be. So they will need to focus on whether the storage facility in the Harwood building can achieve everything that an integrated storage facility at the Museums Discovery Centre at Castle Hill can achieve, adopting the same benchmarks in terms of collection storage and workplace safety and other considerations. Thirdly—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Minister—

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** No, please let me finish. Thirdly, they will need to consider the role of the museum in that precinct and the place-making capacities of that precinct, which are incredibly important in terms of driving future visitation to the Powerhouse at Ultimo. So, effectively, they will need to be the three broad issues that the final business case at Ultimo focuses on.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** So one is what, if any, remodelling—

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Yes.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** —of the Sulman Medal-winning building and the heritage buildings that form the main part of the Powerhouse.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Yes, so that it functions—as you know, in the 2014 final business case, which was adopted by the trustees and prepared by the staff—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** We should just never call any of them the final business case, I think, Minister. It is the 2014 business case.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** That final business case describes the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum as not fit for purpose. So obviously that whole issue has to be looked at and evaluated—re-evaluated, I should say—before a final decision is made in terms of this project going forward.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I will try to break this down, and then I want to come back to one aspect about that. Then there is the Harwood building.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Yes.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Is one of the options being considered—I am trying to decode what you have said—the closure and sale of the Harwood building, or the use of the Harwood building for a non-museum commercial purpose?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Well, there is no need to decode it. It is very simple. Obviously, the Harwood building was designed in the mid-eighties and built in the mid- to late eighties and has a couple of drawbacks, which are that, in particular, it is not as possible or it is not possible at all for the public to look at the collection in non-museum conditions in the same way they are at the Museums Discovery Centre. It has always been a strong objective of this project that we increase the access that the public have to the renowned collection of the trust. So that is an issue. I do not want to go right through the drawbacks of the Harwood as a storage facility, but there are issues that have to be considered. They will be worked through. I think it is important that we consider, as a place-making strategy, how the precinct can be a vibrant precinct that will increase patronage at the museum. So the final business case will look at the future of the Harwood building, as it must.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Minister, I asked what I thought was a fairly straightforward question. Is part of the business case looking at the potential yields from the sale or commercial utilisation of the Harwood building or the space where the Harwood building is? Is that part of the business case?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** That business case will certainly look at the precinct and how it can achieve more in terms of the creative industries and in terms of driving visitation to the Powerhouse Museum.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Alright. I think I have given you an opportunity to address that directly. I am going to assume from that, unless you tell me otherwise—

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Look, David—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** —that the sale and activation through sale of the Harwood site is part of the business case.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** There is no plan to sell the Harwood building, if that is where you are going. There is no plan to sell the Harwood building. But, obviously, in terms of making sure that we get the best result for the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo, we have got to look at all the options. A final business case has to do that. It has been looked at before and actually advocated by the trust and the trust's staff in the 2014 business case.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Will the options that are going into the business case all have been approved by the trust? Will they have been signed off by the trust? If not, what will be the role of the trust and the public in giving feedback on the future of the Powerhouse site? Surely we have learned that that is important.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I will just take some advice on that. The project committee is co-chaired by the president of the board of trustees, Barney Glover. So there is consultation and involvement with the trust in the preparation of the final business case.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** We will probably explore that later with the trustees.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, I take you back to the 4 July announcement. That was your first public appearance after being reinstated as the Minister?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Correct.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** When did you become the Minister? When were you sworn in?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** At four o'clock on 3 July.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** When was the decision to retain the Ultimo site made?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** 4.01.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** No, it is serious. I would like to hear the answer. You were sworn in at 4.00 p.m. on 3 July.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Look, obviously—

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** How long had it been in the works?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** —the announcement, the decision to make the announcement on Saturday 4 July was made prior to me being sworn back in as the Minister on 3 July.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Was the intention to have the Treasurer and the Premier there because you were not the Minister and the Premier was acting, was that the intention? Then she was subbed out and you were subbed in?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** To be perfectly honest, I cannot really answer that question.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** You get signed in at 4.00 p.m. and it is like, "By the way, you are turning up tomorrow with the Treasurer at the Powerhouse Ultimo to make this announcement."

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Pretty much.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** And you were just completely like: Wow, that has come out of the blue.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Well, it was a good start, a good reheating.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** That is what we are meant to believe: Wow,—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I think most people thought it was good reheating.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** —that is amazing for my first day back on the job.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** The truth is sometimes stranger than fiction, as they say.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** We are meant to believe that, that there was no pre-planning or involvement—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** That is not what he said.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** —from you that has gone into that? We cannot ask you about that at all, you were not involved in that?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I can honestly say that I was not involved in any discussions about reopening Ultimo, but I was absolutely thrilled to be told about them when I was sworn back in. It had been my—as I have explained to the Committee earlier in the morning—long-held objective to retain a museum of applied arts and sciences presence at Ultimo and I was delighted that that was the outcome, and I really was not interested, frankly, in what had preceded that prior to me being sworn back in. It was the outcome that matters and I could not be happier, and I am totally focused on making sure that once again Ultimo is a world-class museum.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Hear! Hear!

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** I am taking from what you have suggested that you were not out of the ministry for that long. Prior to you being stood down you had been privately advocating for the—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** He did not get stood down.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Apologies. What language would I—that you stood aside?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I actually voluntarily resigned—

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Prior to your voluntary resignation—

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Well, yes, okay.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Prior to your voluntary resignation you had been privately advocating for the outcome that was announced on 4 July. You voluntarily resigned. In that relatively short period that decision is made, you are not consulted, you are not told. You are reinstated to the ministry and then told that less than 24 hours later you will be standing up next to the Treasurer and making that announcement.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** That is what he says.

**The CHAIR:** Rose, there is a Santa Claus.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Just accept it, it was good.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** It is great news, it is fantastic.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** When were the trustees advised of the new position?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I would have to take that question on notice.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Ms Foy, you were involved in creative infrastructure in the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

**Ms FOY:** Yes.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** When was the board advised of the new position?

**Ms FOY:** I am not a member of the board, nor did I have communication with the board.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Mr Draper, were you involved in that decision? Do you have any knowledge of that?

**Mr DRAPER:** In the decision or the communication?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** The communication to the board?

**Mr DRAPER:** No, I did not have any communication.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** What about we ask Professor Glover when he turns up.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** I would like to ask Ms Foy about the decision because obviously we share the Minister's absolute delight that the facility will be retained at Ultimo, but he has indicated that he was not involved in that decision. Can you enlighten us at all as to who was involved in that decision and what led to this change of policy that was announced on 4 July?

**Ms FOY:** I am afraid I have probably about the same response as the Minister, which is these decisions are taken by government. They do not necessarily involve a range of people, so I became aware of it around the day before.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** The day before, on the Friday?

**Ms FOY:** On the Friday.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** The same day as the Minister?

**Ms FOY:** Yes.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** What caused it was a citizen revolt. That is what caused it, not any action of government. A citizen revolt caused this, did it not, Minister? There was no assessment, there was no report, it was just like, the people of New South Wales think it stinks to knock over the Powerhouse and that is what caused it.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** No, I do not think it is that simple.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Tell me what else? You do not have any other explanation.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Can I have a minute? I need to check one thing with a member of my staff. It is not as easy with social distancing.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I understand.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I do not think I can really help you beyond that, sorry. I just literally was not party to any of the discussions prior to 3 July.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** There was no fresh business case, there was no further report, there was no detailed memorandum. It was a political decision taken because there was a citizen's revolt about the demolition of the Powerhouse. I am glad of the decision, but that is the answer, is it not?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Look, I cannot say that that was—I suggest if you really want the answer then you will have to raise it with some of my Cabinet colleagues who were involved in it. I cannot give you the answer and I cannot consult—

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Did you ask when you were told of the announcement? The phone rings, it is 4.05 p.m. "You are standing up tomorrow with the Treasurer, this is the announcement that is being made." Did you say, "Why has this announcement—

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** When you are the Arts Minister and you are getting a great decision like that out of the Government you never look a gift horse in the mouth, you just accept it, you take it as a win and you move on and—

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** I am not suggesting that you should have challenged it, but perhaps you might have inquired.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I mean really, I am sure you have got better questions to ask.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, now that you have got your wish—

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Yes, Chair?

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** I just want to ask—apologies, Chair. I just wanted to ask one more specific question, but it can wait.

**The CHAIR:** I turn the Committee's mind to the destruction of heritage property at Parramatta.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Right, okay.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, is it still the Government's intention to destroy those heritage properties, St George's Terrace and Willow Grove? Your setpiece answer.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** The Powerhouse Parramatta project is underpinned by extensive architectural, heritage, geotechnical, engineering and flood risk studies. The Government understands the importance of local heritage to the community and the international design competition for Powerhouse Parramatta focused on developing concept designs to get the best outcome for the people of New South Wales. All finalist design teams in the Powerhouse Parramatta international design competition were asked to consider heritage and cultural significance within their submissions,—

**The CHAIR:** Minister, we have heard this answer before.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** —including local heritage buildings.

**The CHAIR:** We have heard this answer before.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Potential design themes to explore outlined in the stage two brief included the history of the site's development over time, including Willow Grove and the St George's Terraces. Design teams were also asked to consider the City of Parramatta Council's aspiration to create a pedestrianised civic link from Parramatta train station to the Parramatta River. The submissions received made clear that it was not possible to deliver on the design ambitions of the brief and council's aspirations for the civic link, while also retaining Willow Grove and St George's Terrace. While the retention of heritage was considered carefully during the judging process, the jury was unanimous, including Kim Crestani, the City of Parramatta Council's architect, a staff member of council. The jury was unanimous in its decision on the final chosen concept.

On 1 July 2019 the City of Parramatta Council wrote to Create NSW saying there was no need to prioritise any single objective, such as the delivery of civic link or retention of Willow Grove as to do so may unduly constrain the delivery of a world-class museum. Council also expressed support for the planned jury process and, as I have just pointed out, had a member of its staff, its city architect, on that jury. The winning design reflects and will engage with the multiple histories of the site including its Indigenous histories. The environmental impact statement seeks approval to demolish two local heritage items as required. As part of the environmental impact statement, Infrastructure NSW commissioned three independent and separate reports to assess the European and Aboriginal cultural heritage within the site of Powerhouse Parramatta and the surrounding areas.

The three independent reports include an Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment report done by Curio Projects, draft archaeological research design also done by Curio Projects and a statement of heritage impact done by Advisian. The cultural impact of demolishing the local heritage items will be mitigated through the

implementation of heritage interpretation measures and on balance is outweighed by the significant positive cultural impacts associated with the delivery of a world leading cultural institution that will make its own unique and important contribution to the cultural heritage of Parramatta, particularly through a major focus on highlighting First Nations culture, art, science and technology.

Overall the environmental impact statement identifies that the cumulative impact of heritage lost is minimal. The environmental impact statement recommends a detailed heritage interpretation plan be developed for the site with consideration of the City of Parramatta Council's draft heritage interpretation guidelines 2017. The Powerhouse Parramatta is uniquely placed to undertake programmatic interpretation and engage audiences with the multiple pre- and post-contact histories of the site. Heritage interpretation will continue during the operation of Powerhouse Parramatta through the ongoing commissioning of new works, cultural programs and community consultation.

**The CHAIR:** I am almost sorry I asked that question, Minister.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I am sorry you asked it.

**The CHAIR:** I am sorry I asked it, because we have heard that answer before. Is this now going to be subject to another political decision, since the CFMEU still has a green ban on those two historical properties? No, do not read out another statement.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Government is aware that the New South Wales branch of the CFMEU has placed a green ban on the demolition of the Willow Grove and St Georges Terrace buildings in Parramatta.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, what has changed?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** The New South Wales Government will consider all submissions received during the public exhibition of its EIS, which closed on 21 July 2020. A response to submissions report will be prepared to respond to all matters raised including concerns about heritage loss. The Government understands the importance of local heritage to the community, and the international design competition for Powerhouse Parramatta focused on developing concept designs to deliver the best outcome for the people of New South Wales.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But, Minister, it is not just the CFMEU that is calling for the retention of Willow Grove and St Georges Terrace. The Heritage Council NSW, in their submission to the planning process, required the EIS to outline the process leading to the selection of the site and the siting of the new development in the context of the heritage items on the site including any designs that could facilitate the retention of Willow Grove and St Georges Terrace.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** And that is what has happened.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Are you going to—

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** And that is exactly what has happened.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Have you provided designs that will allow the retention of Willow Grove and St Georges Terrace, as the Heritage Council asked?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** One of the shortlisted designs did that and the jury felt that it was a suboptimal outcome.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Minister, this is a requirement for the planning process, not the jury selection. This is a requirement for the planning process. The Heritage Council has said that the planning process should consider any designs that could facilitate the retention of Willow Grove and St Georges Terrace. Why is that not part of the planning process?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Thank you, I will take that on notice.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** They also said this—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Chair, can I ask a question?

**The CHAIR:** Are you sure?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Can I ask one more on this? They also required the proponent to investigate the cumulative impact of the further loss of heritage within the Parramatta area from the point of view of the local community. You have not done that either. Why has not been done?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I will take that on notice and get an answer for you.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Minister, I just wanted to go to part B of the terms of reference, which is the broader one talking about the Government's management of all museums and cultural projects in New South Wales. I want to raise the issue of COVID and its impact on arts and culture in this State and any ongoing plans the Government has to deal with it and address it, because obviously this sector has been hit probably more than any other.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Mr Franklin, was your question just about State cultural institutions or about something else?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, it was predominantly about the impact of COVID on the arts and cultural sector in New South Wales, obviously with reference to the major institutions particularly.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Obviously, we acknowledge that there has been a profound impact across the State's cultural institutions and, arguably, an even more profound impact on the independent arts sector. We have been working very closely with the State's cultural institutions to provide support and minimise the impacts. Museums, galleries and libraries have been able to reopen from 1 June 2020, subject to public health guidelines. Theatres, concert halls and other live performance venues have been able to open from 1 July 2020, observing COVID-safe plans and physical distancing.

Create NSW has established a working party, Project Awake, to inform the sector on reopening. Project Awake has been working closely with cultural institutions and NSW Health to deliver reopening information to the rest of the arts and culture sector. I am pleased that most of our cultural institutions are now open to the public and are following strict COVID-19 protocols to ensure the safety of staff and visitors. That is a very good thing as well. I will not go into detail of all of the individual cultural institutions, although if there are any particular institutions that are of interest to you, I have information and I am able to supply that to the Committee today, if necessary, or obviously questions can be asked on notice. In terms of the independent arts sector, the NSW Government has announced a \$50 million rescue and restart package for New South Wales arts and cultural organisations to ensure the sector continues to make an important contribution. It will ensure the survival of some of the most significant arts and cultural organisations.

The package will be delivered in two stages, \$25 million now for organisations to temporarily close and to ensure that they avoid financial crisis and then \$25 million in the coming months to enable organisations to restart operations after the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding is available to New South Wales not-for-profit arts and cultural organisations that are assessed as being in financial distress across the State on a case-by-case basis. That package is in addition to the \$6.34 million interim package, which was announced on 24 April. A number of expenditures have been made as part of that. I can go into some detail about that, if you want it. The last thing I would say is that Creative Kids was expanded to include digital programs keeping kids creative during COVID-19, and that has been fantastic. We have also provided an extra \$1 million to content providers to support their expansion of digital programs for kids during the COVID-19 period.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I have just one final question. When do you envisage the first tranche of the \$25 million for successful projects will be announced?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Basically, it is a detailed process, which involves working out exactly when the money is required to ensure avoiding a catastrophe for them, but not before they need it.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** On a case-by-case basis.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** It is effectively a forensic accounting process, rather than a grants process, if you know what I mean?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Got it, yes.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Basically, the companies will be getting it as needed. Obviously, the horizon for independent organisations is worrying but most of them are fine certainly till the end of September. It becomes more difficult when you start looking at 30 December. We will be progressively making decisions about what the need is, but it is pretty much an objective process, not a subjective process, based on an accounting exercise. We are not saying, "They deserve it more than"—whoever needs it should be encouraged to get in the Create NSW system, supply Create all of the information they have and their concerns. Create then does that forensic accounting exercise, assisted by some external experts, and then it is looked at by Treasury to confirm eligibility and then it comes to the Minister to sign it off. It is as simple as that.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Minister, I want to ask if you had completion dates for either one of the two projects?



**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Yes, we did seem to overlook that in our enthusiasm to get on with exploring various aspects of the process, didn't we? The expected completion date that we are working to at the moment for Parramatta is late to 2024. Two big unknowns in those processes will affect that. First of all, the State significant development application [SSDA] process and how long that takes and, secondly, how long the procurement process takes to get the construction. To the extent to which you can say anything is normal these days—

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Ten years!

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** If they go as we would like them to go, then Powerhouse Parramatta will be open by the end of 2024.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Is there any date that you would like to have the new facility at Ultimo—whatever that is—up and running?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** As soon as possible. Obviously, that cannot be assessed until we see what the recommendations of the final business case are and until that goes through the standard Infrastructure NSW assurance processes, and then after a decision is made by the Expenditure Review Committee.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** That could be some way off.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Correct.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** There has been some discussion about the construction costs of Parramatta and some non-discussion of costs in relation to Ultimo. I want to ask about operational costs and what provisions have been made in relation to that because now, obviously, the intention is to operate two museums and not one. That is obviously a more significant undertaking for the Government going forward. What is the intention for funding the operational costs of the two museums?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** You make a very valid point and obviously that is a focus of the final business case, as well—to look at the operational funds that will be needed to ensure that the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences [MAAS] can operate across four sites. I am not sure that there would be a lot that the deputy secretary could add now on that issue, but I invite her to make some comments, if she would like.

**Ms FOY:** We have provision in the business case for Parramatta and Castle Hill for recurrent operational expenditure. That is being finalised as part of our business case activities. Obviously, Ultimo is an operating museum at the moment, so we have a baseline cost of what it takes. The business case will need to take into consideration what Ultimo will look like in the future, the options around that and then the budget demand on it. Obviously, we will do all we can to operate to respect the Government's fiscal considerations and operate effectively and efficiently.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Has the Government given you any footprint or blueprint in relation to those considerations? Has it told you—

**Ms FOY:** The considerations are part of the master plan. If I can say about Ultimo, as well, we also think about the master-planning of the site as an input into the business case—so, how does that work? As the Minister said earlier, it is in a very important precinct. It is part of Ultimo and Harris Street—we have the light rail sitting behind it, we have Darling Harbour on the other side, we have a tech precinct in the central area and a major transport hub with Central Station buses and light rail. How do all of those things work together to support visitation to the Powerhouse at Ultimo?

The Minister indicated earlier that parts of the Harwood site are problematic for collections and storage, which is why Castle Hill is an incredibly important part of the overall program. When those inputs are put together in the master-planning, that then goes into the business case to assess what the costs are, both from the capital point of view and a recurrent point of view—understanding we already have a baseline because we have a museum there—both in the forward estimates process and also into the future.

I note that the Ultimo Powerhouse continues to operate at the moment. With COVID there are some constraints inside the museum and I am sure Ms Havilah can talk about that this afternoon. Providing for the digitisation of the collection is also part of the overall program budget to improve access to it. That is a cost within the program budget and also managing the constraints of the site. Sorry, that was a very long-winded answer but the inputs are part of the master-planning, which takes into consideration a precinct that will be part of the business case and assured through the Infrastructure NSW [INSW] process.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Are you doing a master plan at the same time as you are doing the business case? Are they happening concurrently?

