

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**

CORRECTED

At Jubilee Room, Parliament House, Sydney, on Thursday 17 March 2022

The Committee met at 10:00.

PRESENT

The Hon. Robert Borsak (Chair)

The Hon. Don Harwin
The Hon. Rose Jackson
The Hon. Walt Secord
Mr David Shoebridge (Deputy Chair)

* Please note:

[inaudible] is used when audio words cannot be deciphered.

[audio malfunction] is used when words are lost due to a technical malfunction.

[disorder] is used when members or witnesses speak over one another.

The CHAIR: Welcome to the sixth 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 Government's proposal for the Powerhouse Museum and support for the State's museums and cultural sector more broadly. Before I commence, I acknowledge the Gadigal people, who are the traditional custodians of this land. I also pay respect to the Elders past and present of the Eora nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginal people present.

Today we will hear from a range of stakeholders including the Minister for Arts, the Hon. Ben Franklin, MLC, the Powerhouse Museum board and management and an expert flood panel. Before we commence I will make some brief comments about 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. While parliamentary privilege applies to witnesses giving evidence today, it does not apply to what witnesses say outside of their evidence at the hearing. I therefore urge witnesses to be careful about comments they may make to the media or to others after they complete their evidence.

Committee hearings are not intended to provide a forum for people to make adverse reflections about others under the protection of parliamentary privilege. In that regard, it is important that witnesses focus on the issues raised by the inquiry terms of reference and avoid naming individuals unnecessarily. All witnesses have a right to procedural fairness according to the procedural fairness resolution adopted by the House in 2018. If witnesses are unable to answer a question today and want more time to respond, they can take a question on notice. Written answers to questions taken on notice must be provided within 21 days. If witnesses wish to hand up documents, they should do so through the Committee staff. To aid the audibility of this hearing, I remind both Committee members and witnesses to speak into the microphones. Finally, would everyone please turn their mobile phones to silent for the duration of the hearing. I now welcome our first witnesses. 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.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Regional Youth, before the Committee

ANNETTE PITMAN, Acting Chief Executive, Create NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet, on former affirmation

KATE FOY, Group Deputy Secretary, Tourism, Sport and Arts, Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade, on former affirmation

The CHAIR: Minister, would you like to make a short opening statement?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I would, if that is all right.

The CHAIR: Can you keep it short?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I will, but because this is my first time in this role with this Committee, I think it is important that I put a few markers down. It will be, I think, about four minutes or so.

The CHAIR: Thank you.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I have, Mr Chairman, an ambitious vision for the future of arts and creativity in this State. I want New South Wales to be known as a State where creativity is valued by everyone and where arts and culture is at the forefront of how we live our lives. For us to succeed and prosper as a State, recovering from one of the most socially challenging and isolating times in recent history, we must embrace the importance of arts and culture in our daily lives and invest in great cultural experiences that bring people together. We must create fit-for-purpose spaces that enable our creative practitioners to create and show work and generate new opportunities for people to share powerful experiences and moments.

Increasingly, people want to live, work and be at the beating heart of things. My vision is for a State transformed by arts and culture where people are happier and healthier because they have access to enriching arts and cultural experiences. This is a State where every single person has access to a remarkable range of high-quality arts and cultural experiences, regardless of where you choose to live and work. The Powerhouse is in a period of extraordinary transformation. With the establishment of Powerhouse Parramatta, the renewal of Powerhouse Ultimo, the expansion of the Museums Discovery Centre in Castle Hill and the ongoing operation at Sydney Observatory, the Powerhouse is designing a new approach to museums.

Leading with a place in history, the Powerhouse and its venues will set a global benchmark for museums and cultural precincts, rewriting how institutions represent and reflect their communities. The investment by the New South Wales Government will cement the Powerhouse as Australia's leading museum of applied arts and sciences with the development of two world-class facilities, in Ultimo and the museum's flagship in Parramatta. As the first New South Wales State cultural institution to be based in western Sydney, Powerhouse Parramatta will be a transformational cultural precinct in Australia's fastest growing city. Leading in science and technology and fostering our future STEM leaders, Powerhouse Parramatta will be the largest museum in New South Wales, with over 18,000 square metres of exhibition and public space, attracting two million visitors annually.

Furthermore, Powerhouse Ultimo will undergo a renewal that would put the museum's notable design and fashion collection at the forefront. Presenting exhibitions that feature the museum's significant collections alongside iconic objects, Powerhouse Ultimo is an ideal site to host exclusive international exhibitions and programs that support the fashion and design industries. The expansion will deliver a new and increased exhibition and public space and a significant investment in the development of a creative industries precinct that will generate subsidised commercial studios and workspaces. Lastly, the Museums Discovery Centre is home to the Powerhouse collection. A key component of the Powerhouse renewal is the development of new storage facilities with a research workshop and community spaces that will provide new levels of access to collections on one consolidated site.

Museums play an essential role in helping us understand and shape our culture and the culture of those around us. They connect us to the past and encourage us to think about the future. They have cross-disciplinary functions, linking science, history, art and education, and the Powerhouse Parramatta and the associated sites are no exception. This is a once-in-a-generation investment in cultural infrastructure and it will ensure equitable access to world-class innovative cultural experiences. Strategically and metaphorically, the site chosen for the Powerhouse Parramatta has power. For at least 40,000 years, the Burramatta people, a local Indigenous clan of the Dharug nation, lived on Parramatta River's banks. For the Burramatta people, the river is a source of life, the provider of food, such as oysters, yams, mullet and, of course, eels.

Today the city of Parramatta has evolved from the river, expanding into a cosmopolitan and sophisticated hub of western Sydney. The Powerhouse Parramatta sits at the centre of this re-imagined city—the jewel in the crown. I firmly believe in the power of arts and culture. The Powerhouse will harness this power to help the communities of western Sydney and beyond make sense of the world. But I also acknowledge the value of creative investment to deliver broad, tangible social benefits. This includes building the skills of young people and workers, generating economic benefit and building healthy, cohesive communities. This inherent value should be accessible to everyone, not just a privileged few. The establishment of the Powerhouse Parramatta and the strengthening of Ultimo will help equitably distribute social and cultural capital to ensure these benefits apply to all.

I have just outlined why arts and culture is so vital to our society and how the Powerhouse Parramatta will deliver a number of powerful outcomes for western Sydney. This project is important because arts and culture elevates us and it enriches our lives. For me, that is why this project is essential. We would be delighted to take your questions.

The CHAIR: Thank you.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Minister, you mentioned in your opening statement that there would be studios and workspaces. Are you referring to the Ultimo site or the Parramatta site?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I was referring to the Parramatta site specifically, but, as we know, there will be some studios and workspaces in Ultimo as well. My understanding, and I will throw to Ms Pitman if she has any further information, but my understanding is as some of the storage of the collection is moved from Ultimo to Castle Hill, that will open up some space in the Harwood Building for some studio spaces there. But, Ms Pittman, I do not know if you have anything to add to that.