**Ms FOY:** You have a look at the site—it is not for the whole precinct, the whole area, it is for the Powerhouse site. They become inputs into the options as part of the business planning process.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Minister, there was a period when Ultimo was going to be closed. What has happened to the exhibitions? There was a period when there was going to be no exhibitions, so what has the Government or the people working at the Museum—what are the plans in place for the exhibitions that were not going to occur? What is happening at the Museum during the period when it was originally going to be closed and there would be no exhibitions?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Shouldn't we ask Ms Havilah that?

**Ms FOY:** I do not understand the question.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I do not quite understand it, either.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** There has been no planning for new exhibitions—no curatorial work done—at Powerhouse Ultimo because, up until 4 July, it was closing. So has there—

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** That is not quite right.

**Ms FOY:** That is not the case.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** It was originally closing and then it was remaining open for a period. The question is simply: What are the plans for the Powerhouse between now and whenever the business case/master plan are finalised?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I will give an answer and then invite the deputy secretary to give any additional information she has. Bookable tours of the heritage core continue until the end of 2020. *Linear*, an exhibition that explores the significance of line and lineage within Indigenous narratives and practices, has been extended until the end of 2020. *Maton: Australia's Guitar*, which you may have seen some media coverage of over the past few days, opened last week on 25 July and is scheduled to go till 11 October 2020. That is a retrospective of Australia's leading guitar manufacturer.

I am delighted to see that they have a music focused exhibition, because they have a great collection of musical instruments. If honourable members have visited the Museums Discovery Centre at Castle Hill they would have seen that. That is one of the things that the Museums Discovery Centre can do—you can go and see things like that in non-museum conditions. It also has—and I will try my best with the pronunciation here—*Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh and Hesam Rahmanian: I Prefer Talking to Doctors About Something Else*, which opened in March and is due to go through till 1 September 2020. It is an installation across themes of grief, the body and healing.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Thank you Minister for the very good indication.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** They are some of the exhibitions that are open and are planning to go for sometime yet and that has always been the case. I imagine now that we have taken the decision to keep the museum open further work will be done on that.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Can you give the Committee any assurances about the future of the Wiggles exhibition which, based on my personal experience, is one of the most popular at the Powerhouse museum?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I am sure if it is very popular it will be staying home for sometime to come.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Save the big red car.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Parents will hold you to that, Minister.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, will you be clear as to the future of Harwood buildings?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I have been very clear which is that it is a matter that is being looked at in the Ultimo final business case.

**The CHAIR:** At this stage you do not know whether they will be retained, demolished or repurposed?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** No decision has been taken about that but a variety of options will be looked at, including the option which was flagged in April 2018 when the Premier and I announced that one of the options being looked at for the Ultimo site was the possibility of a 1,500-seat theatre.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** There is not much time left but one of the primary and continuing concerns about the construction of the museum at Parramatta is flooding. I think you have just been handed a

report from Molino Stewart who are the leading consultants in flood plain risk management and planning. They have particular expertise on flood planning and flood risk issues in the Parramatta central business district and Parramatta River catchment. They are the company that has prepared most of the major flood policies and plans for Parramatta council. These are the experts.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Yes.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** In light of the data that came from the 9 February floods, their report states that the museum site is likely to experience overland flood depths of up to 0.5 metres as frequently as once a year. To put that in context, a flood height at 30 centimetres is considered enough to sweep people away. The major flood experts say once a year it could be inundated up to half a metre and what do you say to that?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Given that I have not had time to read your document I think the only appropriate thing in the circumstances is to take that part of your question on notice. I will say that we have been through this issue many, many times. The museum is being built above the one-in-100 year flood level which has been the guiding principle that Parramatta council has always used in terms of the building of any building in the Parramatta CBD.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Minister please turn to page 28 of that report where the primary conclusion states that that is a woefully inadequate assessment for this site. It states: "The site itself is at risk of flooding from floods more frequent than the 20 year average recurrent interval and flooding as frequent as the one year average recurrent interval overland flows in Phillip Street and Dirrabarri Lane." They say that the analysis under the one-in-100 years is a dangerous basis to proceed.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I do not want in any way to intervene in what I am sure is a good quality company and the work they have done.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** They are the experts.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I think the only fair thing for me to do in the circumstances is to take the question on notice.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Will you also take on notice one further question? These flood consultants also make it clear, because of the rapidity—

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** David—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I ask you take one further question on notice.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** You made it very clear that you have limited time left. If you have got further questions why do you not put them on notice?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** No, this is one I want to put to you directly. These flood consultants say that there is as little as 45 minutes' notice of a major flood event in Parramatta and that the only safe way to ensure that the public in the museum can be protected is if they shelter in place. Their conclusions say unambiguously that there are no plans—

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** Is this a question?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** There are no safe places to shelter in place in this museum.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** David apparently wants to use the rest of his time by making a political statement rather than to actually ask questions.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** And that it is dangerous to proceed. I cannot understand how you are proposing such a dangerous project.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** Is this a question?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I do not think it is, Trevor.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Minister, will you respond to that public safety conclusion in this report?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Yes, I would be very happy to respond on notice.

**The CHAIR:** It has been said in the media—and I do not know how accurate it is—that up to \$45 million has been spent on various consultants and others since this project started. Obviously there will be more spent—whether it is \$45 million or more.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Another \$5 million on the business—

**The CHAIR:** Another \$5 million.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** That estimate is wrong. I will give you the figures in just a second.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** That is from papers tabled in the Legislative Council.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I am sorry—

**The Hon. Walt SECORD:** Are the papers from Treasury wrong?

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** Let him answer. I have come back in here and people have lost their—

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Since mid 2017 approximately \$19.6 million has been spent on consultants— infrastructure NSW, Create NSW and the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Trust—for the development of Powerhouse Parramatta. This includes costs associated with the purchase of the site, the development of the Powerhouse Parramatta Business Case, running the international design competition and conducting the collection, digitalisation and relocation, developing the design, navigating the statutory planning and conducting a substantial program of community consultation. Given the complexity of this project, the risks and community concerns are expressed, it has been important to obtain strategic advice on different options. As with all complex infrastructure projects consultants are engaged to provide the specialist advice needed to define and progress the project. This includes architectural design, engineering, acoustics, cost estimation, urban and statutory planning, economics and communications. The procurement of these consultants was consistent with government procurement processes—\$19.6 million.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But Minister you have only given us the figures since 2017. It may not be a decade, as Walt suggests, but this was first announced in February 2015.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** It is going to be a decade.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Can we have the full list from February 2015 onwards?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I am happy to take the question on notice.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** How much of that money since 2015 is now wasted because specifications of the policy changed on 4 July? How much of all of that work and millions dollars spent is now completely redundant?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** None, of it.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** Tram sheds.

**The CHAIR:** That is what they are. The Harwood buildings, if we rename them, might not get demolished.

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** Because it all assists in helping us refine the options as we go forward.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** What is the status of the 95 casual employees? Have all of their jobs been saved at the Ultimo site?

**The Hon. DON HARWIN:** I will have to ask the Deputy Secretary to either respond to that or take it on notice.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Deputy Secretary, what has happened to the 95 casual staff?

**Ms FOY:** My understanding is they continue to be engaged in work but I am happy to get back to you with the detail on that.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Minister it is good news that the Powerhouse is staying at Ultimo—you should get a fresh Ministerial portfolio once every six months.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Yes, that is right. Who knows what will happen in 24-hours as a consequence?

**The CHAIR:** You should come and go a bit more often and that way you will get what you want. I note you have taken a number of questions on notice. The Committee has resolved that answers to questions taken on notice be returned within 21 days. The Secretariat will be in contact with you in relation to the questions you have taken on notice.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**(Short adjournment)**



**KATE FOY**, Deputy Secretary, Community Engagement, Department of Premier and Cabinet, on previous affirmation

**PROFESSOR BARNEY GLOVER**, President, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, sworn and examined

**LISA HAVILAH**, Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, affirmed and examined

**The CHAIR:** Would any of you like to make a short opening statement?

**Professor GLOVER:** Yes, I would like to make an opening statement, if I may.

**The CHAIR:** Please do.

**Professor GLOVER:** Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee today. As president of the board of trustees of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences I will respond to your questions and where these relate to operational matters, obviously I will seek the advice of the Chief Executive, Lisa Havilah or the deputy secretary, Kate Foy. In my role as president I have been working closely with the trust, the chief executive and Government to establish the first New South Wales State significant on-scale cultural institution in western Sydney, which is going by the name at the moment of the Powerhouse Parramatta.

This visionary investment into our institution is a transformative cultural project that redefines who has direct access to world-class museums and where. It cannot be underestimated the generational impact that the establishment of Powerhouse Parramatta will have on the communities of greater Sydney and New South Wales. Powerhouse Parramatta will be our flagship museum and will be the most important science and technology museum in the Southern Hemisphere.

On 4 July 2020 the New South Wales Government announced that Powerhouse Ultimo will be retained. The major investment that has been made through this announcement is consistent with the trust's position that have indicated on many occasions—one museum, four sites. I look forward to working closely with the Government, community and stakeholders across New South Wales to ensure that we deliver together an incredible outcome for Powerhouse Parramatta, Powerhouse Ultimo, the Museum Discovery Centre at Castle Hill as well as the Sydney Observatory.

The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences will carry forward its 140-year legacy through its renewal to become an institution that reflects and engages communities and young people with science, innovation, design and technology in new ways and with greater impact. Our museum will stand proudly alongside all of the great museums across the world and will stand in service to our communities of Sydney and New South Wales as well as becoming a national and international destination.

I am honoured to be entrusted with the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences incredible encyclopaedic collection of over 500,000 objects. The creation of Powerhouse Parramatta and the renewal of Powerhouse Ultimo will provide unprecedented new levels of access to our collection, to exhibitions, education and outreach programs and support us to document, present and amplify the incredible innovation and creativity of the people of Sydney and New South Wales for generations to come. I and the trustees of the museum are deeply grateful to the New South Wales Government for their commitment and investment into our institution.

The trust is actively engaged in the delivery of the renewal program. I co-chair with Infrastructure NSW the project steering committee and other members of the trust participate in project governance through membership of project control groups. I acknowledge the dedication and the commitment of our museum staff and volunteers, who continue to deliver extraordinary outcomes and make a significant contribution to our museum.

Over the last few years we have continued to develop exhibitions and programs that have resulted in ongoing increases to visitation and engagement. I recognise the dedicated museum staff for their professionalism and ongoing achievements. I acknowledge the trustees for their ongoing commitment and of course our chief executive, Lisa Havilah. Under her leadership we are well on the way to delivering two world-class museums that will be relevant and engaged with the diverse communities of New South Wales and forever embedded into the contemporary identity of our great city and State. Lisa Havilah, the chief executive, will now address the Committee.

**Ms HAVILAH:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Committee, for the opportunity to address you today. I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners, the Gadigal people, and thank them, elders past and present, for allowing us to be here. I acknowledge the President of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Barney Glover, AO, and thank him for his leadership.

It is very rare in a lifetime that a Government makes a philosophical investment decision as bold and as transformative as is the investment into the renewal of the Powerhouse Museum. The last time this happened in Australia was the creation of the Sydney Opera House in 1971. While both infrastructure projects signify cultural and generational change, the establishment of Powerhouse Parramatta goes directly to the heart of long-held cultural hierarchies of Sydney to rethink how we define ourselves as a city of sandstone, waterfronts and seafood to a contemporary identity that is culturally diverse, fine grain and dynamic.

The original intention of the Powerhouse when it was established 140 years ago was to be a museum of the people and to connect community with industry and innovation. I recognise the honour that has been bestowed upon our institution to reflect, recognise and hold the stories of ingenuity and achievement of the people of New South Wales. Powerhouse Parramatta will be the flagship museum of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. At 30,000 square metres with 18,000 square metres of exhibition and public spaces, it will be the largest museum in New South Wales and the leading science and technology museum in the Southern Hemisphere.

From our home in Parramatta we will tell the great stories of technology and innovation from our first Indigenous sciences to local stories including Samuel Marsden's contribution to the Australian wool industry and the Nota Fang Racing car developed at 30 Smith Street, Parramatta. These stories will be embedded within the great Australian traditions of research and invention—from Howard Florey's development of Penicillin in 1939 to Graeme Clark's invention of the cochlear implant in 1972.

Powerhouse Parramatta will be a museum that looks to the future by presenting leading edge science and technology as it is created, including innovations in robotics, data visualisation and artificial intelligence. In a world first Powerhouse Parramatta will incorporate accommodation for regional New South Wales students to immerse themselves in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics [STEM] learning and connect with international leaders in the fields of science and technology. These experiences will provide each one of them with the opportunity to develop new ambitions creating pathways for future generations.

Powerhouse Ultimo will be Australia's leading museum of design and innovation. Its home in the Ultimo Power Station will provide the context to tell the stories of the age of industrialisation and its ongoing impacts which continue to shape our world. The iconic Powerhouse objects, the Boulton and Watt Engine, Locomotive No.1, and the Catalina flying boat and the ideas they represent, will frame periods of extraordinary innovation and creativity that influenced design, architecture, fashion and visual communication.

The Powerhouse Museum holds the stories of our great designers: from Florence Broadhurst, whose work has influenced Akira Isogawa and Catherine Martin, to Jorn Utzon's original architectural models that inspire today's architects and designers. I have dedicated my professional life to ensuring that the diverse communities of Greater Sydney and New South Wales have direct access to culture: from Liverpool to Campbelltown and Redfern and now from Parramatta to Castle Hill and Ultimo. I have embedded collaboration, cultural relevance, access and entrepreneurship into my practice. I have seen firsthand the impact that connecting communities with their histories can bring to creating engaged and cohesive communities.

I am determined through this great institution to make our histories relevant, to tell great stories, to connect communities with our extraordinary encyclopedic collection and to continue to document our great innovations. I am honoured to be able to bring my experience to my role as the Chief Executive of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences to collaborate with the incredible museum team which steps up every day, the trust and the Government to contribute to the renewal of our institution for the benefit of the communities that we serve. Thank you.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Professor Glover, when were you informed by the Government that it planned to retain the Ultimo site?

**Professor GLOVER:** I received a phone call from the Premier's office the day before the announcement was made.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Did you have any indication that the Government was moving in that direction?

**Professor GLOVER:** I was not aware that the Government was considering the announcement that they made. We were doing a business planning process for Ultimo, of course, so we had been involved at the project steering committee level with a range of discussions about options for the future and, of course, retaining a museum presence on that site has always been a priority for the trust. So, those conversations had gone on but I think the scope and scale was something that I was not aware of until the day before.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Thank you, Professor Glover. Ms Havilah, in your opening statement you described the project as "bold, transformative" and you compared it to 1971 and the Sydney Opera House. What will be the cost of retaining the Ultimo site? The arts Minister said \$840 million for Powerhouse Parramatta—

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** No, that is not what he said.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** He said \$840 million net for Parramatta and Discovery.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So \$840 million net cost for Powerhouse Parramatta and the Castle Hill Museums Discovery Centre.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** That is more accurate.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Some \$140 million for Riverside and associated arts—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** No, Walt, he said that was part of the \$840 million.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** It is part of the \$840 million.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Oh, he said it was part of the \$840 million? It was a bit confusing.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, it was not. It was absolutely clear.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** You are the shadow Treasurer!

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So \$840 million for Powerhouse Parramatta—

**The CHAIR:** Committee members should address their comments through the Chair and the Hon. Walt Secord should address his questions to the witnesses.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** This is very confusing.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Only to one person in the room.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** For you.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I think it is very confusing for the community and it will be very troubling for the taxpayers. Okay, so we can agree on \$840 million net for Powerhouse Parramatta, the Castle Hill Museums Discovery Centre and Riverside Theatre. Ms Havilah, what is the projected price tag to retain the Ultimo site?

**Ms HAVILAH:** That is subject to a business case that is currently being prepared.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** We understand from the Minister that that business case is \$5 million. In the hearing this morning the Minister said that \$46 million plus \$5 million had been spent on consultants.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** The Minister did not say that.

**Ms HAVILAH:** No, that is not correct.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** What did he say?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** He said \$19 million.

**Ms HAVILAH:** Nineteen.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Since some date in 2017.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** In 2017—they took it on notice. How much has been spent on consultants to date?

**Ms HAVILAH:** Since mid-2017 approximately \$19.6 million has been spent on consultants by Infrastructure NSW, Create NSW and the Powerhouse for the development of Powerhouse Parramatta. This includes costs associated with the purchase of the site, the development of the Powerhouse Parramatta business case, running the international design competition, conducting the—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ms Havilah, I do not mean to interrupt but we had those exact words earlier. It is the same briefing note.

**The CHAIR:** Ms Havilah, we have heard this before. I do not mean to be rude.

**Ms FOY:** Those costs are overall program costs of which MAAS has some. The Minister's answer this morning obviously stands and we have no further information.



**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ms Foy, it is useful having you here in both sessions to cut those off.

**Ms FOY:** Thank you, Mr Shoebridge.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Ms Havilah, when were you informed that the Government had decided to retain the Ultimo site?

**Ms HAVILAH:** I was informed by Government the day before the announcement. I was very excited to get that news and it was very warmly welcomed by the museum.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Were you frustrated in any way, given that this ongoing project was announced five years ago, I think, with an indication in 2017 when Minister Harwin took over that he wanted to retain some kind of cultural presence on the site and now, in 2020, we have yet a new iteration of that? Presumably you and your staff have put quite a lot of work in over all those years towards one policy outcome. Was it frustrating for you to then have one day's notice of a new policy outcome?

**Ms HAVILAH:** No. We were absolutely thrilled with the announcement and the outcome. The museum and I and the trust work very closely with Government on the development of the business case and we are looking forward to working through what the future of the museum will be at Ultimo?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ms Havilah, how can you say you work closely with the Government on this when you were blindsided by the announcement on 4 July? The first you heard about it was on 3 July. You were blindsided, were you not? You were not working closely. You were blindsided.

**Ms HAVILAH:** No. I work closely with Create NSW and our delivery partner Infrastructure NSW every day.

**The CHAIR:** But this morning the Minister said even he was blindsided.

**Ms HAVILAH:** It is a decision by Government. It is the Government's decision and my position is to get the best outcome for the museum. I think this is a great decision and we warmly welcome it.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But you have a joint project team, of which you, Professor Glover, are the Chair. It never went to the joint project team, did it?

**Professor GLOVER:** I imagine all members of the project steering committee were informed at the same time I was, which was the day before.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** It did not go to the project steering committee, did it, Professor Glover?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** He has just answered the question.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** No, he did not. He gave an oblique answer. Did it or did it not go to the project steering committee?

**Professor GLOVER:** My apologies for the oblique answer. It was not meant to be oblique. I simply assumed I was one member of a committee that was informed on that day.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Did it go to the project steering committee?

**Professor GLOVER:** There was not a meeting of the project steering committee at which that proposal was presented prior to the announcement by Government.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** It did not go to the project steering committee, did it?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** He has just answered the question.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** Really! This is—

**Professor GLOVER:** I have answered your question, Mr Shoebridge.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** So how can you pretend there is a collaborative project when it did not even go to the project steering committee?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Point of order: Mr Chair, I understand robust, strong and strident questioning of the Minister who deals with that sort of thing every day but for witnesses, such as the ones before the Committee, I ask that Mr Shoebridge asks his questions more quietly and respectfully.