ANNETTE PITMAN: There is an ambition, and I know that you are going to see Ms Havilah later on today, there is an ambition from the Powerhouse Museum to be close to and connected to industry, and a component of that for them is to have that physical connection onsite with them. A number of the attributes of the various museums will provide that opportunity for very close collaboration and engagement with industry as well as with educational parties. They will manifest themselves differently on the different sites and, again, Lisa can talk about her vision on that. On Parramatta there are some facilities that will enable parties from industry and education to come and work on the site, to have facilities there that will enable them to do their work and work collaboratively with curators and students and others directly onsite. In Ultimo that vision is similar, so to really have that connection with appropriate parties that engage from an industry side, together with the museum, and how that manifests itself physically on the site will be borne out through the development of the planning for Powerhouse Ultimo.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Minister, on the subject of work spaces and studios, you would be aware that in the last 48 hours there has been a bit of public discussion about the Creative Industries Residency Program. There has been a bit of community discussion and debate about the provision of those spaces. Have you, since there has been discussion and debate on this, spoken to the chief executive of MAAS about the allocation of those creative industry residencies?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I have not but my office has spoken to the Powerhouse about the issue to get further clarification about it. I might give you a little bit of background. As a cultural institution the Powerhouse has a responsibility to support creative industries in New South Wales.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I understand.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Core to that is creating a creative industries precinct within the museum. Creative industries residents will reflect a multitude of arts and cultural practices across fashion, design, photography, film, broadcasting and First Nations. The residents work and collaborate with staff to deliver research and public programming outcomes. Over the past two years, the residents, like all Powerhouse staff, have been impacted by COVID, with restrictions imposed on site access. But now that the Powerhouse is open again, I am advised they are actively working with residents to produce programming for their audiences. Examples of this include regular FBi radio programming as part of the Powerhouse Late program, and fashion designer Jordan Gogos bringing his Australian Fashion Week 2022 runway to the Powerhouse Ultimo in May, which is a major milestone for the museum. I think these creative residencies are really important to foster and encourage our thriving and surviving creative precinct around both the Powerhouse and more broadly.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Minister, I gave you an opportunity to discuss what we are referring to. Who determines those residencies? Were they determined by the previous Minister or by you, or were they devolved to Ms Havilah to organise?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: They are determined by a body within the Powerhouse. It has nothing to do with me. I did not know, frankly, that they existed—sorry, I should not say that. I did not know that the organisation that had the controversy raised about it yesterday existed until yesterday. These residencies are determined by, I understand, a board of four people, chaired by Ms Havilah. She would be best to speak to that but they go through that process of determining which ones are appropriate and which ones should have the support given to the tenancy.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: When your office spoke to Ms Havilah yesterday, you were reassured and you are now comfortable—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I do not know that it was to Ms Havilah but it was certainly to the Powerhouse itself. I can find that out. I should just give you a little bit of further information that I have, which is the approval process for creative industries residents is made internally, following a public expression of interest process. The residents are selected by a panel and recommendations are signed off by the chief executive. The panel members are Lisa Havilah; Julie Banks, the director of curatorial and collections; Michael Rodrigues, who was from Time Out and is now the 24-hour commissioner; and Antonietta Morgillo from Create NSW. They are the four.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So your office investigated yesterday and you were reassured, and all 21 stand?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I understand the concerns about the particular organisation that was mentioned. You know what I have said publicly, for example, about the boycotting of the Sydney Festival. I disagreed with it and I do not think that is in anyone's interests, creative artists or the community, for those sorts of boycotts to occur. Obviously, the organisation that was referred to yesterday is a strong supporter, so I disagree with some of their positions. I also have to say that for an arts Minister to start interfering in the selection of creative providers, or artists, based entirely on their political views or what political stance they might have, I think is a very slippery slope and the thin edge of the wedge. The arts has always been influenced by politics and has always sent political messages. I do not think it is the Minister's role to start either approving or censoring any organisation or artist because of their political content.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I will take you back to the Powerhouse. When are we going to get the business case?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I believe that the business case is Cabinet-in-confidence but I am happy to take that on notice.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Which business case are you talking about?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Obviously, there is one already that you have.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Are you talking about Ultimo or Parramatta?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Several days ago there was a discussion at the inquiry about the business case.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Which one—the Parramatta final business case or the Ultimo creative industries final business case?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Whichever one is not in the public arena.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I do not believe either of them are, and I believe both of them are Cabinet-in-confidence.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: We want all the business cases.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: You want all the business and all the cases. I am happy to take it on notice but my advice is that they are Cabinet-in-confidence.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I will be quick because I understand other members want to ask questions too. As you said several days ago, construction began in January. What is physically actually happening at the site?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I am very happy to throw to Ms Pitman on that.

ANNETTE PITMAN: There is a variety of activities that Lendlease is undertaking at the moment. It ranges from establishment of the site, and specific works that need to be done in order to accommodate their staff and their workers et cetera on the site.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Is that like portaloos and things like that?

ANNETTE PITMAN: It is a variety of things that will keep their workers safe and cared for on the site.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Is it putting up portaloos for workers and things like that?