**The CHAIR:** That is not a point of order. I think Mr Glover does know how to deal with it. He has given evidence at parliamentary committee hearings a number of times.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I know that but I do believe that Mr Shoebridge was hectoring the witness.

**The CHAIR:** I do not think Mr Shoebridge even got started hectoring.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** To the point of order: I reject the suggestion of hectoring. When a witness gives an oblique answer, Committee members are entitled to press the witness to try to obtain a clear answer on the record. Oblique answers will inevitably produce follow-up questions.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Getting a clear answer on the record is fine. Being rude is not.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I was not being rude. I reject that.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** With respect, I think you were.

**The CHAIR:** Order! Mr Glover, I ask that you try to answer the question directly to avoid the need for follow-up questions and any potential for hectoring.

**Professor GLOVER:** I did answer the question directly.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ms Havilah, it was never presented to the joint steering committee of which your president is chair. It was not presented to you. It was not presented to the board. How can you pretend it is a collaborative project? Given that unarguable history, how can you pretend that?

**Ms HAVILAH:** I do not have to pretend because I work closely with Government every day, whether it is Create NSW or Infrastructure NSW. I am part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet so I do collaborate every day, as does the museum team. The decision that was made was a decision of Government which I was informed of and I strongly welcome.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You were informed of it once it was made. You were not consulted about it. You were not given any advance warning. You were not given any input into it, were you?

**Ms HAVILAH:** I was part of the development of the business case which led to this decision, which had a number of options. I also support the direction of the trust, which was always to have one museum over four sites.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But your own submission says that the CBD site will be located at the Ultimo creative industry precinct or at the land titles building on Macquarie Street. You had no idea where it was going. Is that right?

**Ms HAVILAH:** It is a decision of Government.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Was this an outcome that you were pressing for privately? Was it something that you had been using your position as CEO of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences to advocate for? Is that why perhaps you were not surprised—because you had been pushing for it?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** For the record, Ms Havilah never said she was not surprised. I do not think you can assume that.

**Professor GLOVER:** Could I perhaps make a comment, too?

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** I think she can answer for herself. I do not need you helping me, Mr Shoebridge, honestly.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I am trying to help her.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** That is unusual.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Ms FOY:** May I just offer a comment in terms of the steering committee? Steering committees are there to implement decisions of Government. We have the responsibility to manage the scope, the cost and the timing of projects. That is jointly done with the chairmanship of Professor Glover, along with Simon Draper. We are tasked with implementing those decisions. Certainly the Minister said this morning—and I think Ms Havilah and Professor Glover have said it—that the retention of a creative industries precinct at Ultimo has been the Minister's intent since he assumed his role as arts Minister. We have, as part of our business case development, involved the retention of a museum presence. I think the focus was fashion and design. This is a decision for Government. The role now of the steering committee—of which I am a member, as well—will be to implement that decision of Government.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Ms Havilah, were you surprised by the announcement?

**Ms HAVILAH:** I did not know the decision was coming. So, yes, I was surprised, but I was surprised in a way that was incredibly positive and I warmly welcomed it. I am very thankful for the increased investment

into the renewal of our institution and I look forward to working with Government and being part of the consultation process in the development of the business case, which will ultimately determine how the museum operates in Ultimo.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Had the option of retaining a Powerhouse presence at Ultimo—the announcement that was made on 4 July—been the subject of conversations or advocacy on your part prior to the announcement?

**Ms HAVILAH:** As the Minister said this morning, it was always the intention that there was a cultural presence retained on the site. The form that took was part of the business case development process, and the decision that was made in terms of retaining the museum at Ultimo was a flow-on from that process.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** You have mentioned a couple of times that this is a natural, to be expected outcome of the business case development process. We have been told that the business case is not finalised and will not be finalised until the end of the year. So, something has happened at some point prior to 4 July—prior to the finalisation of the business case—that has led Minister Harwin and the Treasurer to stand up and make this announcement. Have you been given any indication as to what that event was or why this public announcement was made at that point? The business case is in development. You are involved in these ongoing conversations. You are advocating to keep a presence at the Ultimo site. Suddenly, out of nowhere, you are receiving less than 24 hours notice that the next day quite significant policy change is going to be announced.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** A positive policy change.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** A commitment to keep the Powerhouse at Ultimo. Did you ask why that was occurring and what has led to this announcement happening?

**Ms HAVILAH:** No, I did not ask that question.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Nobody asked.

**Ms HAVILAH:** I warmly received that information. I welcome the investment that Government is going to make in Ultimo. I am looking forward to working with them on the business case and on the consultation of the business case, in terms of working through what the Powerhouse will be in Ultimo.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But, Ms Havilah, did you not say you thought this decision came out of the development of the business case for the creative precinct? Was that not your evidence earlier?

**Ms HAVILAH:** There were a number of options that were being developed. It was always the intention, as the Minister said this morning, that a cultural presence was retained at Ultimo.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Are you saying that one of the options that was being explored in that business case was the precise option that is now being stated by the Government—the retention of the Powerhouse site? Are you saying that was one of the considerations for that business case? I do not understand. What are you saying?

**Ms HAVILAH:** I am saying that the business case was in development and that the Government made a decision. And now, we will develop a new business case for the future of Ultimo and we will work closely with the Government on that.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But 4 July was a change of stance, was it not? The 4 July position was a change in stance. It was quite a significant change, was it not, Ms Havilah?

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** It is not appropriate to ask this witness those matters. You had the Minister.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Well, of course it is, if she is working on the business case. Of course it is.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** She is a public servant, Mr Shoebridge, and it is unfair to be putting that style of question to this witness.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** This witness is saying that the prior business case was one of the things that led to the change. I am trying to explore if this prior business case contained the 4 July option as one of the options.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** Well, you are entitled to ask that—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Which is what I am asking.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** That is not what you were asking.

**The CHAIR:** You should address your comments through the Chair, by motion.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** Well, I will, Chair. It is unfair to a public servant witness to be putting matters that essentially ask her to reflect upon a policy decision of Government. That is what is being done.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** To be clear, I am not asking this witness to reflect upon the decision. I am trying to clarify what, if anything, this witness is trying to say about whether or not the pre-existing business case workings included the 4 July option. That is what I have not got an answer on from you, Ms Havilah.

**Ms FOY:** Mr Shoebridge, may I say the business case is being developed by my agency and Ms Havilah is providing quite significant input as the chief executive. The business case is in development. It is considering a range of options. It certainly has not been presented to Government yet. It will take into consideration the decisions made on 4 July around the specifics of Ultimo and the museum at Ultimo, but it is my job to complete the business case and to present that to Government in due course.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ms Havilah volunteered in a previous answer that it was her position—correct me if I am wrong, Ms Havilah—that the development of that business case that Ms Foy just spoke about was one of the reasons that, throughout the development of that, led to the 4 July decision.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** That is not what she said.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** If that is not your evidence, please clarify what your evidence is about whether or not the 4 July option has at all been considered in the development of the business case before the announcement.

**Ms HAVILAH:** No.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** What is your position, Ms Havilah?

**Ms HAVILAH:** The business case, which was in development, has not been submitted to Government, as Ms Foy said. So it was not considered; no options have been presented to Government. It was a separate decision.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Ms Foy, the 4 July announcement—when did work on the business case begin?

**Ms FOY:** The business case has been in development for some time at the moment. I am happy to refer to my staff and see if I can get the original date that it started, or take that on notice.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** But work on the business case to retain the Ultimo site began after 4 July.

**Ms FOY:** It has always been a part of the business case to retain a museum presence at Ultimo. The thinking has been creative industries and a museum presence. Fashion and design was one of the options inside—you know, the stuff that is inside the museum. The Government has made a decision to continue with—may I go back to some of the principles about the museum? We have got two major bits where there are exhibitions. There is the heritage core—which is largely where those large items are, like the Boulton and Watt and the Catalina, et cetera—and there is the touring hall, which is in the Wran building.

As part of the business case we looked at what museum presence is retained in what part of that footprint. The Government has made a decision. So in fact a museum presence as part of a business case pretty much remains unchanged. There is a museum presence. The Ultimo, the part of the heritage core that is being used and the Catalina and those very large objects et cetera, that is the part that remains. The other part of the Government's decision was \$195 million as part of a yield or a revenue, if you like, from the Ultimo site would go towards Parramatta. That is now no longer required. So that \$195 million is not required for a broader redevelopment of Ultimo, if you like, so the museum remains. We are looking at how does that all work together now.

So the business case is not radically new and we retain the information that is already there. It is not significantly new; it just becomes more specific in terms of what is the museum presence at Ultimo. We do work with Ms Havilah, we work with Infrastructure NSW and a range of other stakeholders in the development of the business case. We have expert input into it and we work closely with the trust through the president and through the governance, so the steering committee. It has not yet been presented to government. As the Minister indicated this morning it is anticipated to be completed this year for submission to government.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Ms Havilah, there was some discussion this morning about an August 2014 report that said that \$500 million would be needed to—

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** That was not the evidence this morning. The \$500 million is a figure that you quoted and the Minister corrected you on that.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** From *The Daily Telegraph*.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Somewhere between \$350 million and \$500 million.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Somewhere between \$300 million and \$500 million—okay.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** I think \$350 million was the number.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Okay. There you go.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I think it was \$300 million and \$500 million—adjusted to inflation it became \$350 million.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** Yes, that is correct.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Thank you. Let us agree on \$350 million to bring the Powerhouse Ultimo site up to scratch because "it was compromised" and it would not be able to continue with a major overhaul. How has that been factored into the costs of the Ultimo site?

**Ms HAVILAH:** So our business case, we are working closely with Create Infrastructure on the development of a business case which will identify the costs required to renew Ultimo and that will be a decision of government.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Do you stand by the business case that was completed and put forward in 2014 that put a figure on that very question of what it would cost to bring that site up to scratch, which was placed at somewhere between \$300 million and \$500 million?

**Ms HAVILAH:** That was a business case that was offered before my time so I look forward to working with Create Infrastructure on the development of a new business case that takes into consideration the operation of the museum going forward and all of the thoughts that the Minister presented this morning in terms of how it can respond to its landscape and the changing nature of Ultimo as well.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ms Foy told us earlier that there is a master plan being created for the Ultimo site. Are you aware of that, Ms Havilah?

**Ms HAVILAH:** As part of the business case, yes.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** It was my understanding—Ms Foy can correct me if I am wrong—that the master plan would inform the business case and was separate to the business case. Is that right, Ms Foy?

**Ms FOY:** It is part of the whole business case approach and obviously it informs. So when you have the master plan it talks about potential uses on the site and that then informs elements like cost planning et cetera and the options as part of the business case. So it is a business case activity, as I understand it. It is a business case activity that informs the economics and the costings as part of the business plan overall.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** It strikes me as sensible to work out what you want to do with a site before you go down to a detailed costing. I assume the master plan is intended to inform you as to what you want to do with the site.

**Ms FOY:** I agree with you wholeheartedly. Yes, a master plan will help you understand what the options are inside that site.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** So, Ms Havilah, are you producing that master plan or is somebody else producing that master plan? Who is responsible?

**Ms HAVILAH:** Create Infrastructure—

**Ms FOY:** I am responsible and Create Infrastructure, which is part of my portfolio, is responsible for it. If there are details, I am very happy to take them on notice.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Alright. What role does Ms Havilah have in the development of something that is so critical to her institution as the master plan of the site?

**Ms FOY:** This is a very large, complex project. As Mr Draper indicated this morning he appears quite a lot around it. As part of our governance for the program you have a client. Ms Havilah is the client because they are operating a museum, so they bring their expertise about the design and operation of a museum—the collections and the storage et cetera—so that is their expertise. As the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Create we are responsible for the implementation of the Cultural Infrastructure Plan, which is my accountability. So I will run activities around the business case. I am the sponsor of the program so I work with all of the stakeholders around the overall program.

Create Infrastructure is responsible for the business case and the business case development in consultation and collaboration with all parts of government. Infrastructure NSW is responsible for the delivery of Parramatta. They are responsible for the planning process, so the site acquisition and environmental design [SAED] process, the State significant development and ultimately the procurement of a builder and the construction. Then that is handed to the client to operate. The client is involved very deeply both in all levels of governance as well as on the project team on a day to day basis.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ms Havilah, what public consultation and what stakeholder consultation are you going to do in order to inform your input into the master planning process? Are you going to talk to anybody or is it all going to private?

**Ms HAVILAH:** In the development of the business case for Ultimo of course we work right across the Powerhouse team. We work closely with the trust. We will also be undertaking a formal consultation process as part of the development of the business case with the community and others.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** What does that mean, "a formal consultation process" with the community? Are you going to be putting some options out there so the public can see?

**Ms HAVILAH:** As part of every business case there is a consultation process and so we will be undertaking a consultation process with Create Infrastructure as part of that.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ms Havilah, you said that you "embed collaboration" into all of your work. So what collaboration are you going to be doing with the public about the development of the master plan and the development of the business case?

**Ms FOY:** The business case, as I said, Mr Shoebridge, is a matter for Create NSW and we will be undertaking any obligations for consultation that are required through any planning process. But ultimately the business case is a matter to be submitted to government. Ms Havilah has been deeply involved in the consultation around the Parramatta project. I think she has personally been attending nearly every community consultation.

**Ms HAVILAH:** Yes, 60 hours of consultation.

**Ms FOY:** But at this stage the business case is a matter for us to develop options for consideration of government. Whatever we are required to do as part of any process to consult with the community will be undertaken but ultimately that is a decision for government and for us to comply with whatever the rules are that we have to comply with.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Any master plan for this site would be assisted by engagement with the community and engagement with a variety of very, very well informed key stakeholders. I have not heard any commitment from you, Ms Foy, or from you, Ms Havilah, to have a formal public consultation about the master plan and I find that unfortunate.

**Ms FOY:** Perhaps how we are understanding the master planning process may be different. The definition of that might be different between us but I am happy to come to you with more detail and, if possible, just get some detail on what that is. But it is largely to look at the functions and uses, and potential uses and options, of the main parts of that precinct, whether it is where the Harwood Building is, the heritage core, the Wran building, the forecourt or the car park and what the potential uses are in those, with the direction of government to retain the Powerhouse at Ultimo, to have a fashion and design museum presence there, and within any heritage constraints that may be determined.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Can I ask about some of the flagship exhibits? The Minister in his evidence this morning and indicated and provided a guarantee that the Locomotive No. 1, the Boulton and Watt and the Catalina would all be retained at Ultimo. But I understand, Ms Havilah, that you had indicated at least the Boulton and Watt would at least be moved to Parramatta. Is that your understanding of the Government's expectations? Could you give us any indication of what your understanding of the status of the location of those flagship exhibits is?

**Ms HAVILAH:** Yes. The Boulton and Watt, the Catalina and Locomotive No. 1 iconic powerhouse objects will be retained at Ultimo.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** If that is the case, and I think in your opening statement this morning you indicated that at the Parramatta site it was intended that flagship exhibitions would be held there, what is going to be in the Parramatta facility?

**Ms HAVILAH:** At Parramatta there will be a focus on science and technology. We have been focused on ensuring that Powerhouse Parramatta meets the needs of the presentation of the Powerhouse collection. I am

working with the Powerhouse team on the development of exhibitions for the museum when it opens in a number of years.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** If it is going to live up to the standard not just that you have described and the Minister has described but that we all hope will be this world-class, world-leading facility in Parramatta, in order to make that real, presumably significant investment is going to be needed to bring the exhibits, the exhibitions, and the content to that museum. If all of the existing big flagship assets of the Powerhouse are staying at Ultimo and Parramatta is to realise the vision that we have all been described and we all hope will be there, other than some positive references to science and technology, what is actually going to be there? And where is the funding to ensure that it is going to be as good as what that community has been promised?

**Ms HAVILAH:** The museum has over half a million objects.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** But all of the big—

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** Just let her finish. Just let her answer a question.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** As long as she does not list them.

**Ms HAVILAH:** The museum has over half a million objects and in Ultimo only 10 per cent of the collection has been able to be shown in the 32 years that the museum has operated there. I will be working closely with our incredible team of curators across science and technology that will develop a whole range of exhibitions. We will be including in Powerhouse Parramatta a 360 degree and massive screen space. We will be also commissioning a range of digital exhibitions that will focus on and provide opportunities for young people to engage with STEM and STEM education. All that work is under development and we look forward to revealing it as we get closer to the opening of the museum.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Has there been any additional funding provided or earmarked for the development of flagship exhibits at Parramatta?

**Ms HAVILAH:** As part of the Parramatta business case, the operational funding of the museum is currently being considered by the Government.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Earlier in the year there was much discussion and a call for papers revealed that the Government had plans and was engaging in dialogue with a number of regional councils and regional museums to share some of the collection. You said of 500,000 objects only 10 per cent of the collection was shown. Is it accurate to say that the representations from Goulburn Mulwaree Council for the steam engine, that is completely dead in the water?

**Ms HAVILAH:** We have a long history of collaborating with regional museums not only across New South Wales but across Australia. We loan objects regularly as part of our normal business as usual as a museum. We have a request from Goulburn Mulwaree Council and our collections team are currently considering that request. There has been no determination made at this stage.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So they still have hope of getting the steam engine? The representations deal directly with the steam engine. They have a long-term connection with the steam engine.

**Ms HAVILAH:** Our staff are going through that process. We need to check things like environment conditions, context and a whole range of different perspectives in terms of considering a loan. We are following that process and we do not have an outcome as yet.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** An outcome has not been made on the steam engine going to Goulburn.

**Ms HAVILAH:** Yes.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Sorry, is it still seriously on the table to relocate the Boulton and Watt?

**Ms HAVILAH:** No.

**Professor GLOVER:** We are talking about the beam engine

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** The beam engine, okay.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I was talking about the steam engine for Goulburn Mulwaree. You said in your earlier answer that the Locomotive No. 1 has gone down to Thirlmere?

**Ms HAVILAH:** Locomotive No. 1 will be retained in Ultimo.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Okay, that is fine. You have clarified that. The 4 July announcement, will that have any impact on the timetable? The Minister said he hoped to have the Powerhouse Parramatta opened in late 2024. Does the 4 July announcement have any impact on that?

**Ms HAVILAH:** No, it does not.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** What was the reaction and what happened on the Monday? On the Friday, some of the 95 staff—I think the casuals—were on the verge of being let go or were going to be let go. What has happened to those 95 staff?

**Ms HAVILAH:** We have retained all of our staff.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** All of them?

**Ms HAVILAH:** Yes, and we intend to retain them. Even through COVID, which I am incredibly proud of, we were able to retain all of our staff, including our casual staff. We successfully redeployed them into other areas of museum operations including working on the collection digitisation project.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Where are you up to on the digitisation project? Is it completed?

**Ms HAVILAH:** It is on track. We are 12 months into the project. It is a four-year project. It is an incredible project where we are assessing and photographing 384,000 objects from our collection, which will provide completely new levels of access for the community to the collections.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Particularly regional communities, right?

**Ms HAVILAH:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Hear, hear!

**Professor GLOVER:** In fact, if you go on the website you get a good sense, as it is upgraded on a regular basis, of the items that have been digitised and are up and available.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** You are actually rolling them out as it is happening?

**Professor GLOVER:** Yes, there are a couple of thousand at the moment that are available on the website.

**Ms HAVILAH:** Yes, is updated every week

**Professor GLOVER:** It is a very comprehensive program of identification of the items and the conservation aspects that have to be taken into consideration, and then of course the digitisation and uploading. There have been some great moments as the team uncovers new information about items in the collection.