ANNETTE PITMAN: There are also some site works happening. Again, you will see Tom Gellibrand, the head of projects—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You are head of Create NSW—

ANNETTE PITMAN: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: —and you are involved in Create Infrastructure.

ANNETTE PITMAN: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I am not being belligerent; I actually genuinely want to know what is happening at the site. I understand you are using phrases—I am not from the construction industry, but I know what establishment of the site means. It means putting up portaloos, maybe taping off areas, pegging out areas and things like that. I actually want to know what is physically happening there in the construction.

ANNETTE PITMAN: Apologies if I am not being clear; I am trying to give you that answer. The works that are happening onsite involve some groundworks. Again, I do not have the absolute specifics of where they are digging and what they are doing specifically in those works, but I am sure that that can be provided this afternoon for you.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I think there are excavations works happening.

ANNETTE PITMAN: There are.

KATE FOY: Earthworks, site occupation.

ANNETTE PITMAN: Site occupation.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I might ask a follow-up question. Is it the case that Create NSW is the client but Infrastructure NSW is responsible for the construction?

ANNETTE PITMAN: Create NSW is the sponsor of the project and Infrastructure NSW is overseeing the construction.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Would it not, therefore, be appropriate—no, I will not ask you that question.

The CHAIR: I can see another hearing coming up.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You are creating new witnesses, Mr Harwin.

ANNETTE PITMAN: But I think that it is also important to—there are an awful lot of works—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: He is coming this afternoon; you can ask him then.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: We will. Apologies, Ms Pitman.

ANNETTE PITMAN: That is okay. It is also important to note that there are an awful lot of works that are happening alongside the work on site to finalise the design and the procurement of the various materials and trades that will construct the buildings. At this stage in a project, it is inevitable that there is an awful lot of activity that happens preparing for the commencement of the erection of steel and those sorts of things as well.

The CHAIR: Minister, why does the Parramatta Powerhouse have seven performance spaces but no dedicated space for museum exhibitions? There is an awful lot of talk about fashion design and all that nice staff, but I thought we were talking about a museum, especially a museum of applied arts and sciences.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Of course.

The CHAIR: There is a lot of talk about all these other things—marketplaces et cetera—but where is the talk about relocating, for example, the steam exhibition? Where is that going to be? Is that going into storage? Is that going to be functioning at Castle Hill?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: When you say the steam exhibition, do you mean the—

The CHAIR: The live steam exhibition that was at Powerhouse Ultimo.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Obviously the most appropriate person to put that question to is Ms Havilah, who is in charge of programming. She will be able to talk to you about that. But in terms of the exhibition space, there is 18,000 square metres in Parramatta.

The CHAIR: But there is no dedicated space for museum exhibitions, and to my mind that says to me that the so-called Powerhouse Parramatta is not actually a museum but a fun folly.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: No, I fundamentally disagree with your contention.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Farmers' market. You forgot the farmers' market.

The CHAIR: Farmers' market too, sorry.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Of course a modern museum is going to be a vibrant, alive and fluid place. It is not the museums of old, Mr Borsak, where there is a room with objects and they just sit there for decades. That is not how museums operate now. They operate in a way that has—

The CHAIR: But that is not the way the Powerhouse in Ultimo operated under its old arrangements.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Indeed, that is exactly right. It is wonderful.

The CHAIR: But it is not going to be wonderful now, is it?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: But it is, because you are going to have the opportunity in Parramatta to have an enormous number of different ways that the community can interact with their collection and with arts and culture. There are going to be an extraordinary number of objects and exhibitions, which will be on display in a range of different ways.

The CHAIR: That leads me to another question: How many large objects will be on display at Parramatta, and where in the building will they be displayed?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Again, I would respectfully say that I am obviously not in charge of those specific details. Ms Havilah is the best person to talk to that. But I can say that the overall impression will be incredible. I believe that this will be a world-class facility, and the exhibitions that will be there will be of such significant magnitude that I think that even you will be impressed when it is opened, Mr Borsak.