**The CHAIR:** These are items you did not know you had?

**Professor GLOVER:** We knew we had them but we—

**The CHAIR:** You did not know where they were.

**Professor GLOVER:** Let me finish. We got extra information about them, Chair. Thank you. Walt, I think you wanted to ask a question?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Yes. Has the board met by Zoom or since the 4 July announcement?

**Professor GLOVER:** Yes, we met as soon as we could convene. I think it might have been the Tuesday after, by Zoom.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Without going into details, what were the decisions or the business papers. Were you required to make any decisions to facilitate the Government's announcement?

**Professor GLOVER:** No, it was essentially an opportunity for me to brief—and for Lisa, of course, as chief executive—to brief the trust in relation to the decision. As I said, I only heard the decision the Thursday before so there was not a lot of time to digest it. We gave a comprehensive briefing to the board and I think it is fair to say, as Lisa indicated earlier, we welcomed the Government's decision. I know I have said it on a number of occasions, both publicly and at the inquiry that preceded this Committee, that the trust has advocated for one museum, four sites. We have always advocated to retain a significant presence at Ultimo. The decision that the Government made reinforces the fact that full retention of Ultimo through the business planning process to come is a very welcome decision.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Mr Glover, that is not true though because your own submission says:



The Sydney CBD site will be located at the Ultimo Creative Industries Precinct or at the Land Titles Building on Macquarie Street East.

I am reading from the opening paragraph of your own submission.

**Professor GLOVER:** There is nothing inconsistent with what I just said.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You said you were always arguing for the retention of Ultimo, yet your own submission says that part of your planning was potentially having the only CBD site at the land titles building on Macquarie Street East.

**Professor GLOVER:** There is always the Sydney Observatory. There would always be a CBD site. As I said—one museum, four sites. We welcome the decision to fully retain Ultimo. The Government did suggest the potential for the land titles building and, quite appropriately, the museum and the trust considered that as an option. We are very pleased that Ultimo is being retained.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Professor Glover, when the board met on—was it Tuesday?

**Professor GLOVER:** I think it was a Tuesday.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Were there any legal requirements for the board to ratify or approve any of this change of direction?

**Professor GLOVER:** No, because—as, I think, both Ms Havilah and Ms Foy have indicated—we are in an ongoing business planning process, and had been for some time, about the future of Ultimo. That business planning process had yet to deliver an outcome to government. The Government, I think—my interpretation of their announcement was to give a very clear direction about where that business case should focus beyond 4 July. So we were not required to make a decision. The overwhelming view of the trust was we welcomed the decision. We welcome retention of Ultimo and we look forward to that business planning process giving us greater clarity about the investment that will be required for the refresh and the refurbishment of Ultimo.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Professor Glover, you have long been an advocate, publicly and privately, for greater investment in western Sydney and reinvigorating that part of Sydney—or perhaps not even reinvigorating, but invigorating that part of Sydney. As part of the ongoing community contestation about what happens with the Powerhouse Museum and its relocation, you have been a really strong advocate for why having the facility in Parramatta is such an important part of investment in western Sydney. As you said, you welcomed the decision for the full retention of the Powerhouse at Ultimo—including all, in a way, of the key flagship exhibits that will now not be coming to Parramatta. Are you concerned at all that the decision that the Government made on 4 July is going to make it more difficult to meet those important goals around the establishment of a significant site in western Sydney?

**Professor GLOVER:** No. It is a good question, though, Ms Jackson. Thank you for it. As Ms Havilah indicated, we have a very large collection. That is the first aspect.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** I just want to, on that—

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** No, let him finish. He is actually answering the question.

**Professor GLOVER:** I do want to answer the question directly, Ms Jackson. My view is that we have a very large collection. Yes, you are right—the Catalina Locomotive No. 1 and Boulton-Watt will remain in the heritage core at Ultimo. That is very clear and a very clear decision of government that they should not be considered for relocation or for being put on display in Parramatta. However, we have a very extensive collection now. Parramatta is being designed not simply to highlight the Very Large Objects, of which we have 39, I think, Very Large Objects. There is an opportunity for more of those to be on display in Parramatta. There are also wonderful opportunities for large-scale touring exhibitions to come. The Powerhouse does manage very large touring exhibitions on a regular basis, and business plans for those exhibitions. Over a long time frame, as Ms Havilah said, we are now beginning to think through those opening large-scale exhibitions that we will need for Parramatta and for Ultimo—commencing when Ultimo opens refreshed, but when the Powerhouse opens in late 2024, as the Minister has indicated.

Plus, there are new spaces created for the first time in Parramatta that the Powerhouse has not had access to. I do want to reemphasise the importance of the immersive space. This is an extraordinary space that is being designed within the museum there to create a twenty-first-century digital environment for the public to have access to a whole range of virtual environments and augmented environments. That is a wonderful part of a twenty-first-century museum. There are big educational spaces. There are very large touring spaces and there is an opportunity for the permanent collection to have items on permanent display there, as well as rotated through. The intention from the outset with this project from government—from right back in the original announcements

of government—was to see much more of the collection on display to the people of New South Wales and nationally.

This decision actually provides a hugely enhanced opportunity to do that, because we have the large spaces in Ultimo to be retained and we have these fabulous new spaces in Parramatta. So I think we can achieve what you are alluding to. I do not doubt it will be challenging to secure the world-class exhibitions that we are seeking, and I think we would also be very keen to see support from government for the acquisition of new large items in a twenty-first-century context. That is a conversation the trust would have with government over the course of the next few years. But I am still confident that we can display a great collection and great touring exhibitions in Parramatta.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Ms Havilah, have you been able to overcome the problems that were highlighted at a previous hearing, where it was revealed that there were no entrances, no elevators and no escalators into the Parramatta site? Have you been able to resolve that matter?

**Ms HAVILAH:** Yes, through the design development process. I am pleased to let you know that—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You can get into the building.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** There will be an entrance? Excellent.

**Professor GLOVER:** They were always there, Mr Secord.

**Ms HAVILAH:** There will actually be two entrances to Powerhouse Parramatta.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Where will those two entrances be?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You need two exits because of the flooding, so we should start there.

**Ms HAVILAH:** One of the great things about the location of the museum is that it will be integrated into the Civic Link, which will connect to Parramatta station and Parramatta Square. So if you are coming down the major Civic Link and cross Phillip Street, the main arrival area will be to the left-hand side in the western building. If you are coming from the river level, there will be a major set of stairs in the centre of the museum precinct. So you will be able to walk up the stairs to the museum public domain and enter into the building. If you need access assistance, there will also be a lift that will have 24-hour access.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** In late 2024, if the museum is finished at Parramatta, where will your offices be?

**Ms HAVILAH:** In Parramatta. That is our flagship and that is where we are planning to have the majority of our staff. We will also have staff at Castle Hill, of course, because that is where we will be consolidating our collection. So our collection and research staff will be based there.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Professor Glover, have there been any changes to the board in the past two months?

**Professor GLOVER:** Not in the past two months, no. We have vacancies on the board at the moment. I had been in discussion with the Premier's office when the Premier was the arts Minister and now with Minister Harwin in relation to those vacancies and appropriate names for the Government to consider.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** How many vacancies are there currently on MAAS?

**Professor GLOVER:** I am about to say two. Just to be accurate, yes, two. My position comes up at the end of this year, when I step down.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Are you planning to?

**Professor GLOVER:** Yes, my term is completed at the end of this year.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** And you plan to step down then?

**Professor GLOVER:** Yes.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ms Havilah, one of the critiques of the proposal for the Parramatta site is that it will have significantly less exhibition space that meets museum standards of climate control. The analysis that has been provided to my office is that the Parramatta facility will have just 5,200 square metres of that, whereas the current Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo has 21,800 square metres of museum-standard climate-controlled exhibition space. Why is there such a radical reduction in this important environment at Parramatta?

**Ms HAVILAH:** I am not sure where you got those figures from, but they are incorrect. There will actually be 18,000 square metres of exhibition and public space in Parramatta. The overall museum will be 30,000 square metres. All of the exhibition spaces will be climate controlled to international standard and the whole of the museum has actually been engineered to be able to present the Powerhouse collection.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** In terms of the 19,800 square metres that was in the initial plans for the Parramatta facility, is it your evidence that all of that—all of the public exhibition spaces—will be engineered to a standard that has them at the museum standard for climate-controlled exhibitions?

**Ms HAVILAH:** All of the exhibition spaces at Powerhouse Parramatta will be designed to international museum standard, including climate control. I am happy to take it on notice so I can give you those accurate detailed figures.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** And the comparison between the two, if you would, Ms Havilah.

**Ms HAVILAH:** Absolutely, yes.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Mr Chair, I note that it is two minutes past the time we were supposed to stop.

**The CHAIR:** We are making up the time that you wasted.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** With respect, Mr Chair, at the beginning of this we determined not to have a lot of time for Government questions. I think asking that question was an appropriate one.

**The CHAIR:** I correct myself; the Hon. Trevor Khan wasted time.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** I do my best.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much for coming. I do not think you took anything on notice.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** The last question was.

**The CHAIR:** The last question was. Thank you very much.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**(Luncheon adjournment)**

**MONICA BARONE**, Chief Executive Officer, City of Sydney, affirmed and examined

**CLOVER MOORE**, Lord Mayor of Sydney, City of Sydney, affirmed and examined

**JENNIFER CONCATO**, Executive Director, City Planning and Design, City of Parramatta Council, affirmed

**BRETT NEWMAN**, Chief Executive Officer, City of Parramatta Council, affirmed

**The CHAIR:** Would anyone care to make an opening statement, maybe starting with the Lord Mayor?

**Ms MOORE:** Yes, thank you, Mr Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Could you please limit it to a minute or two.

**Ms MOORE:** Thank you for the invitation to appear before you. The City of Sydney applauds the Government's decision to retain the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo and its intention to create a new sister museum in Parramatta, which will also hopefully respect that city's heritage and history. We have always supported meeting western Sydney's cultural needs, but not by pitting region against region. Western Sydney should have its own iconic cultural facilities, but not by destroying a distinctive and valued inner city cultural institution. On 6 April the council reaffirmed its strong opposition to plans to relocate the Powerhouse Museum. We also resolved to strongly advocate for continued cultural and creative uses of the Ultimo site if their relocation proceeded. I am pleased that the Government has now recognised that retaining the museum is the best cultural use.

The Powerhouse Museum has made an invaluable contribution to our cultural and intellectual life since its beginnings as the Technological, Industrial and Sanitary Museum of New South Wales in 1979. Its value is recognised in its formal name, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. The museum's significance to Sydney's cultural, social, scientific, industrial and economic history and heritage has been recognised. It makes an equally vital contribution to the Ultimo-Pyrmont-Chippendale creativity and innovation precinct. Keeping the Powerhouse Museum is an opportunity to rethink and renew it, keeping in mind the significance of its home in a former Powerhouse connected with early Sydney tramways. There is also now the opportunity to strengthen its contribution and for it to be more fully integrated into the planning of this important precinct. This was a key element of the 2020 vision for the Powerhouse released by the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences trustees in May 2014. I referred to this vision in my Lord Mayoral minute of March 2015, noting:

The Darling Harbour revitalisation will bring thousands of visitors and the Goods Line pedestrian link will link existing arts, education and cultural institutions. The Powerhouse will integrate with Darling Harbour through a new entrance onto the Goods Line. The area around the Powerhouse is a major centre for education, media and the creative and digital economies. Around 18,000 people are employed in digital and creative industries in the Haymarket, Pyrmont and Ultimo area, providing approximately 30 per cent of the digital and creative jobs in our city. The Powerhouse Museum provides a significant strategic opportunity to help secure new economic, tourism, cultural and educational opportunities as a result of the precinct's current transformation.

We have no fixed or final ideas on what form this renewal should take, but it should be based on a thorough understanding of how the museum could best contribute to the precinct, not only as a significant destination, but also culturally, socially and economically.

Maximising this strategic opportunity is critical, not least because the Powerhouse site is included within the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's review of planning controls for the Pyrmont peninsula. The City of Sydney is ready and very willing to work collaboratively with the New South Wales Government to maximise this strategic opportunity through the renewal of the museum as part of the wider precinct. That would enable a better understanding of the pedestrian connections between Pyrmont and the city and a proper destination for the Goods Line, which is a wonderful government initiative which is yet to reach its full potential. Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Anybody else?

**Mr NEWMAN:** Thank you, Chair. Perhaps just a couple of brief comments if you do not mind. Firstly, the City of Parramatta has for a long time been advocating for investment in arts and culture in the City of Parramatta and including the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum. There are a number of reasons for this, most importantly for many years western Sydney has suffered from an underinvestment in arts and culture. It represents approximately 10 per cent of the total population of Australia, but unfortunately only represents 1 per cent of total Federal funding in arts and culture, and approximately 5 per cent to 6 per cent of investment in arts and culture for the State budget. Secondly, the population in western Sydney, particularly in the Parramatta local government area, is expected to double over the next 15 to 20 years from approximately 270,000 now to over 460,000 in 15 years' time. Thirdly, the loss of jobs and economic income and benefits that derive from having strong cultural institutions in our area is a significant loss to the local community and the economy.

On 2 July 2020 the chamber of the City of Parramatta Council endorsed three things in relation to the relocation of the Powerhouse Museum. Firstly, it re-endorsed and affirmed its support for the relocation of the museum to Parramatta. Secondly, it endorsed our submission in response to the Environmental Impact Statement [EIS] on the Powerhouse Museum relocation, and included a number of comments. That submission itself again endorses the relocation but also provides feedback and opportunity for improvement on the design on a couple of key aspects, which hopefully we will get into later today. Thirdly, the council re-endorsed its support for retention of both Willow Grove and St George's terraces. Thank you, Chair.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** This morning we heard evidence from the Arts Minister about the Riverside Theatre proposal. It was \$140 million or \$100 million. Has the Government transferred the money to the City of Parramatta Council?

**Mr NEWMAN:** The City of Parramatta sold the current site on which the Powerhouse Museum is proposed to be relocated to the New South Wales Government about a year and a half ago, from memory. The purchase price was approximately \$140 million. All of those proceeds have now been received by the City of Parramatta.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So why are we hearing concerns expressed about delays involving the Riverside Theatre redevelopment?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I would need to understand what those concerns are.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Local councillors urge us to ask the Minister questions about what is happening with Riverside and the Minister said this morning that the money had been transferred to the Parramatta council.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** That is the same evidence you are getting now.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Yes. I am asking a question to find out, the ball is now in the City of Parramatta Council's court.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Are you waiting on any additional funding from the State Government in order to realise the vision laid out in relation to the Riverside Theatre? Or was the entire State Government funding contribution the \$140 million from the sale of the site, or was there additional funding from the State Government that the council was waiting on?

**Mr NEWMAN:** The current status of the proposal, which is in relation to the redevelopment of the Riverside Theatre, which is not part of the Powerhouse redevelopment, just to be clear for the members, is the State Government and the City of Parramatta continue to work on the business case, which if and when it is finalised would support two things: potentially enable the State Government to consider an investment in the redevelopment of Riverside. That business case is also a very useful—in fact, it is an essential—document to support any future consideration of the City of Parramatta to redevelop the Riverside Theatres.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** When you say "if and when it is finalised", it will be finalised because it is an essential document, the business case. When is it likely to be finalised?

**Mr NEWMAN:** From our perspective—I cannot speak for the State Government, obviously—we are hoping to finalise that business case at the end of this year and look to finalise the assessment. In any redevelopment, you always have different options that you might consider on what you might propose to develop on that site. That business case will include a number of options. We would hope to finalise it, I would hope, by the end of this year and that would then inform and enable us to put a proposal to council as to what it would like to do in relation to that redevelopment and then also enable the State Government to consider whether or not it would wish to provide a contribution to the development.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Again, just in relation to the Parramatta council's preferred options for that, it is the case, is it not, that the Parramatta council would like to see the redevelopment of that area and the contents of the business case describe a vision that would require additional State Government funding to be realised? That is the direction to Parramatta City Council would like that to go.

**Mr NEWMAN:** The City of Parramatta has yet to make a decision on any option for the Riverside—let us be clear on that. But of course the City of Parramatta would welcome any additional investment from the State Government in the redevelopment of the theatre for the same reasons I gave right at the commencement. We believe there is significant underinvestment in culture and infrastructure in Parramatta. A redevelopment of the Riverside would obviously go some way to support additional culturally investment, particularly in theatre and the arts. We are planning to proceed to complete that business case, provide a number of options, to enable the

council to then make a decision. As part of that, if the State Government wishes to make an additional contribution, that would be highly welcomed.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** You would wish that they would do that.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Of course, it would be fantastic.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Mr Newman, there were multiple reports at the time the sale was negotiated that Parramatta council had got a very good price for the land—in fact, one report says that a source close to the discussions told to your local paper that the council had been trying to extort money from the State for the purchase price. Do you recall those discussions at the time and those concerns about the price?

**Mr NEWMAN:** Mr Shoebridge, I was not at the City of Parramatta at the time of those negotiations, so I actually do not have an opinion on the value that the City of Parramatta obtained and whether or not that was good value for the city.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You had no role at all in any of those negotiations?

**Mr NEWMAN:** Not on behalf of the City of Parramatta, no.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Any role at all in the negotiations on the other side?

**Mr NEWMAN:** Some limited role.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Part of your role was negotiating for the State Government at the time, was it not?

**Mr NEWMAN:** At the time of that sale, my recollection is—again, for all committee members—at that time I was the Deputy Secretary of the Property and Advisory Group, which was a division of the Department of Finance, a department within the New South Wales Government. One of those roles was also as the CEO of Property NSW. Property NSW had some role in relation to that. My recollection—and it is over two years ago, from memory—is that Property NSW provided some preliminary advice to Create NSW, who I think from memory was the lead agency at the time. However, Property NSW did not act directly on behalf of Create NSW in relation to the negotiation of that price with the City of Parramatta. But what I would like to do is take that on notice and confirm that to the Committee.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Mr Newman, I appreciate you taking those timings and details on notice, but you have gone from one side of this deal to the other, have you not? You have gone from having a role for the State Government in setting and negotiating a price, which reports continue to say was a very high price for the property, and now you are on the other side acting for the council, who is in receipt of the money. Do you think there might be a potential of conflict of interest, you having flipped from one side to the other, whether or not you have any commercial-in-confidence information in your prior role?

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** I am going to take a point of order.

**The CHAIR:** What is the point of order?

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** The point of order is I have no idea—and frankly, apart from having a shot at the witness—and difficulty in understanding how this has anything to do with the terms of this inquiry. In terms of this witness, what is now being done is grossly unfair.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I will briefly say that the matter is that he has gone from one side of the record to the other.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** I know it is a slur that you are trying to pass.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** And then it is in the terms of reference.

**The CHAIR:** I think it is within the terms of reference, so the witness can decide to answer or not.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Thank you, Chair. The first thing is, as I said, my recollection is that Property NSW did not act on behalf of Create NSW. My recollection is it was negotiating the sale of that site.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Mr Newman, I am not going to press you. I know you have taken that question on notice and will provide more detail on that. I am not going to push.

**Mr NEWMAN:** No, that goes to answering your question about the conflict. As I said, my recollection is Property NSW did not act on behalf of Create NSW in relation to the negotiation of the price with the City of Parramatta. If my recollection is correct, then there would be no conflict. Secondly, my role was to provide some overall strategic advice, it was not in relation to the terms of that transaction, from memory. That transaction was

two years ago. That transaction, in terms of the transfer of the land and the payment of the proceeds, is now complete. I have been CEO of the City of Parramatta for about nine months, so in terms of timing there is no conflict because that transaction, being the negotiation of the price, is not still ongoing. If it were then I can see there may be an argument for it, but it is not. It is complete.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** The suggestion is—and I accept that you give some further details about your roles—I think many people would suggest that Parramatta council got paid well above market price for the property, because they kind of had the State Government over a barrel. Is that your recollection, that they really had the whip hand in the negotiations and they got paid above market price because this was something this Government wanted?

**Mr NEWMAN:** To be completely honest with you—and I am not avoiding question—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I hope so.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I have no recollection, but if that were correct there would clearly be no conflict.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** In your current role, no.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Exactly.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I get that and that is why I am asking you about this. The suggestion is that Parramatta got paid well over market price.

**Mr NEWMAN:** As I say, I cannot comment because I do not know. I do recall that I do not think it was a compulsory acquisition under the just terms legislation. The process that normally provides for two valuations and both parties being comfortable with the price I do not think occurred in this case. I think it was a genuine negotiation between the parties. If you have an open, free negotiation between the parties, it is up to the parties to agree the price or not. Other than that, I genuinely do not recall whether that was good value or not for either party.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** My final question to you is: Given there are those concerns that there may well have been a payment well above market price, what do you see as the likelihood of getting additional State funding for the Riverside development in addition to the \$140 million? Many people are saying you have already had a pretty big drink with the \$140 million for Riverside.

**Mr NEWMAN:** A couple of comments: Firstly, that transaction was in relation to the acquisition, on the part of State Government, and the sale, on the part of the City of Parramatta, of a piece of land—hopefully at market value. As I said, I do not recall. That is a very separate matter, in my mind, from any consideration of the State Government, or any other party for that matter, of whether or not it wishes to contribute and invest in cultural institutions in western Sydney. I genuinely hope that the New South Wales Government would take any good investment and any good business case for further and additional investment, particularly in the theatre and arts in western Sydney, on its merit and on its face, and separate that from any transaction in relation to an asset at market value. But, of course, that is a matter for the State Government.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Mr Newman, when the transaction involved the sale of the site, was there knowledge by Parramatta Council that there would be impact on Willow Grove and St George's Terrace when the transaction occurred?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I apologise, again, it is very difficult for me to say because I was not at Parramatta council at that time; however—

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Was your colleague?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I will refer to Ms Concato—she may be able to answer. Before I hand over to Ms Concato, I remind Committee members that Willow Grove and St George's Terrace were part of the site at the time of the sale.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So when the sale occurred Parramatta council was aware that it was part of the arrangements?

**Mr NEWMAN:** Yes.

**Ms CONCATO:** Yes, that is correct. During the negotiations I was not directly involved through that process on behalf of the City of Parramatta Council, but I understand that yes, there was a clear understanding that St George's Terrace and Willow Grove were involved, given that they are located on the subject site.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** By "were involved" are you saying, "were likely to be demolished in order to allow for the development to happen"?

**Ms CONCATO:** No, I did not say that. That is not what I meant by the word "involved", but rather that they are located on the current site and there was a clear understanding that the sale included the sale of those properties.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** But the Government was not buying them because they liked the heritage sites and wanted to maintain them and give them a fresh paint job; it was buying them to get a chunk of land to build a museum on. Was there no risk analysis done at council about the loss of these two beautiful, crucial heritage properties?

**Ms CONCATO:** Thank you for the question. As I stated, I was not directly involved in those early negotiations; however, I understand that there was some preliminary analysis and the commencement of a position of council that those items should be retained.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I understand that in your opening remarks, Mr Newman, you talked about the need to preserve Willow Grove and St George's Terrace. What has made them very important to preserve now?

**Mr NEWMAN:** The City of Parramatta's position on Willow Grove and St George's Terrace is that it would continue to advocate and it resolved to support the retention of those sites because of their heritage, including—again, Ms Concato will be able to give more details on the heritage—the age of the buildings. I think they are locally listed and they are of local heritage and cultural significance. Ms Concato may be able to add to that.

**Ms CONCATO:** Both items are locally heritage listed within the Parramatta local environmental plan and have been for some time. The question relating to the interest in retaining them now—there has always been interest in retaining them, that is why they are heritage listed. The council has been fairly consistent in relation to that matter.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** When the site was originally sold, were heritage concerns expressed about it at the time?

**Ms CONCATO:** My understanding is that yes, I believe so.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Can you tell us whatever protections council negotiated or whatever considerations council had at the time of the sale in order to protect their heritage? Because council would have been aware that a State significant development can override any local heritage protections or the like and this was always going to be a State significant development. Can you tell us what, if any, considerations and protections council negotiated at the time?

**Ms CONCATO:** My knowledge of that is quite limited, like I said, because I was not involved in those negotiations. Those negotiations took place by the previous CEO and chief financial officer.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I am happy for you to take that on notice and review the records, Ms Concato.

**Ms CONCATO:** I am happy to do that.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Are you able to provide any additional information, even along the lines of whether council requested or sought to secure additional protection for those heritage sites and that this was rebuffed by the Government as part of the negotiation process? Do you have any knowledge of whether the request was made by council and refused by Government or whether, in fact, no specific request was made? Is that information that you perhaps have?

**Ms CONCATO:** That is a similar question to the question asked before and I am happy to take that on notice.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Mr Newman, what is council's current position on the protection of those two properties?

**Mr NEWMAN:** Again, council resolved on 2 July this year—I am happy to read the resolution out for council, because that is the clearest position of council—that it note its prior resolutions to support the retention of Willow Grove and St Georges Terrace as part of the Powerhouse Museum design; reaffirm its support for the retention of Willow Grove and St George's Terrace; and advise the Department of Planning in writing accordingly, with the lodgement of our submission on terms consistent with our prior resolution of 9 December 2019—which was similarly to advocate for the retention of those sites, receive and note the draft minutes of the Heritage Advisory Committee extraordinary meeting on 18 June and advise the Department of Planning accordingly at the



time of lodgement of our submission. We have completed that, in that we advised the department at the time of the submission's lodgement.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** In terms of the current proposed museum and residential building at Parramatta, council does not support the current footprint of that building, which will require the demolition of those two heritage properties—is that the position?

**Mr NEWMAN:** Yes, essentially.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Could I ask, Ms Concato, for perhaps a little bit more on that topic and more broadly? I understand that the council's submission to the EIS provides some "feedback", I think Mr Newman called it, and "opportunities for improvement" in relation to the current proposal for Powerhouse Parramatta. Is it fair to say that the current proposal is not particularly good from the point of view of the Parramatta City Council and, in particular, lacks due regard for a number of the council's quite significant local plans—river strategies, Civic Link, that sort of thing?

**Ms CONCATO:** I would say that there are opportunities for the design to be improved, particularly in relation to concerns raised around the impact on heritage items, the impact on Civic Link and not quite realising the full aspirations of the council, concerns around flooding—the undercroft—and also some sustainability issues.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Yes. I am just looking at the recommendation now in relation to the submission—"lack of consideration of heritage, lack of integration of the scheme in the public domain, lack of adequate consideration of and design for flood impacts, failure to meet the objectives of the pedestrian spine, inappropriateness of the design of the undercroft and other matters, including the name of the museum". There seems to be quite a number of issues raised by the council in relation to the current proposal. I guess I am suggesting that your description of that as "opportunities for improvement" or "providing feedback" is a little bit of an understatement in relation to what the council has actually said about the current proposal from the Government.

**Ms CONCATO:** Slightly, I would say. I understand that you are referring to the submission that was attached to the council papers—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Which was endorsed by council.

**Ms CONCATO:** Yes, which was endorsed by council. Since then there has been a slightly amended version but, yes, the matters are very much the same. The concerns still stand around heritage, Civic Link, flooding and those other matters that we have both stated.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Lord Mayor, thank you for attendance. This morning the Committee heard that the State Government is developing a master plan for the Ultimo Powerhouse site which will include the future of the Harwood Building, the main museum building and how it links with the rest of the cultural ribbon that we have through the city there. Has council been approached at all by the State Government to have input into that master plan?

**Ms MOORE:** Informal conversations have occurred and we have made it known that we do applaud the decision to retain the Powerhouse museum in Ultimo and we are very willing to be involved in any future discussions and planning for that site.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** It seems plain and obvious that the city should be a partner in any master planning for that site. Do you agree?

**Ms MOORE:** We would want to have input. As I said, informal discussions have occurred and I am hopeful that that will be the case.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Can we consider this an open offer from the council?

**Ms MOORE:** Absolutely.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** To sit down—

**Ms MOORE:** To be involved, yes.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Because if you are looking at place making in the city I would have thought the council—

**Ms MOORE:** Yes, it is essential. It is the whole precinct. It is the goods line. It is the rest of that creative and innovation precinct. Monica, our chief executive officer, can perhaps speak on this too because she is involved in meetings about that precinct already.

**Ms BARONE:** I chair the alliance group. There is an informal group that refers to itself as an alliance of the key parties in that area—the two universities, TAFE, hospital—and now we hope the Powerhouse will join that group. The Greater Sydney Commission and people from Treasury also attend those meetings. The purpose of those meetings is to talk about the future of that whole collaboration and innovation district. We are delighted that the Powerhouse is going to remain because given the significant economic kind of drivers in that area, a Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences fits perfectly in there. We are thrilled with the decision and we look forward to working even more closely now with the State Government around integrating that particular museum. Keeping any museum and cultural facility is important but that one happens to actually represent the very things, and collect on the very things that occur across that precinct. It is the sort of precinct really that is the envy of the world and we are working together to see if we can take it to its next place.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** How often does this shadowy alliance meet?

**Ms MOORE:** It is not really a shadowy alliance.

**Ms BARONE:** I assure you there are minutes. It is not formal. It is a group of members who meet to talk and collaborate and work together. We are meeting this afternoon, in fact. We meet every four to six weeks. Inner West Council is also involved.

**Ms MOORE:** This is to have input into decisions that are made about this important precinct in the future.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I was being flippant. I think it is very sensible you meet together. Is there an invitation to both the State Government and the Powerhouse to come and be part of that alliance to help build that?

**Ms BARONE:** The State Government attends the meetings so, of course, we have got people attending from Treasury because of the tech precinct which is at one end. We have representatives from the hospital because there is the \$750 million investment going into the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital now which is also going to be really significant in terms of that area. The Greater Sydney Commission comes along to the meetings. We have invited the director of the Powerhouse to join us as well.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** The State Government spent quite a bit of money developing this concept of a cultural ribbon running through the city which included at one point running through the Powerhouse and down the strip and connecting all the way to the cultural institutions on the harbour side. Is a cultural ribbon still part of the plan?

**Ms BARONE:** If I could be as bold as to say actually that cultural ribbon was part of the City of Sydney's Sustainable Sydney 2030 plan. We are delighted that the Government has embraced it. When you are looking at city planning you are looking for the connectivity of like because what we know about economic planning and multipliers is that when things are grouped together they tend to do better. That is why if you have a strip of shops that sell furniture they do better than a whole bunch of shops in different places because you go to the furniture district and you buy furniture. Similarly a conglomeration of like types of services and facilities improves all of them. That is why in other cities you have collections of theatres together so you go to the theatre district. Because the City of Sydney has its cultural facilities a little spread out, the idea of a cultural ribbon was to find ways to connect them physically and sort of metaphorically. How do we find the things that connect them to tell the story of that suite of facilities so that it becomes more legible to a visitor or to the community? So yes, it is definitely on the drawing board.

**The CHAIR:** Lord Mayor, do you have a view on the conservation values and the necessity to conserve the existing buildings on the Ultimo site? I am not just talking about the main building but I am talking about the other storage buildings?

**Ms MOORE:** We have a great deal of interest in being involved in any decisions that are made about those sites. Certainly, the historic Powerhouse is vitally important. I know there have been discussions about uses in those other buildings but, yes, I think they are all important and we would like to be involved in that discussion.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** When you say it is vital to protect the main site, do you include in that the Sulman award-winning additions from the late 1980s?

**Ms MOORE:** That is my personal view, yes, the Lionel Glendenning building that was purpose built to celebrate the Powerhouse. I think the linkages from the nineteenth and twentieth century through to the twenty-first century are really vital. This group that Ms Barone meets with is really about the future of the precinct, its innovative and economic importance to Sydney and of course to link that up with the Powerhouse which is really quite symbolic of the past and to have the two together I think is really important. It is important for us in terms of our identity but it is really important too in terms of tourism and interest. As Ms Barone said, it is the envy of

the world really having such a precinct with universities and TAFE and the history and then the goods line access to the city, and linking that with Darling Harbour, it is really quite exciting. I felt so depressed every time I walked down the goods line access. I thought we were going to be losing this because really the goods line was about walking up to and being welcomed at the Powerhouse. It was so vital that that linkage could occur. It will be so important to us in the future in terms of tourism as well as the development of this really important economic innovative hub which is about our future.

**The CHAIR:** Is there a role on that site for further high-rise accommodation?

**Ms MOORE:** I do not, personally, no.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Join the club.

**Ms BARONE:** All of us are looking very closely at that precinct, including government in terms of its economic return. It is really constrained in terms of the amount of floor space that is left to expand things like the bio-medical green tech and other things that are really emerging in that precinct. So I think many of us would think it would be not a good idea to take away any remaining development opportunities from the economic role that that land can play. Once it is residential it is sterilised and it cannot really easily be brought back into the fold. I would suggest—these are not formally adopted positions of council or this is not a formally constituted group, it is just a group of people getting together to talk about and think about the future of the area in order to then advise our councils and bodies. But given the constraint in terms of the amount of developable floor space in the area, we would hate to see it become residential when it could contribute to the economic opportunities there.

**Ms MOORE:** What I said before too is we do not have fixed ideas about the renewal on the site but we have a lot of residential in that area, as you would know.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** It might give a narrow short-term financial return to the State Government but would come at significant cost to the long-term vitality of that district.

**Ms MOORE:** Significant cost when you think about the really exciting opportunities for the future in terms of economic potential of this area.

**Ms BARONE:** And the economic return that we need to preserve.

**Ms MOORE:** Yes, and the economic return. We are very excited about what has happened, we are very keen to be involved and we have done a lot of work. We want to contribute that and we hope that it will be very exciting for the future of the city and the city's economy. Our CBD contributes 24 per cent to the State's economy, 7 per cent of the national economy and this precinct will be a very important part of that economic future.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Just one final thing: I recall reading in your submission that at the time the submission was drafted there had been about 100,000 square metres of cultural space lost in the city.

**Ms MOORE:** Yes. That is right.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Could you give us some indication of where and how and why?

**Ms MOORE:** I think that is the loss of industrial buildings with potential to be cultural spaces.

**Ms BARONE:** Because the City of Sydney does a comprehensive floor space census every five years we do have very good data about usage, what floor space is used for, and the number of jobs that it all generates. So we have different categories, of course—you know, financial, retail, tourism and creative—and we have a certain definition of creative services. They include things like architecture, artists, filmmakers, and people in that sort of innovation-creative sector. Because many of those find it very difficult to pay high rents, as we have less and less of those cheaper buildings then we start to lose them.

Of course we are very concerned about losing them because in terms of the sort of creative industries' ecosystem and the innovation kind of spectrum, cities that have great innovation have people all along that spectrum from artists to creative producers, universities and people who then innovate and create products of the future. In order to maintain the innovation part of your economy you need to have these other people in the spectrum. If you lose them because they cannot afford to be there, then you lose the health of that ecosystem.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** So it is not just sites that are currently used or were previously used for creative spaces. It is that whole environment where the creative industries can operate. That is where the loss has been.

**Ms MOORE:** And where creators want to be in clusters.

**Ms BARONE:** It is the real floor space though that they used to occupy. When we went out five years later, there were fewer of them and those floor spaces were being used for other things or had been converted to residential. That is what happened.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Can I just add one last question for the city of Parramatta. Since the announcement on 4 July that the Government would be keeping the Powerhouse Ultimo site and that all of the large flagship exhibits currently on display there that were to be moved to Parramatta are not going to be moved—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, not all, but three.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Sorry—three of the most significant on display at Ultimo would not be moving to Parramatta and none of the permanent exhibitions at Ultimo would be moving, has the city of Parramatta had any conversations with the State Government expressing any concerns about what will be exhibited in the Parramatta site and ensuring that it is in fact prioritised as the flagship museum?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I am not sure about specific conversations with specific members of the State Government but I can confirm that following that announcement we advocated, and I think we issued a press release advocating and requesting, that the State Government confirm that the Powerhouse Museum in Parramatta would continue to be a full museum offering a full suite of exhibitions and that that would not change. Essentially the Government's commitment to the product being offered and all of the exhibition offerings in that site would not change. I understand, from memory, that there was an announcement by the Treasurer, I think, a day or so following that essentially confirming that commitment. I am not aware of any further detailed conversations or material provided by the State Government as yet as to what the details of that product mix would be.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Is the city architect from Parramatta involved in the Parramatta Powerhouse project?

**Ms CONCATO:** Yes, she is. She is a member of the design integrity panel at the moment.

**The CHAIR:** We will close at that juncture. Thanks very much for coming. I note that you, Mr Newman, took something on notice. In these circumstances, witnesses are advised that they can take questions on notice, which you have done. You have 21 days. The secretariat will be in contact with you in relation to those questions in terms of a response. Thank you very much for coming.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**ALEX MARSDEN**, National Director, Australian Museum and Galleries Association, before the Committee via teleconference, affirmed and examined

**JUDITH COOMBES**, President, Australian Museum and Galleries Association (NSW Division), affirmed and examined

**TROY WRIGHT**, Assistant General Secretary, Public Service Association of New South Wales, affirmed and examined

**The CHAIR:** I welcome our witnesses. Ms Marsden is participating via telephone from Canberra.

**Ms MARSDEN:** Thank you very much. Could I ask you to perhaps lean a bit closer to the microphone?

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Would someone like to make an opening statement?

**Ms MARSDEN:** Yes, thank you. I will make the opening statement. First of all, we welcome the opportunity to appear before this Committee. I would like to acknowledge the Gadigal people upon whose land you are meeting and the Ngunnawal or Ngambri people from where I am speaking in Canberra. I would remind the Committee of our previous submissions and a number of public statements made by the Australian Museums and Galleries Association—AMaGA for short. Who is AMaGA? We are the national organisation and peak advocacy body for museums and galleries throughout Australia. We are independent of government. We are a membership body and membership-led. We have expertise, we look at standards, we have ethics and we provide professional development and a lot of advocacy. So, that is what we do. This is how we operate.

We have branches in every State and Territory. The New South Wales branch is one of our largest and oldest and, of course, Judith Coombes is here as President of that branch. We also have national networks of expertise. My background—I have been five years as the National Director. I am an historian, museums and cultural advisor, design thinker, policy developer. I have expertise in built heritage, objects and collections. My colleague Judith Coombes, who you do see today, has worked in the museum profession in New South Wales for over 30 years and has experience in delivering regional programs and support and was a senior manager at the Powerhouse for 16 years.