The CHAIR: I have one more question. We are spending a lot of time talking about Parramatta, Ultimo and what perhaps may end up being the only real museum left, and that is Castle Hill being turned into an exhibition space. What is happening with the regional museums grants program, particularly community museums and galleries that are run by volunteers? This is also a large part of what this inquiry has been about, yet we have dwelt inordinately on the issues around Parramatta and Ultimo.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Indeed. You would remember, Mr Borsak, that over the last five years I have often been the sole voice arguing—

The CHAIR: Now you have an opportunity to do something—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I do, indeed.

The CHAIR: —and carve a bit of cash off these huge big elephant \$1.6 billion projects and put some money, in a sustainable way, into rural and regional New South Wales. So what is happening?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I am certainly looking into that. We have obviously got a budget process coming up now. If you go back and have a look my inaugural speech, Mr Borsak, you will see that I spoke to this very issue. I spoke about regional community museums and the importance of them. They are a hub for their community and are often the only cultural institution in a small town and play a magnified role of importance there. You are right—

The CHAIR: So what are you proposing then?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I am working my way through the budget process now, and hopefully I will have some good news to announce, which obviously I cannot share at the moment because we have not finished that. But I hear you; you are right. There is significant work to be done in that space in the regions. You would know that that is something that I am particularly passionate about and that I will continue to work on. I should note, however, that you look at projects like the Stronger Country Communities Fund, which has supported 93 LGAs throughout regional New South Wales. There has been significant investment through that through the Regional Cultural Fund into community museums. Yes, more needs to be done, but there have been funding streams already.

The CHAIR: Wasn't most of that money going into National Party and Liberal Party seats?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: The great thing about the Stronger Country Communities Fund is that it goes into every single regional LGA in New South Wales, and every LGA gets an appropriate amount, whatever seat it is in, which I think is a great program.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, you cannot say what is happening to any of the steam exhibits.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: The steam exhibition is still at Ultimo. It welcomes visitors daily, and that is a wonderful thing. You should go down and have a look, Mr Shoebridge.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I saw it before you spent \$1.6 billion trying to reimagine it. It was there before and it is there now. It does not require \$1.6 billion to go to see something that was already there.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: It is obviously a fairly superficial analysis to say that \$1.6 billion is being spent on reimaging one exhibition.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is why I am asking you: Will the steam exhibition remain in Ultimo? It does not seem consistent with your Government's vision to turn it into a kind of fashion precinct? Is it going to be fashion steam?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Fashion and steam. Steam-pumped.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Steam-pressed fashion.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Putting fashion at the forefront does not mean that there will be an absence of everything else. But, as I have said to Mr Borsak, Mr Shoebridge, this is obviously a programming question. I think it is appropriate that Ms Havilah—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, this is more than a programming question.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No, it isn't.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Perhaps one of the most critical pieces of our industrial heritage is the steam engine, an extraordinary and irreplaceable piece of our industrial heritage. Are you saying that you do not have any specific plans for that? You do not know what is going to happen with that extraordinary piece of our industrial heritage?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I am saying that it is obviously a critical and important piece of industrial heritage, as you rightly identified, Mr Shoebridge. But what I am saying is that my role as arts Minister is not to determine where every exhibition will be placed within the new precinct. I will throw to Ms Foy, who might have—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We have heard a lot from Ms Foy in this inquiry. Will it go to Parramatta, with all the risks entailed and the costs involved in transport?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I understand your question and my answer remains the same. I will throw to Ms Foy for further information.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Provided it is a direct answer, Ms Foy.

KATE FOY: I might refer to the several answers that we have provided before in previous meetings of this inquiry—I think it is the Boulton and Watt steam engine.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I just want to know what is going to happen to it.

KATE FOY: I think we have submitted evidence both at the departmental level as well as Powerhouse about the steam engine remaining at Ultimo, is my understanding. But Ms Havilah can confirm that. There are large items in the exhibition at Ultimo that would remain. There is also the facility at Parramatta for large items to be located there.

The CHAIR: That is my question. I did not get an answer to that before.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yes, that is right.

KATE FOY: There is a facility in Parramatta, and Ms Pitman is very much across the detail of the design.

The CHAIR: On the ground floor or upstairs?