We welcome the State Government's recent announcement that it would keep the Powerhouse at the Ultimo site as well as the new site at Parramatta. We would note that this has been a recommendation made by many over the years, including AMaGA. We note, also, new grants programs announced and delivered by the State Government since the first legislative committee inquiry some years ago, so that is excellent too. What we want to see is substantial, appropriate investment in the Powerhouse Ultimo site. We want to see the development of a formal New South Wales museum and gallery strategy that is coherent and funded and especially at this time of compounding disasters. We want to see better government leadership, transparency and accountability. And our final statement is: We are ready to provide ongoing advice and consultation. Thank you.

**Mr WRIGHT:** The Public Service Association of NSW [PSA] appears before the Committee today as a legitimate and somewhat unique stakeholder in the museums and cultural institutions of New South Wales as the voice and representative of the hundreds of staff employed within them. Our members across the New South Wales public sector frequently receive unfair treatment and labelling by politicians and media alike, being referred to as "backroom bureaucrats" who are a burden on the taxpayer. This is, particularly, not the case for the employees in this sector who are the curators, historians, guides, researchers, librarians and technicians responsible for not only preserving and recording the history and culture of our State but to educate the next generation about it.

At the time of its establishment this inquiry was rightly primarily concerned with the proposed relocation of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences from its current Ultimo location to its proposed new building at Parramatta. Whilst the relocation was kyboshed by the Government only 3½ weeks ago, the chaos that this proposal had engendered continues. The Powerhouse, as it is colloquially known, has been for months managing a threat on two fronts: the impacts of the COVID pandemic on its revenue and the festering uncertainty of its relocation and the impacts of that on employees and operations in the interim. As at today, whilst a public announcement has been made that the Ultimo location is to remain in situ for the foreseeable future, our members are still awaiting an announcement from local management and are in limbo as to what plans can be made for exhibitions in the future.

A few months ago museum management implemented what our members considered to be a premature and nonsensical partial closure of the current facility just as the doors were set to reopen to the public after the lifting of COVID restrictions. Notwithstanding the announcement of the retention of the site, redesigned work duties over the past few months of primarily cataloguing and archiving the museum's exhibits has continued as

though the relocation is still on the agenda. We have no clarity regarding the anticipated opening of the Castle Hill facility, nor the timetable, purpose and functionality of the Parramatta site.

Our members are not resistant to change and are, in fact, excited by both the possibilities for, and the renewed interest in, their organisation that have been expressed through the public debate regarding the future of their institution. But the closure of Ultimo was always viewed cynically and the change management plan that was implemented has been ill-considered and poorly communicated at almost every stage. The nature and seeming hastiness of the announcement a few weeks ago has only fuelled the feeling that our members' lack of confidence regarding the bona fides of the entire move may have been well founded.

The situation at the MAAS, however, is only a small sideshow now to the broader crisis confronting the entire industry. Our five State institutions have always cross-subsidised their operations through their own revenue streams. However, this has dried up, leaving the sector, according to our calculations, up to a collective \$91 million in deficit this year. Whilst hit as hard as other sectors in the economy with a downturn in trade, they have been excluded from the Federal Government's JobKeeper package. Further, the State Government has failed to provide any additional assistance as the Victorian Andrews Government has deemed appropriate. An historical pattern of casualisation of the workforce means that job losses and reduced functionality appeared a likely outcome across the five government-operated institutions without some targeted relief.

Our submission made two recommendations which were designed with the relocation of the MAAS in mind but remain relevant today. Firstly, that the five institutions that are the subject of the inquiry, being Sydney Living Museums, State Library of New South Wales, MAAS, Australian Museum and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, develop plans to take their exhibitions regionally as separate or combined roadshows of sorts. This would not only increase the accessibility for residents of regional New South Wales to their collections but provide stimulus to those economies in terms of jobs and tourism.

Secondly, the new Parramatta site, whose arguments in favour have been well aired over several years, wherever it may be established, be considered as being a shared space between all these organisations and not exclusive for the MAAS alone, notwithstanding that the size and scale of its collection could fill it many times over. This would again increase access to cultural institutions for residents of western Sydney but also serve to be a flexible and ever-changing space that would consequently attract frequent visitors. On behalf of the PSA's members, I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to appear today and wish you well on your important work. I am available for questions.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Thank you, Mr Wright. I thought there would have been a collective sigh of relief but you surprise me when you say that there is a feeling of chaos continuing. I thought there were 99 or 95 casual workers who were on the chopping block—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Who now are not. We have been given that advice today, which is great.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** The witness said the chaos continues so I would like to pursue that a little bit.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I know. I understand.

**Mr WRIGHT:** Thank you. There is both. There was a collective sigh of relief that their current site would be retained but there is still an enormous confusion among our membership—and I spoke to our major delegate as recently as yesterday—because there has been no announcement from local management about what the plan going forward is. They learned, as we all learned, in the newspaper on 5 July, that the announcement had been made and there has been no communication either prior to that or subsequent to that. It makes it impossible for an organisation like the MAAS, for the people that we have got as members who plan the exhibitions and engage various—

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So, Ms Havilah did not come to the staff or assemble them?

**Mr WRIGHT:** There is, apparently, a staff meeting set for next week where they are hoping some announcements will be made but there has been no communication to my knowledge, from my delegate yesterday, to any of the staff about what has happened and what is going to happen. Like I said, a couple of weeks ago, just around the time the COVID restrictions were lifted, I think it was early May, within a week of that the staff were very excited—"Okay, we are going to reopen and run for a few years and it's going to be good"—local management announced, "Well, okay, we're not going to completely reopen, we're going to do a partial closure", which we found very curious and odd at that time in particular. Some of the casuals were going to be laid off, who were the guides—you are correct—and also the remainder of the staff would be engaged, rather than opening the premises or the museum to the public, in cataloguing or archiving the current collection. They are still doing that

and they are wondering why they are still doing that. So, again, it is just a very confusing situation for our members at the moment.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** I have a follow-up question. This morning my colleague the Hon. Walt Secord asked the Minister about the exhibitions limbo and we were assured by the Minister and by other witnesses in our first session that that was mistaken, that there had been no disruption and that the museum site at Ultimo was operating as normal. They gave us a long rundown of exhibitions. I am interested to hear you mention feedback from the staff on the ground that their experience has been that there has been a limbo on exhibitions. I just wondered if you could give us a little bit more detail on what that might look like and how that has been for the staff on the site, and them trying to do their jobs as best they can?

**Mr WRIGHT:** Yes. There has been enormous anxiety among our members over a significant period of time since this announcement was made, particularly around the change management plan. We have been pressing museum management. "Okay, how are you going to manage the transition from your current site to the new site?" They were only willing to release that in staggered parts. The first staggered part of that was announced in May, which was, "We're going to close half of the museum to the public because we're going to slowly move all of that exhibition space out. We're going to catalogue it and we're going to let all those casual guides go." But we were still saying, "Hang on, what's going to happen? What's the timetable for the new building? What's the closure of Ultimo? When do you have to be out? Where are staff going to be in between? What are they going to be doing?"

None of that was provided, so there has been this anxiety right up until the July announcement. Now that anxiety is replaced twofold, in that no announcement has been made locally about what is going to happen. There is one exhibition at the moment that has been opened up, but that was booked many, many months ago. You do not just put on an exhibition next week. You have to plan it months, if not years, in advance. So there is one major exhibition now and people are excited about that. But the anxiety has probably been replaced with concern about the financial situation of the museum, given that visitor numbers have downturned both because of uncertainty about its current move and whether it is open or not, and secondly because of the pandemic. It is almost like one concern about their jobs and the security of their jobs has been replaced with another. We would really like and appreciate—and we hope it happens next week—some sort of certainty and direction given by local management.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** This morning there was a rebadging of it, saying it will be one museum on four sites. We found from Ms Havilah that the headquarters, or her offices, will be at the Parramatta site. Is there any communication of when staff will have to relocate and what will happen?

**Mr WRIGHT:** There has been no communication prior to the announcement on 4 July, or since that announcement, about whether any relocation—what would go, when it would go, who would go—has been planned out, as far as we know.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Were you aware that her offices—

**Mr WRIGHT:** No.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** So you found out—

**Mr WRIGHT:** I was not aware. I can check and take it on notice whether our members were aware.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** It would be great if you could take on notice whether there has been any consultation at all about the prospect of the HQ of the Powerhouse being located in Parramatta.

**Mr WRIGHT:** I can. I would be 90 per cent sure there has not been, but I am happy to take that on notice and confirm.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** You said there was no clarity on the Castle Hill storage site, the Discovery Centre. How many staff actually are employed there?

**Mr WRIGHT:** I would have to take that on notice. It is nowhere near the number that are employed at Ultimo. It is a small amount. I understood it mainly to be people concerned in storeperson capacities, but I would have to confirm it. I will take that on notice as well.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** My question is to any one of the witnesses, but it is probably more to Ms Coombes and Ms Marsden. The Government has said that it is pulling together a business case for the Ultimo site and also a master plan for the Ultimo site, and doing that throughout the balance of the year. How important do you think it is for the Government to consult with key stakeholders when developing a master plan for something as critical as the future of the Powerhouse?

**Ms COOMBES:** I think it is terribly important. I think museums are all about communities and there is a very large number of experts in this field. The Australian Museums and Galleries Association is the peak body.

There is a lot of professional museum staff in Australia and overseas, as well as lots of very informed community and council stakeholders. To hear this morning that the business case and master plan were well underway was quite surprising, since it has only been a few weeks since the announcement that we are keeping the Powerhouse.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ms Marsden?

**Ms MARSDEN:** Of course I support what Ms Coombes is saying. It is absolutely essential that there is strong consultation, more and more so. There always should have been consultation, but even more nowadays. It is actually good design practice. It is good community practice. It creates resilient and invested communities and stronger results all around. As I say, AMaGA—and there are many other organisations and individuals that are able to provide expert advice, as well as the communities in the affected areas.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You would almost think it was one of the lessons to learn from the history of the Powerhouse to date, that unilateral decisions made by Government about critical cultural institutions can be quite damaging and hard to land. You are much better off consulting. Can you think of any examples where that has been done well that we could look to? You do not have to limit yourself to New South Wales, if that is the problem.

**Ms COOMBES:** There does not seem to have been the level of conflict and division in other States, and potentially in the UK, with new developments that there has been here. But I think that is because closing down a world-class, internationally known museum is not commonly done. In fact we are not really aware of any cases. We build new museums. We know about the Tate and the V&A and the Guggenheim. We expand. We are aware of growing communities and community needs and we expand—the Louvre in Abu Dhabi. But we are not really aware of examples where this has caused so much division.

**Ms MARSDEN:** And in terms of consultation on establishing a new institution, anything good and worthwhile takes time. You have steps forward and steps backwards. I am thinking about Alice Springs with the new Indigenous cultural arts centre. There is a lot of consultation. There is division. They are actually going to come up with good outcomes there. It just takes time and good heart and a willingness to listen.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Would you think that time and detailed consultation would be an important part of developing a master plan and the future of something as critical as the Ultimo site?

**Ms MARSDEN:** Yes, absolutely. And you can look at not only museum development principles, you can also look at design principles—all of it. Absolutely critical.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Mr Wright, what about consultation with the workforce? In some ways, the workforce are people who have critical knowledge about it. Has there been any outreach?

**Ms MARSDEN:** Yes. There are two reasons for that. One is that they actually have expert advice they can give, which is critical. The other is that it is going to impact them. Again, it is both in terms of their expertise and also them as human beings and cultural workers.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I see Mr Wright nodding.

**Mr WRIGHT:** Thank you. I used the term "chaotic" in my opening reference and it is not just chaos now; it was during that period leading up to May in particular. We agree that consultation is not just an important thing for the planning of the museums. It is also an industrial right that our members enjoy and that has not been occurring. When the announcement was made in early May that the current site would be partially closed, we had to lodge a dispute in the Industrial Relations Commission because we had not been consulted about that. Our members had not been told what was happening. We were told that 95 casuals, who are the guides—I think they are called customer service off-roaders or something hifalutin like that—were going to be laid off. We had not seen a change management plan. That is our industrial right. A change management plan should be set out by any organisation. "This is where we're at. This where we've got to get to. This is how we're going to get there."

They had not done that. During the proceedings in the commission they came out and said, "Look, we haven't done a change management plan because we haven't done the rest of the change management plan. We can't do it in little parts." Well, eventually they said they would do it in little parts. I found it astounding that something like the planning of the workforce—where they would be, who would be where, what they would be doing in the interim—had not been thought through. Contrast that with the announcements that were being made in the media at the time, from Government and higher, that this was dead certain to occur. Yet at the ground level there did not seem to be the actual planning or thought process put into it. We found that very difficult to reconcile at the time because you had these statements that it was a dead certainty and then confusion on the ground.

**The CHAIR:** That has pretty much typified this whole process, going right back to the thought bubble in 2015 and the ongoing inquiries that we originally ran. This morning I heard in evidence from Ms Havilah and/or



the Minister that what they were thinking about doing—because they did not want to tell us what they were going to do with the Ultimo site—was actually one of the options in their version two or three business plan. Maybe that is one reason why they have come up with it so quickly.

I just want to go somewhere else for a second. It is forgotten in all of the discussions we are having in relation to the very important site at Ultimo and at Parramatta, et cetera. Ms Coombes or Ms Marsden, have you got any comment to make in relation to the Government's track record on regional museums? It was very much a part of our original inquiries years ago. My good colleague here, Mr Franklin, secured some money and also some improvement in the way the Government was looking after these institutions. But I think that has fallen by the wayside recently.

**Ms MARSDEN:** Thank you. I might answer briefly first and then hand over to Ms Judith Coombes. I think it is recognised that there is not a good enough comprehensive museum strategy in New South Wales, one that focuses not only on regional museums but also the role of the State institutions. How they all interact together is really quite critical to understand. We can see, just lifting our eyes up a little bit to the Commonwealth level, the diabolical impact of not having a decent cultural policy for museums and galleries at that Commonwealth level. Okay, so you have got thought bubbles, you have got bits and pieces coming out everywhere, you do not have integrated approaches at all. You certainly do not have something that would integrate with a decent State policy and local government policy. We can see the fact that the Local Government Association has come out unanimously calling for a well-funded and coherent museum strategy. So despite some welcome advances at the State Government level in some funding programs we are still waiting and still advocating very, very strongly for a good regional museum strategy.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Can I perhaps, if you do not mind, Chair—

**The CHAIR:** I think Ms Coombes wanted to respond.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Oh, apologies.

**Ms COOMBES:** I just wanted to note that I also have an opening statement and I do not know if we have got time to do my whole statement.

**The CHAIR:** I beg your pardon—certainly, yes.

**Ms COOMBES:** Because we are on the regional museums I might do that part first.

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Ms COOMBES:** I listened to the session this morning. Often there was a reference to, "It's a government decision." I just wanted to make the note that within the museum profession we do not see museums and cultural institutions as belonging to the Government. They belong to the people of New South Wales. People have donated their precious collections for the display to the people of New South Wales and to grow and develop these more than a century old institutions. Governments change and staff at a museum change but there are really these solid organisations within the community that are very highly valued, as we have seen in this recent shift around the Powerhouse.

In terms of regional museums, although there have been some additional grant programs in recent years for our regional communities there are still considerable risks to very significant collections and to local museums, especially after the bushfires and the continuing pandemic. Capital and grant funding should be increased and an annual cultural subsidy to local government be considered. This has come straight from our members. There have also been media reports recently revealing that expert advice regarding arts grants was on occasion overruled by the Minister, which risks destroying the trust between government and regional stakeholders.

We are very willing to work with other stakeholders to improve and promote regional museums, galleries and historical societies, to focus on the quality, services and sustainability of smaller organisations that play such an important role for communities and tourism in New South Wales regions. The New South Wales library and the Victorian model for regional museums could be useful models. Expertise from the big institutions should be shared and exchanged in a more structured, well-funded program. The current pandemic provides a great opportunity to focus on growing regional tourism but this takes coordination and funding.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, Ms Coombes.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Ms Coombes, you raised political interference in the grants process. What was the impact on smaller galleries and isolated galleries across the State who put a lot of time and energy into a comprehensive grants process?

**Ms COOMBES:** That is right.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** What was the response from them when they discovered that there had been blatant political interference by the Minister and the Deputy Premier?

**Ms COOMBES:** There was a lot of disappointment but I guess there have been other media reports about other grant programs that have also been influenced politically. It is a loss of trust, I think.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** We should have an inquiry into that.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** But because small organisations are very time constrained and people are volunteers, to write an application and to get it together and jump through all of the hoops would have been quite taxing.

**Ms COOMBES:** It is very taxing and a lot of these organisations are run by volunteers. You know that the regions have suffered from drought and bushfire and now the pandemic. There is a lot of distress out there.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** On the pandemic, because we hear about the drop-off of visitation in galleries and performance institutions in Sydney but what has been the impact on rural and regional galleries, performance spaces and museums?

**Ms COOMBES:** Yes, it has been a major impact of course and a lot of places had to close down or close their doors and that impacts on their income. A lot of them rely on fairly modest income that comes in through the door, but that is what they rely on

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** What is your feeling for the number that—are there some that may never reopen their doors?

**Ms COOMBES:** That is quite possible.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Do you have any examples, if you could provide that, of museums or—

**Ms COOMBES:** I can take that on notice.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Thank you.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** I want to ask a follow-up question either of Ms Marsden or perhaps Ms Coombes. In your opening remarks, Ms Marsden, you mentioned the need for a coherent museum and gallery strategy in New South Wales. I think that has been a recommendation of a previous inquiry in relation to this issue. You mentioned it again specifically and the benefit that it might bring, for example, in terms of regional galleries. I just want to ask you to elaborate a little bit on why you think that that is such an important strategy for the Government to develop generally. What kind of additional benefits would investment in that strategy development bring in terms of the decisions that the Government is making in relation to, for example, the Powerhouse?

**Ms MARSDEN:** Thank you. In terms of a strategy it is a bit like—I mean, look at other industries. There are industry policies for all sorts of things and no-one questions that, really, because it does provide a framework for prioritising, it does provide a framework for consultation and coming up with some very good proposals and ideas, it does give you a sense of the future and the stepping stones to get to an image of the future that people are invested in. So for all those reasons a decent, funded, coherent strategy is actually quite critical. For example, digital access to collections should be a key part of it. You have got some ad hoc digitisation, which is great, but would it not be terrific to be actually prioritising the digitisation of critical collections around the State rather than just what happens to be needed because of a move or because of some ad hoc funding and grants. Digitising collections would be one aspect of a coherent strategy.

Another aspect of a coherent strategy would be—we are heading into compounding disaster seasons, okay? It is just a happening thing. I convene a national emergency response round table for national cultural organisations. I have just come from convening that today. How are we preparing for a compounding season coming up? We are still going to be having COVID reactions. How do we actually get a coherent communications program out to people? So they need to do their disaster planning. All of that could be afforded within a framework, within a strategy. It could be funded. It could be communicated well. So they are some of the key examples of what you would do—you would actually start linking disaster preparedness with other parts of government delivery agencies so that you have actually got some coherence there. They are the examples that I would put forward and they are the examples I would love to see the New South Wales Government pick up and develop.

**Ms COOMBES:** Also in terms of strategy we have seen a lot of decisions come out of government around Sydney Modern, the NSW State Archives and Sydney Living Museums' amalgamation and around the Powerhouse, but all these new projects have not been in one strategy document for museums and galleries. In most other areas of government we have 10-year plans or 20-year plans. Museums and galleries are long term—

we have talked about how many are over a century old. We really need a longer term strategy. We do not have a history museum in New South Wales. The Powerhouse stopped collecting social history under Dawn Casey in around 2010. But prior to that social history was a very strong collecting area for the Powerhouse. It was a very strong exhibition focus for all of its life up until then. That discussion has been raised by Sydney historians and creators many times and it has not emerged in any kind of overall strategy.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** I recall you used to work at the Powerhouse, is that right?

**Ms COOMBS:** I did.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** It was mentioned in Ms Marsden's opening statement, and you have alluded to it as well, that in order to turn the Powerhouse Ultimo into the sort of fantastic museum that we all hope it is and that the Minister has articulated a vision for, substantial investment is going to need to be provided.

**Ms COOMBS:** That is right.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** We know that. We have heard evidence that a business case was prepared in 2014 that put that figure at somewhere between \$300 million and \$500 million from the MAAS board. Do you have a sense? Putting both your experience of the house and your expert hat on, what is the sort of monetary figure that you might be looking for in order to achieve that goal for the Ultimo site?

**Ms COOMBS:** It very much depends on how much you do. That 2014 business case was quite major. It was changing the whole Harwood Building, the stage one tram shed building, and also the Wran Building, the 1988 adaptive reuse. There is no reason why that sum should now be current because in saying, "saving the Powerhouse" is an assumption by many people that that means saving the 1988 award-winning adaptive reuse and also that the whole heritage precinct, which includes the tram shed. I would like to note that Minister Harwin did say that building was 1980s this morning. I did check also this morning that the perimeter walls of the building are original turn-of-the-century tram shed. It depends whether it is renewing the air conditioning and the interiors and great new exhibitions, or it is significant work, including, as Mr Harwin mentioned, the theatre. That is a very different project than just stabilising and improving the conditions there.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** And you have a view on what would be preferable? If you were advising the Minister directly—and, in a way, you are through our proceedings—but there are clearly a range of options.

**Ms COOMBS:** Yes.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** What do you think might be the best way forward?

**Ms COOMBS:** I have been able to talk to Ms Havilah several times in the last few weeks. That has been wonderful consultation. The ideas of maintaining the industrial history of the original Powerhouse are really important and that is why we are maintaining those large objects there. They look really fantastic. I hope they can maintain the live steam operation because that was one of the real innovations at the time the museum opened. We have spent a lot of time and money maintaining that over the years. The idea of the creative precincts has been around for quite some time as well.

As the representative from Sydney City Council said, you have University of Technology Sydney with its fashion architecture and design schools, you have a TAFE that does a lot of design and technology work as well; you have Sydney University and right up to the hospital. The collections there at the moment in that basement of the Harwood Building, there are around 300,000 of the small objects. The plan had been to move all those to Castle Hill. My view is that it is better to have collections where the people are. I was responsible for managing the collection at the Harwood Building and it was a very active space. It is not just like a dead museum collection. We are constantly taking tours through; researchers, student groups, artists and curators could easily access that there. Castle Hill is a great site but it has always been very difficult to get visitors to go there. It is an hours' drive from the city. It is a 25 minute drive from Parramatta—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** And you might run into the police Minister on the way.

**Ms COOMBS:** Sorry, was that a question?

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** No.

**Ms MARSDEN:** There has been a worrying trend over the last decade, nationally, in various States and Territories, of investing a bit more in bricks and mortar and cutting, cutting, cutting staff and programs. That is actually what makes museums live as well. So get rid of the efficiency dividend for a start, which is just compounding budget cuts, and invest in brilliant support for the staff and more staff. Fantastic educating, collecting, history and communications programs and education programs. That is what I would love to see, not always sacrificed on other orders.

**The CHAIR:** Where are you on the efficiency dividend in museums?

**Ms MARSDEN:** I am where I have always been. I have advocated very strongly against efficiency dividends. It is in all the statements I have made and in the submissions. I have got the information. They are compounding budget cuts, et cetera.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** And you point out the particular damage that efficiency dividends do to smaller institutions.

**Ms MARSDEN:** Particularly damage to cultural institutions where if they do not have a lot of fat to cut, it is actually staff and programs which have to go. It is a ridiculous thing nowadays, the efficiency dividend, absolutely ridiculous.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** My final question is to Mr Wright. You said in your opening statement that these State-run cultural institutions have some of the highest rates of casual employment in the public sector. Can you give an indication of what those rates are and whether or not the Government is willing to sit down with the union to work out a strategy to provide more permanent and secure employment?

**Mr WRIGHT:** The uncertainty about the Powerhouse over the past few years has led to a reticence to address that, certainly at that institution. We hope to deal with that now. I was surprised when the proposed layoffs were to occur in May. We had people who were employed casually there in the guides roles for more than 10 years. They had been there and working full-time hours. It is very unusual in the public sector for that to occur, to be honest. That had been a creep that had probably got under our radar and then the uncertainty about the institution itself had led to it becoming an almost institutionalised practise. It is less so at some of the other places. It is certainly less so at the State Library and the art gallery. The Australian Museum, as you know, is currently closed for renovations. They had a bit of a period.

I am happy to get some numbers were ever I can about the levels of casual employment. They would certainly be higher than most if not all other public sector agencies and usually in that customer service front. Can I just add on that other point about the proposal about renovations. I was meeting with the delegates a couple of weeks ago. It is a minor anecdote. They joked about something about "being on buckets" and I did not know what they meant. Apparently the roof horrifically leaks at Powerhouse. I raise that because it is probably indicative rather than the issue in itself of a general neglect of that building. If the roof is leaking, god knows what else is wrong with it and, therefore, we have a triple threat. We have building at Ultimo may be in a state of a bit of decay and it will require significant capital spending to get up scratch. You have a repurposing of Ultimo potentially and you have a third issue which is a massive drop in revenue on account of the pandemic. No doubt I think there is a difficult time ahead without some strong government intervention with the organisation.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** This question may go to Ms Coombs. Have you been following the recent controversy at the MCA involving staff and the leadership at the MCA?

**Ms COOMBS:** I have only read a few articles about that.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I was just checking to see if you had any knowledge or insights. Ms Marsden, do you have any knowledge or insights on that?

**Ms MARSDEN:** No, like Ms Coombs, I have only read a few articles. I have not been able to follow it up.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much for coming today. I note there was a number of questions taken on notice. The Committee has resolved that answers to questions taken on notice be returned within 21 days. The secretariat will be in contact with you in relation to those questions.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**(Short adjournment)**

**BRUCE DAWBIN**, NSW State Representative, International Council on Monuments and Sites Australia, affirmed and examined

**CHERIE McNAIR**, Secretary, International Council of Museums Australia, affirmed and examined

**The CHAIR:** Welcome, Mr Dawbin and Ms McNair. Would either or both of you like to make a short opening statement?

**Ms McNAIR:** I represent the Australian chapter of the International Council of Museums [ICOM]. Apologies from our chair, Dr Mat Trinca, who is unable to join me today. The International Council on Monuments and Sites [ICOM] Australia recognises the traditional owners of country throughout Australia on which our museums, galleries and sites stand. ICOM Australia thanks the Parliament of New South Wales and this Committee for the opportunity to speak today. ICOM is a membership association and a non-governmental organisation which establishes professional and ethical standards for museums and activities. As a forum of experts, it makes recommendations on issues related to cultural heritage, promotes capacity building and advances knowledge. ICOM is the voice of museum professionals on the international stage and it raises public cultural awareness through global networks and co-operation programs. The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences is a member of the International Council of Museums, as are 850 Australian museums and professionals—part of the 44,686 professionals in over 138 countries around the world.

ICOM is the only global museum organisation, and all of us are guided by a code of ethics. The ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums establishes the values and principles shared by ICOM and the international museum community. It sets minimum standards of professional practice and performance for museums and their staff. ICOM regards the development, documentation, preservation and representation of heritage collections as being a common good at the heart of civil society. We proceed from the view that the people own museum collections and have knowledge about those collections. The ICOM Australia membership has an expectation that the moveable heritage is housed in a safe location and that there are adequate resources and intent to protect and preserve built heritage. ICOM Australia is concerned that two heritage sites will be impacted by the design for the Powerhouse Museum, namely Willow Grove and St George's Terrace, both of which are planned for demolition. These are considered to be of significant heritage value by the local community.

The establishment of any new museum is a unique opportunity to take account of the fundamental obligation to protect and preserve public collections in perpetuity. Concern has been raised regarding the site presently favoured by government and its propensity for flooding. ICOM Australia believes this concern should be addressed in any preparation and planning by reference to the guiding principles enshrined in ICOM's code of ethics. Investment in museum development is critical and the New South Wales State Government's contributions in this area have been well received by ICOM members. The membership is open to and would welcome opportunities to assist with review and planning with consideration to the code of ethics and the best practice it describes.

**The CHAIR:** Mr Dawbin?

**Mr DAWBIN:** Australia ICOMOS welcomes the announcement by the Premier on 4 July 2020 that the New South Wales Government has reconsidered its proposal to relocate the Powerhouse Museum from Ultimo to Parramatta. ICOMOS has continued to monitor the detailed implications of this announcement and remains concerned that the form of the upgraded Ultimo museum or the scope of the Parramatta facility have either not been resolved or threaten to impact on heritage items at both locations. The heritage value of the Ultimo site is one of the major issues that we are following very closely. Particularly in recent times, there was a State Heritage Register listing of the Ultimo tramway powerhouse in isolation from the rest of the complex. ICOMOS supports a full and detailed assessment of the heritage values of the entire site and upgrading the listing nomination to include the entire Powerhouse Museum site. We believe it has heritage values—ranging from social, aesthetic, scientific, and historical values—as an entire complex. They are of an exceptional level and worthy of long overdue recognition as a heritage site of State significance.

Another issue of concern is the protection of the collection and its appropriate display. The priceless collection includes many large items, including the 1785 Boulton and Watt beam engine and an 1835 Maudslay beam engine, which are unique in this country and in the world and are still in operating condition. The Steam Revolution gallery is unique in Australia and exceptional in global terms as a tangible narrative of the Industrial Revolution. Any breaking up of the collection of the Steam Revolution or the beam engine and the Transport Hall would be quite unacceptable, to have that dislocated and relocated in any form. A future upgraded museum at

Ultimo should not lose sight of its origins and original purpose as a science and technology museum first and foremost.

Regarding the matter of the Parramatta River site, the concept of a purpose-designed cultural and arts facility in Parramatta is applauded. This may include technological exhibits for western Sydney, as has widely been indicated in the media reports. The majority of the Powerhouse Museum's collection is still warehoused at Castle Hill, and much of it has never been accessible to the public. Expansion to new locations for the museum should have been part of long-term planning for the Powerhouse Museum but has not occurred. The selection of the current site is incomprehensible, it is inadequate in area, it is flood prone, it does not have major transport links, and as far as we are aware there is minimal investigation into alternative sites. The Cumberland Hospital complex is one such site that should be investigated further in our opinion. The other negative aspect of the site selection is the demolition of the two existing heritage items, Willow Grove and St George's Terrace.

We are also concerned about the consultation process. This has been widely publicised by other groups, such as the Powerhouse Museum Alliance. But from our own experience through this entire process, which has been quite active for the consultation process quite late in the day from 2018, ICOMOS has not been consulted at any stage of that process and as the cultural heritage organisation in this country one would expect that we would have some level of involvement. The relocation to Parramatta was announced as a foregone conclusion before that consultation process was wrapped up and announced. Acceptance of a design, which is not a museum, decisions regarding the proposal to relocate the museum and the selection of the site need to be addressed—the acceptance of a design, which is not a museum facility, will not accommodate the most important exhibits, and also the negative collateral damage of the demolition of two heritage buildings. Thank you very much.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Thank you for the opening comments.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Ms McNair, you mentioned your two concerns were Willow Grove and St George's Terrace, then the flooding. What is your concern about the flooding? Have you seen the design? It is a milk crate on stilts. What is your view on the Government's attempt to overcome the flooding concerns?

**Ms McNAIR:** In terms of the first part of your question, the ICOM membership does not believe that one history—be that built, object based or oral history—should be replacing another. The demolition of historical sites of importance is something that we do not advocate for as a membership. We do not see a new history overtaking another, we like to see these things coexisting. That is part of the reason that we are all in museums. On the second part of your question in relation to flooding, I or the ICOM committee have not been privy to the detailed plans for the site. We have seen the concept drawings from Moreau Kusunoki, like the majority of other people. The issue that we have as a membership-based organisation is there is an expectation that museums provide for the safe care of collections, and whether that is their own collections or collections on loan from other institutions or from individuals in the community.

Obviously with any facility that is subject to flooding, then that brings that safety into question, so the safety and preservation. As we have seen most recently with the bushfires, any kind of potential natural disaster can be pre-planned for and most museums within our membership have disaster planning as a significant component of their activity. But it should not necessarily be something that you are proactively planning for a natural disaster, if that makes sense. You would not necessarily pick a flood prone site if you are having to include that. It tends to be something that you are addressing as a last resort if disaster strikes, rather than something that you are planning for in the build site.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Do you see any way of preserving Willow Grove and St George's Terrace and still undertaking the construction of the new museum?

**Ms McNAIR:** That is a difficult question. Noting that I represent a large body of members, that is not something that we have gone back to consult them. In terms of the design, certainly there are other institutions around the world that have a combination of contemporary and historical architecture. The most local would be the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, for example. They have a heritage building within the centre of their courtyard. Another example in Tasmania, you have got a Harry Seidler building on top of MONA that has been maintained. There are other examples where there is a combination of historical and contemporary architecture coexisting. So it is possible. That is possibly a question for the architect.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You do not have to go that far. You can go to Phillip Street—

**Ms McNAIR:** Yes, absolutely.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** —where there was that large development and the retention of that run of gorgeous colonial buildings just up from the first Government House.

**Ms McNAIR:** Yes.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** In relation to that, and the process I suppose, the Government's response to the concerns in relation to Willow Grove and St George's Terrace would be: Well, we indicated when we went out to request design that it would be preferable, or we would like architects to consider the possibility of including the retention of those heritage sites and none of them were meaningfully able to do so.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** One did.

**Mr DAWBIN:** There was one submission, yes.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Yes. Only one was meaningfully able to do so and the jury determined that another design was preferable. In terms of the process as to how it could have been better managed, does your code of ethics or best practice guide provide any suggestion or direction as to how governments might better ensure that heritage items on a site like that are in fact protected, as opposed to the process that was adopted, which was: Well, this might be something that you might like to consider, but it is really actually not conditional on the submission of your design?

**Ms McNAIR:** I will answer briefly but then it very much falls into Mr Dawbin's territory. In terms of the International Council of Museum's code of ethics, certainly there are guidelines. Ultimately it comes down to the heritage legislation. You try to do any work with somewhere like Hyde Park Barracks, which has a World Heritage consideration, the limitations are exceptionally tight in terms of anything that you can do, even with the curtilage of the church across the road, for example. If the legislation is tight, then obviously that places the restrictions around what can be done with the site. That is what ICOM would point to as what is the relevant legislation. Whether there are better examples internationally, that would be something that we would go out to our constituents to find. But from our perspective the legislation is the thing that would govern something like that.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** In this case it is State significant development. What that means in New South Wales is all of the local heritage protections that otherwise would apply are overridden, it is purely discretionary. There is no legislative protection. I think that is one of the problems.

**Mr DAWBIN:** It is one of the problems.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Did you have anything you wanted to add, Mr Dawbin, in relation to the process the Government undertook and the extent to which that offered an opportunity to protect Willow Grove and St George's Terrace?

**Mr DAWBIN:** Going back to the original part of your question about whether there was any potential for the heritage items to be adaptively reused, I just make a point that many people, including ICOMOS are encouraging another look at the alternative site, which is Cumberland Hospital, which has got dozens of heritage buildings in it, including one of the most significant colonial era buildings, the Female Factory. There is absolutely potential and there is a lot of potential also to enhance the heritage values of those items if a museum is incorporated around that site. But the difference is at Cumberland Hospital there is plenty of space.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** There would be a lovely symmetry if we had a second Powerhouse Museum, if it adopted the same heritage adaptive reuse that we saw with the first Powerhouse Museum, and the Cumberland Hospital site is the obvious place to do that. It would be a gorgeous symmetry, would it not, if the two sites had that?

**Mr DAWBIN:** Absolutely. It is completely compatible, except that I reiterate how important it is for Sydney to have a world-class science and technology museum, which we used to have at Ultimo. It is badly needing a lot of work to bring it up to standard again; however, that is an adaptive reuse of very appropriate buildings for that theme of industrial buildings, being the Tramway, the Powerhouse and tram sheds, industrial buildings that are completely appropriate to creating a display area for the huge items like the 2½ metre high Boulton and Watt steam engine and other large items, Catalina aircraft and railway locomotives. This is one of the issues that has not been really pointed out in the new design, how those items are intended to be displayed. It is most important, in our opinion, that these are displayed together, the transport hall and the steam revolution area be maintained and entities not be broken up. We do not see that in the new proposal. If it was going to be shoehorned into that new development, with the size of those items and the weight of them, they would have to be at ground level, being conceivable they would be hoisted up metres above ground. We then come back to the issue of the flood-prone site. It is just completely inappropriate.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** We got a commitment from the Minister this morning that the No. 1 locomotive and the Catalina aircraft and the Boulton and Watt steam engine, at a minimum, would be retained at the Ultimo site. We do not have a commitment on the broader collection, but we did at least get that commitment this morning.

**Mr DAWBIN:** I reiterate that it is a great first step, the announcement on 4 July. We are hoping that from all of what you are saying, those large items will remain at Ultimo.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We were given that commitment by both the Minister and the staff.

**Mr DAWBIN:** Yes, that is very encouraging, but there is so much more detail to be resolved that we are watching closely.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** And the balance of the transport collection and the steam collection provides a context to those items. Is that what you are saying to us?

**Mr DAWBIN:** Yes, the cost of moving almost any of those items would be astronomical and then the risk of damage would be very high as well. It is just so appropriate and the building was a Sulman award-winning architectural project, when it was opened in 1988. It was for good reason because Lionel Glendenning did a wonderful job of tying those buildings together with a beautiful new gallery space, where it is not obvious which is new architecture and which is the original industrial building because it is blended together appropriately.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** I am not sure if you heard my colleague Mr Shoebridge this morning asking the Minister for assurances in relation to elements of the Powerhouse site at Ultimo. Essentially they were not forthcoming and there were consistent references back to a business case in development. In your opening statement you talked about the significance of the entire site and said that you could not pick out particular elements, but other elements perhaps could be sold off or put to other uses. The Minister was unable to provide those assurances this morning. Would you like to reflect on how important it is that all of the built elements of the current site are maintained?

**Mr DAWBIN:** That is one of the most important issues that has to be clarified and we very strongly support the entire site being listed on the State Heritage register and that it be fully preserved. There is so much potential within that with the Harwood building, where much of the collection is stored out of public viewing at the moment. The whole complex, the modern parts as well, equally deserve to be part of that total listing because it works so well together.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** We had the Minister this morning describing the Harwood building as a 1980s building. Do you have any observations in relation to that?

**Mr DAWBIN:** The tram shed is probably the largest element there and that is about turn of the century, turn of the twentieth century.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** About 1900 or so, not 1980s.