KATE FOY: There is a museum presence in all of Parramatta. How those spaces are described provides for some flexibility. One of the things that Ms Havilah has talked about before is the large number of items in the museum's collection, some of which are not seen. Having a flexibility facility—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Then why don't we go to Ms Pitman?

KATE FOY: I understand what you were saying before, Mr Borsak, about the description of spaces, but having a degree of flexibility allows for a larger part of the collection to be exhibited at all three places: Castle Hill, Ultimo and Parramatta. The large steam engine items and the Catalina plane, which are also at Ultimo, we have also talked about before, and I am happy to refer back to the evidence provided. Ms Havilah will give you some detail. But by way to assist the Committee, I think the things that are of importance perhaps to direct to Ms Havilah are, first, precisely what are exhibitions that would remain at Ultimo, and we have talked about that before, particularly the large items; secondly, how the spaces might be used at Parramatta; and, thirdly, how fashion and design can coexist with the museum presence at Ultimo, as well as a Creative Industries Precinct, and the programming around those things.

Again, if I may assist the Committee with discussions with Mr Gellibrand this afternoon, when it comes to the site at Parramatta, he can provide detail about what site occupation looks like—whether it is work sheds, portaloos, fencing et cetera, what earthworks may be underway, what geotechnical work might be occurring to have a look the ground level and what might be underneath it, and any other detailed assessments that might need to occur and how they might be planning for literally the pouring of concrete and the erection of steel. They would be the three areas, if I can assist the Committee, that I would direct you to.

The CHAIR: I think, Ms Foy, you had done a good job of wandering away from the core question.

KATE FOY: I am happy to be very specific to the core question.

The CHAIR: The core question was large items, and you said that—

KATE FOY: Large items remain at Ultimo.

The CHAIR: —there would be space for large items at Parramatta.

KATE FOY: Large items will remain at Ultimo and Ms Havilah can be specific about what they are. I just cannot remember off the top of my head.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: It is the Catalina, the Locomotive No. 1 and the Boulton and Watt steam engine. Ms Pitman was going to add something further.

ANNETTE PITMAN: Powerhouse Parramatta and Powerhouse Ultimo are both museums. They are being developed to the highest museum standards in international museum standards. That includes—

The CHAIR: Does that include the air-conditioning system that we were told was not going to be up to museum standard?

ANNETTE PITMAN: The air-conditioning system is going to be up to museum standard. When you design a museum, you look at a number of different things. You look at the floor loading and ensuring that you have spaces that have the scale and the capacity to carry the weight for large items. But importantly, also, you need a pathway to get in and out of the building for those large items. All those things have been considered in the development of the Parramatta facility and all of those things will be considered in detail as we develop the plans for the Ultimo facility. I think the Minister has just said that there has already been a commitment to retaining the Boulton and Watt, the Catalina and Locomotive No. 1 in the Ultimo facility and that forms part of our plans, as well as providing opportunities for changing exhibitions that draw upon other parts of the collection, as Ms Foy has said.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: The question is, Minister, one Ms Foy said was best directed to Ms Havilah but I think is for you. This is what I think Mr Shoebridge was getting at. You were very clear that your vision for Ultimo—you described it as your vision, the Government's vision—is for a fashion and design centre of excellence. It is not clear how that exists alongside a piece of industrial machinery, trains and aircraft. That is incongruous. What has happened is that those pieces were originally intended to move to Parramatta. That was the original plan. That plan has changed. They are now being kept in Ultimo, we have been told. The Ultimo site has not been designed exclusively as a fashion and design precinct; it has got all these different bits bolted on. We have got a train, a bit of industrial machinery, a plane hanging from the sky and a Chanel dress.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And a rocket.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: It does not seem clear what the vision for that is and it looks incongruous. It looks messy. Can you explain to the Committee how that is your vision for that site?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Yes, I am happy to. I think you have just slightly misrepresented my words, Ms Jackson. I will go back to my words, which are in front of me. I stated the following:

Furthermore, Powerhouse Ultimo will undergo a renewal that will put the museum's notable design and fashion collection at the forefront.

That is not incongruous. That is not antithetical to also having other focuses in the museum.