**Mr DAWBIN:** Around 1895 to 1900, yes, when that trams started.

**Ms McNAIR:** The Queensland Government recently put the entirety of the Southbank precinct, which was built in the mid-1980s, on their heritage listing. Age is significant, but there is a lot that goes into something being ascribed to the heritage register. Age is probably one of the credentials, but not the entirety.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** The New South Wales Government recently demolished large parts of Darling Harbour.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** You are not possibly suggesting that the Darling Harbour development go there, are you?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I think many people say elements of Darling Harbour—

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** It was a large shopping centre, by any other—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** It was a large conference centre, actually. Is that right?

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** The plastic seats.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You might want to recycle our city every 30 years; I do not. That is probably where we differ, Trevor. I do not support recycling our city every 30 years and wiping out our history.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** David, your attempted outrage subsides into—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** That is a matter for you, Trevor. I will ask if you have any questions for the witnesses. Do you have any questions for the witnesses?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I do, I would like to ask a question. Mr Dawbin, you talked about one of the concerns that you had about the new site being not accessible to transport. I would have thought that with



ferries, buses and trains coming into Parramatta that is one thing that is beyond question. I ask you to explain that a little more.

**Mr DAWBIN:** Certainly. On ferry access, from what I remember, the river does not go right up to that point. Is that correct?

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** They do not.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** When it floods they might.

**Mr DAWBIN:** It is very shallow, so it is very limited to what kind of vessels could go there. More importantly, a site such as the Fleet Street-Cumberland Hospital site is having the light rail, which is another contentious issue for some, quite close to some of the heritage buildings in the Cumberland Hospital complex. Nevertheless, that will provide a very robust people-moving system to get people on and off that site.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I am sure there are others, like Central Station, that would be an excellent sites for transport access, too. I was just talking about the current site.

**Mr DAWBIN:** But the riverfront is a long way from the railway station and from the light rail.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, but within the scheme of things it is relatively close.

**Mr DAWBIN:** Certainly. That is not a major issue, it is just one of a number.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** One of the Government's proposals is potentially to relocate the storage facility in the Harwood building out to Castle Hill and have the Castle Hill site as a more active site where people can visit the collection. That is a site with other major transport constraints, is it not? Are you aware of any key cultural sites that have those kinds of transport constraints that we see with Castle Hill?

**Mr DAWBIN:** The War Memorial is a good example. They have an outpost in a very large industrial building mainly for their aircraft. It is only a couple of years old, in Mitchell, and they have another workshop complex across the road from it. Under controlled situations, admittedly, they are accessible to groups and it is a wonderful facility. They could not possibly put those items in the War Memorial because there would be no room for anything else.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Does that come with a transport plan? How would you make the Castle Hill site work? Is there a transport plan attached to it for examples that work?

**Mr DAWBIN:** I am not personally familiar with the Castle Hill site. I have not actually been there.

**Ms McNAIR:** For an international comparison, the National Museum of Scotland have what they call an open storage program in a new facility, which is a shared facility with other national agencies in Scotland, in Granton. They run a shuttle bus from the main campus for those that want to go from Chambers Street in Edinburgh out to the storage facility. I would not be able to quote how often it runs and how many days a week, but that is how they get around some of the accessibility issues. They too are a four-campus museum, with two of the campuses located some distance away. One is more than an hour's drive from the central museum.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** So should that be something the Government looks at in terms of linking the Parramatta facility with the Castle Hill facility, not just an organisational link but perhaps also a shuttle bus or a transport link to physically link the two facilities?

**Ms McNAIR:** There is a number of international examples that ICOM can provide in terms of comparative models for the Powerhouse administration to look at when they are trying to connect them. There is a number of very successful international models with multi-campus activity.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** If you could provide any further detail on that I think that would be of great assistance. I think we all want the multiple site concept to work, but we need to make sure it has a coherence to it.

**Mr DAWBIN:** Any opening up of the Castle Hill warehouse would be encouraged by our group as a positive thing that would only enhance both the Ultimo and Parramatta sites.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Mr Dawbin, in your opening remarks you talked about your view and the view of your organisation of the important continued use of the Ultimo site as a science and technology museum. The suggestion from the Minister seemed to be that, in fact, the science and technology element would perhaps be moved to Parramatta and that the site at Ultimo, whilst final plans are still very much to be confirmed, would perhaps be more so in the fashion or design type space. Correct me if I misheard or misunderstood your opening statement, but I wonder if you could talk a bit about whether it is your view that the Ultimo site, with its link to and history of a science and technology space—if it is suitable to move that element out to Parramatta.

**Mr DAWBIN:** No, that is where we totally disagree for the reasons we have talked about before—the large items, breaking up the collection.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** The suggestion from the Minister seemed to be that those three large items that my colleague Mr Shoebridge identified would stay at Ultimo, but the rest of the science and technology elements of the Ultimo site would move to Parramatta, and that there would be other uses at Ultimo, perhaps more so around design and fashion. Do you think that that would be suitable or smart?

**Mr DAWBIN:** No and it does not just stop at those large items like the steam engine and railway locomotives; there is also a space component, which is quite large, and it would break up the collection. The whole theme is so consistently "applied arts and sciences"—hence its name—and I guess there is a point where that goes across to things like fashion but that is very peripheral. There is a fashion display, of course, at the Powerhouse Museum, but I think it would be a very negative outcome if that started to compete with the emphasis of the museum celebrating and showing the narrative of the development of industry and technology.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** We had a slight move from the Government this morning on that, where I think the Minister indicated that the present intention for the Ultimo site was to have—I cannot remember the exact words—the industrial age, there was definitely a substantial industrial element to the Ultimo site. Mr Dawbin, what I understand from your position is that that should not begin and end in the steam industry; it should come all the way through.

**Mr DAWBIN:** Absolutely. Science and technology is much broader than just the steam age, of course.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Essentially, if your proposition were to be adopted and they were to keep almost all of the science and technology and industrial elements at Ultimo, with the three—and other—large items and the attendant exhibition elements, putting aside concerns about the location of the Parramatta site—whether it was moved or not—what do you think would be the best use of that site in terms of the content of it? What types of thing should be displayed there and what should the Government be focusing on featuring at that Parramatta site?

**Mr DAWBIN:** What they should be displaying a Parramatta?

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Yes.

**Mr DAWBIN:** Certainly Parramatta is entitled to have a major cultural and artistic gallery space/cultural centre. What that entails is, I guess, outside the terms of reference that we have been discussing. We are trying to ensure that the Ultimo museum is not impacted negatively and destroyed. The first step in not destroying that is to keep it there. We have reached that point and now the devil is in the detail of what happens next. The Government is being very circumspect about responding to those questions so far. I am not a museum expert, so I will not make any more comment about what should be at Parramatta.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** You are not going to curate the Parramatta facility for us, fair enough.

**Mr DAWBIN:** However, I am happy to go into great detail about what should be at Ultimo and I think we have covered that in detail. There is potential for expansion there in the old tram sheds, which are currently used for workshops and conservators' area and storage. There is a vast space there where that can expand out into the courtyard and whatever.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Ms McNair, you indicated that one of the concerns about having a site that is at risk from natural hazards, whether it is fire or flood, is that it may have difficulty attracting exhibitions or the loan of items from other museums. Do you think that is a realistic concern for the Parramatta site?

**Ms McNAIR:** Without knowing the details, what I can tell you is that each institution—not just ICOM members, this is the more broader museum and gallery community—has a facilities report. That facilities report goes through even to the amount of detail as to what type of paint you have used on the walls, so it is all designed around managing risk of collections. You would have to reveal within that facilities report if that particular location was subject to any potential issues. In Japan, for example, there is obviously a lot of detail about earthquakes. It is then up to the loaning institution to decide, through their own risk framework, as to whether or not they will accept that risk. So, yes, it could potentially be an issue if the Powerhouse facilities report reflected that flooding was a possibility and, obviously, that would be reflected in its insurance documentation and if it is using State Government indemnity.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** You give the fairly clear example of Japan. Are there other examples of institutions you can think of where there are those kinds of risks and it has an impact on their ability to attract exhibitions or the loan of items?

**Ms McNAIR:** There is a number and without calling up specific institutions, obviously—

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Yes, probably best.

**Ms McNAIR:** It is certainly something that ICOM can provide you with—case studies. We can go out to our international community and ask them for some but it can fluctuate. A number of years ago there were issues with loans to Russia, in terms of political instability. Loans to Russia, particularly depending on the subject matter of the content you were sending—there was an issue there. There is also significant risk around things like immunity from seizure. The collection of Lichtenstein ended up in limbo in the UK because there were discussions and arguments around the ownership of some of those materials in the collection. All of these things are managed through very transparent and well-managed risk processes within the museums community and, with the amount of publicity around this particular site, it would not be unknown to the international museum community that this is potentially an issue.

It is then up to the collections and registrar community within the Powerhouse cohort to either address those issues and to say—because, you know, there is no location that does not have risk. It might be social unrest somewhere like Hong Kong, it could be earthquakes somewhere like Japan, it could be bushfires at the Los Angeles County museum, for example, but the risk mitigation strategies are there and there is a best practice internationally established for how to communicate that. Ultimately, it would be up to either the state to decide whether they are happy with the care of the collection in that particular location or the loaning individual or organisation.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Thank you Ms McNair. It is more than just a theoretical risk, there are examples around the world where these risks really do impact upon the ability to partner with other organisations?

**Ms McNAIR:** Yes.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** It is where they are managed.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** And where they are managed?

**Ms McNAIR:** Yes.

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:** I come back to that starting point which is: why would you design a building with that risk in the first place? Would the better decision be to find a site without the risk? Is that your position?

**Ms McNAIR:** That is something that we would go back to our membership but there are certainly examples around the world. If you look at the Louvre in Abu Dhabi, for example, when that was first designed and planned—I mean they receive a year's worth of rain the space of a week. The original design leaked and you are putting it in the middle of a desert in any area where there was no ability for that water run-off to occur and they still built it there but they just mitigated that risk. So again they wanted a world-class destination museum and that risk was mitigated and it was still built in the same location. I think from an icon perspective it is about managing that risk and how to manage that risk through a framework. It is potentially aligning it in the international community as to where that would sit as a world-class facility. A lot of it is facility management so it is down to the Powerhouse, the expertise within the Powerhouse staff and support of government through appropriate funding levels that can actually manage that risk if that is the site that has been chosen.

**The CHAIR:** I am advised that you have taken some questions on notice. The Committee has resolved that answers to questions taken on notice will be returned without 21 days. The secretariat will be in contact with you in relation to the questions that you have taken on notice.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**DAVID BURDON**, National Trust (NSW), sworn and examined

**The CHAIR:** Do you want to make a short opening statement?

**Mr BURDON:** Yes, I would. By way of background I will state I am a registered architect in New South Wales. I am the current chair of the National Trust of Australia (NSW) Built Heritage Conservation Committee, and am here today to represent the National Trust of New South Wales. As you would be aware the National Trust acts as custodian of over 30 historic and significant places, landscapes and collections spread across New South Wales, including Old Government House in Parramatta. We act in this role on behalf of the people of New South Wales, not just on behalf of our 22,000 individual members, and in the 2018-19 financial year our properties were visited by more than 139,000 people to attend tours, events, exhibitions or education programs. I believe this places the trust in a good position to make comment to this inquiry.

I am sure members have reviewed our submission, and although circumstances have changed since we made that submission, the core position of the National Trust remains relevant, namely: that the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo should remain open in Ultimo, with its key exhibits remaining; Willow Grove and St George's Terrace should be conserved and a design alternative that retains these heritage places should be considered; and that Parramatta deserves a new museum that meets the needs and expectations of the people of Parramatta and wider Western Sydney. They were our three main points and they remain valid.

The cultural value of the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo is more than just the buildings, it is also the collection which traces its origins to the 1879 Sydney International Exhibition. Both the buildings and the collections are intrinsically linked by the 1980s development project which repurposed and extended the former power house to be used as a contextual and responsive setting to the Museum of Applied Arts and Science's collection. I am sure you are sick of hearing about it but particular items such as the 1785 Boulton & Watt beam engine operated by bespoke live steam system from boilers in the museum's basement are prime examples of this. It has been mentioned many times, and I have been listening to the inquiry today, but that item shows the international prominence of this museum. Boulton & Watt and that engine are on the British £50 note currently. It is a very important exhibit and we are very lucky to have it.

**The CHAIR:** It is very important.

**Mr BURDON:** I would seek to reinforce the role of the museum as defined in the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Act 1945 through the objects and functions of the trustees, which include the display of selected objects arranged to illustrate the industrial advance of civilisation and the development of inventions and manufactures; the promotion of craftsmanship and artistic taste by illustrating the history and development of the applied arts. The closure of the Ultimo site and the opening of as yet undefined exhibition halls at Parramatta would have, in our opinion, put these objects and functions in jeopardy. The National Trust support the New South Wales Government announcement to retain the Powerhouse Museum at its Ultimo location. I note the Minister's commitment this morning to retain some of those significant items at Ultimo, including the aforementioned engine.

**The CHAIR:** So we believe.

**Mr BURDON:** We would of course support any new funding towards the current building stock at Ultimo and its collection. We would urge that in consequence of recent changes, a proposed Museum at Parramatta obviously envisaged as a full replacement rather than an annex to the Ultimo site, needs to be reconsidered in a way that could facilitate the retention of Willow Grove and St George's Terrace as a way of building upon, rather than starting out by demolishing, Parramatta's increasingly reducing stockpile of historical buildings. That is the conclusion of my opening statement.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Mr Burdon, I hear everyone say this, witness after witness, "Willow Grove and St George's Terrace", but what actually makes them important and creates the necessity to preserve them?

**Mr BURDON:** I think the importance of those two buildings is that there has been a lot of emphasis placed on them as individual items.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** Yes.

**Mr BURDON:** I think that it is important to consider, in the context of Parramatta, that not many items have remained. Obviously we have just seen the demolition of a hotel currently in the newspaper as part of the light rail project. I think that it is the sum of its parts. That is basically my answer to that question. They are both very good examples of their type and they are a bit, in the case of terraces, an unusual type for Parramatta. Parramatta did not have that many terrace houses built compared to other parts of the city. Willow Grove itself is a good example of a Victorian Italianate mansion. It still has relatively substantial grounds to it. It has its fence to the street. It obviously gives some good streetscape value to Phillip Street in the way that it provides a green expanse in an otherwise urban setting. So I think they are well known buildings.

I think it is also important to consider the social significance, in particular of Willow Grove being a maternity hospital for a good period of its life. It would have some social significance as well as architectural significance. The grounds and setting of Willow Grove are reduced from what they were originally but still provide a good example—and perhaps better than most examples—of old building stock in Parramatta, particularly houses that have been squeezed between, shall we say, more recent developments in most cases.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** I think it might be useful, just following on if I might, to talk us through what are the consequences when we fail to properly preserve these significant and heritage items? As I guess what my colleague was alluding to, there is a little bit of a sense of it is just one little house there and a couple of little terraces there. As you say, they are historically good examples of their type and, you know, they are not a particularly big deal. You have talked to us, I think very well, about why we should value them, but what are the consequences of us failing to do that in each little instance where we dismiss, minimise or do not properly value what could perhaps be seen as small items—the cumulative impact of that over time?

**Mr BURDON:** I think the cumulative impact is the biggest aspect of any of these proposals. I think there are numerous examples—and we do not have to look to Parramatta: We could look at Burwood or Hurstville, or any other Sydney suburban area—where you look at those then-and-now photographs and you can see a fully intact Victorian streetscape in the middle of one of our suburbs, which is now sadly depleted in many cases. I think that the National Trust has long argued for conservation areas in addition to listing of individual items because the actual area is important itself.

In my local area there are not too many local conservation areas in the Rockdale local environment plan [LEP], for example, but there are a number listed by the National Trust as conservation areas. They do not necessarily have to relate to Victorian-era buildings. I can nominate the National Trust listing of Beverly Hills as a conservation area in some parts for the 1940s and there is a large Catholic Church there, which is a war memorial church paid for by both the United States and Australian contributions as a memorial. So there are more recent examples of these sorts of areas as well.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** I just want to draw you out a little bit on the Ultimo site. There seems to be some recognition by the Government that elements of that site are significant and should be maintained. I do not know if you heard the witness before you talking about his view that the entire site there was of significance and should be listed as a State heritage item. I do not know if you have a view on that.

**Mr BURDON:** Yes. The National Trust itself has nominated the Powerhouse Museum in its entirety for State heritage listing. I am sure you would be aware of that. The Harwood Building, which was the tram sheds of course, was listed by the National Trust in 1997. The Powerhouse and the Powerhouse building were listed in 2015. In November 2015 the trust nominated the Ultimo Powerhouse—the whole site—for inclusion on the State Heritage Register. The nomination was placed on exhibition for public comment by the Heritage Council in March 2020. That is the current status of that nomination.

I would just say, following on from the previous witness, that there was a comment about the listing of Darling Harbour and the like on the Heritage Register. I would just point out by way of fact that the Chinese Gardens of Friendship within Darling Harbour, built between 1986 and 1988 as part of that broader project, are of course listed on the State Heritage Register.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** I do not have an argument with that but I think a shopping centre is questionable. It was not even a good shopping centre.

**Mr BURDON:** I do not like Harbourside either. I also point out, I suppose, that the National Trust has long advocated that just because a building is not listed does not mean it is not important. There has been a lot of description in the media and whatnot about the local significance of these two items by virtue of their being on the local heritage list. The Art Gallery of NSW is only locally listed. I think anyone here would be hard-pressed to argue that it is not a State significant building. I am not saying that St George's Terrace and Willow Grove are of State heritage significance. The Heritage Office itself would of course make that final decision based on any

submission that is put forward by a member of the community, but I just make the point that the level of listing does not necessarily indicate the significance of the place.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** I asked that question of yourself and of the witness prior because the Committee's inquiry was announced prior to the Government's change of heart in relation to Powerhouse Ultimo. One of the things that I think is going to be most significant in terms of our work is this: Will what happens with that site now? That is a work in progress and the business case is under development. There did seem to be a hesitation on the part of the Minister this morning to make definitive statements in relation to the site as a whole.

**The Hon. TREVOR KHAN:** That is because the business case is in development. It is the nature of the process.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** Absolutely. I think drawing some evidence in this inquiry as to the significance of the site as a whole is useful. I just wanted to give some context to that question in terms of the future use of that whole site and all of the built items in it.

**Mr BURDON:** I cannot comment on the current level of funding to the Powerhouse Museum as it sits at Ultimo, but as a visitor to the place you are hard-pressed not to admit that it is a little tired and that it perhaps is not doing the best with the amazing collection that it has in terms of representing the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences and decorative arts and the like. Of course, any increase in funding and upgrade works to make the existing site better would be welcomed.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** I am fine, thank you.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** I do not have anymore questions.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD:** You were very concise.

**Mr BURDON:** Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** No more questions? That is very good. We have finished a little bit early, Mr Burdon, unless you want to add more to your previous statements.

**Mr BURDON:** No. I think I will just close by again supporting the Government's decision to retain the Ultimo building at its current site and to advocate for funding of that site. If any new museum can facilitate the retention of those two heritage items, which I think are of importance to the local people at Parramatta, then that should definitely be considered because it was not, in fairness, considered as part of the original scope that the present design had to consider when it was going to be a full museum rather than an annex.

**The CHAIR:** Yes. Thank you very much for coming.

**(The witness withdrew.)**

**The Committee adjourned at 16:30.**