The CHAIR: How does design and fashion work with a museum of arts and sciences? How does that work together? I am with Ms Jackson here. Again, you are talking about fashion and design but we do not hear you talking about technology. It is a technology museum. That is what it was designed for.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Indeed, and there is going to be an enormous focus on STEM out at Parramatta. There is no question it is one of the foundations of the museum itself. But of course, design is part of art too. Fashion is part of art as well. That is why Ultimo will have a significant focus on that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: One moment, Mr Shoebridge. Will that be the only focus? No. Almost no museum in the world has only one tiny, single focus. Of course there are other focuses. I do not think it is incompatible to say that there will be a focus on the heritage, particularly the industrial heritage of the building, and looking to some of the major objects to link to that, but also noting that fashion is something that is significant and unique to the Powerhouse and something that will be focused on at the Ultimo precinct as well.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, this is what has happened, is it not? The original decision to move everything to Parramatta pissed a lot of people off and a campaign was done to save the Ultimo site, which thankfully was in part successful because the community loves it.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: And the leadership of the former Minister.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is your position. That is okay. I am glad that—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Well, it is actually true.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Someone had to make the decision and—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It is actually true.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: The former Minister is here and I think deserves some credit for that. That is all I am saying.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am glad the Minister acquiesced to that strong public campaign to keep the Ultimo site and made the right decision in that regard. Whether that is—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I thought it was wonderful that the Minister worked hand in hand with—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You can describe that as—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: —with the community and was responsive to their needs.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: More sanctimonious doublespeak from a Stalinist who just tells lies.

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is just out of order. But anyway, that is okay.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Point of order—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I withdraw.

The CHAIR: The Hon. Don Harwin is withdrawing the comment.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Can I just say I love these committees, Mr Chair?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Having retained the Ultimo site, there was then the problem that a whole series of the steam engines could not be moved without seriously risking them and you were not quite sure what you would do with them at Parramatta. You have cobbled together a scheme which will have some of the steam and large industrial items held at Ultimo grafted onto this new fashion and design position that you have in a very incongruous collection. Now you are making that out to be a virtue, but in actual fact you have got a bit of a mess. You have got a camel—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: It is a camel of a museum.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That is just garbage.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: —at Ultimo.

The CHAIR: You have got a horse designed by committee and it has turned out to be worse than a camel.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What is the idea of the Ultimo site? A bit of steam and a bit of fashion? Is there a market for that? Are people coming to see dresses and steam engines? Is that the plan?

The CHAIR: Millions.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: That is exactly what is happening there now, obviously. There are—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It is what has been happening since 1988, David.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Exactly.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Why would you think it would not continue to work?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: It has obviously been successful and is passionately supported by the community.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That is just stupid.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I just find this line of questioning a little odd. Museums can have a range of different focuses. I have said that the focus on fashion will be at the forefront, but it is a design museum. That is the whole point of the Powerhouse. Whether we talk about fashion or the sorts of industrial objects that you are talking about, Mr Shoebridge, these are extraordinary examples of industrial design. This represents and reflects the museum's role in basically representing the applied arts. Design is part of every item in the collection and I do not think that it is incongruous—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you understand how sceptical the community is about this? The original plan was to completely shut down the Ultimo site and find a way to sell it off to finance the Parramatta construction. The community has pushed back on that—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: And under the leadership of the former Minister it is now being kept as an arts and cultural space for the community in perpetuity. I think that is an absolutely wonderful outcome—

The CHAIR: I thought it was supposed to be a museum, not an arts and cultural space.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: And a museum. I was not trying to be cute there, Mr Borsak. Of course it is a museum.

The CHAIR: That is the very point that is being made.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Absolutely, and I agree with you.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Will there be any permanent exhibits at the Parramatta site? Is it the plan to have permanent exhibits, or are they large blank rooms that just get—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Why do you not ask Lisa in 10 minutes?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is the Government's plan for permanent exhibits? Or is it—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Have you not got anything for Ben? Surely you understand the different—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I have a question—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I will ask—

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. DON HARWIN: You are just being—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Large blank rooms or permanent exhibits?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I want to put formally on the record—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And if Don wants to be the Minister, he can have that fight.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am perfectly happy to have Ben as the Minister.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The question is directed to you, Minister.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I appreciate the question, Mr Shoebridge, but I have to say, as is always the case, the former Minister and I are as one on this. There is not a cigarette paper between us. We both agree that the appropriate person to ask these questions and all questions about programming is obviously Ms Havilah. This goes back to the point I was making before. I do not believe that it is appropriate for government Ministers to get involved in curatorial programming decisions.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Who made the decision to make it a design and arts portfolio? Was that a ministerial decision?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It has been a design museum since 1988.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Who made the decision to have the Ultimo precinct be about fashion and design?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: It obviously reflects its use and the fact that it is being used—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Who made the decision?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: —for that historically.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You say it is not for politicians to make those decisions. Who made that decision?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Mr Shoebridge, you should obviously speak to Ms Havilah about those questions. That is a programming issue. As I continue to say, when we talk about programming or curatorial decisions, those decisions are made, appropriately, by the director and those questions should be referred to her. I do not think that is a controversial statement.

The CHAIR: As Minister for Aboriginal Affairs also and, I believe, your previous Minister, who is on the same page as you—there is not a cigarette paper between you—why have you not prioritised the development of an Aboriginal cultural centre?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I have, and I am—

The CHAIR: You have. Okay. Can you please explain where, when and how much?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I am very happy to. Actually, it is a really important question and issue. The Premier has made it clear that one of his priorities is the establishment of an Aboriginal cultural centre in Sydney. He has instructed me that, as part of my remit, that will be one of the things that I will be focusing on. I am excited that initial work has already happened in terms of a coordination—

The CHAIR: Is this a thought bubble too? Or is it actually something concrete being put to Cabinet for the budget process?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: You understand, Mr Borsak, obviously, you cannot create an Aboriginal cultural centre without having genuine collaboration with Aboriginal people. That obviously just—

The CHAIR: The Government has had nearly 11 years to do that.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I understand your question, but I have just become the Minister. I have only been the Minister for 2½ months. The Premier has made it clear that this is one of his priorities. It is one of my priorities too. This is a process that will be led from the involvement of both Create NSW and the department of Aboriginal affairs. Perhaps Ms Foy might like to add to this. I think it is actually incredibly important. I think it is incredibly important that there is a standalone space for First Nations people, where their history can be told in an honest way, where we can appreciate and reflect the truth telling and the songlines and the storylines of that 65,000-year-old culture, the oldest surviving culture in the world. I am very excited about it. It is overdue.

The CHAIR: Just talking about culture and surviving culture, where is Willow Grove going to be relocated to?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I will throw to Ms Pitman for more information, potentially, but that decision will be taken in consultation with the community. That engagement and discussion is happening now. Obviously, you would know that it has been dismantled. It is in storage. But, again, this is something that needs to be done with genuine collaboration. But Ms Pitman might have further points to add on that.

ANNETTE PITMAN: With the decision to rebuild Willow Grove, the first thing that we did was set up a community reference group. That community reference group is there to provide feedback and advice, both on the future use of Willow Grove and the future site of Willow Grove. We have been engaging with the community reference group. That group has a broad-ranging representation across—

The CHAIR: Ms Pitman, you are not answering the question.

ANNETTE PITMAN: I will. I was getting to it.

The CHAIR: The answer is that no decision has been made yet. That is what you are saying.

ANNETTE PITMAN: I am telling you the process that we are going to go through. But, yes, no decision has been made yet on the site.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Ms Pitman, in an earlier answer you talked about the elevation of the building at Parramatta, and you said that that would affect large objects going into—no?

ANNETTE PITMAN: That was not quite what I meant. Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Can I take you back to those comments. I interpreted it to mean that the elevation of it in response to flooding concerns would affect what would be displayed in the building. That is what I interpreted it to mean. Can you clarify the comments for my benefit.

ANNETTE PITMAN: Sure. I can happily do that. I was talking about access. For large objects, you need to make sure that you have the ability to move them into the building and out of the building. That includes both the entry points into the building, but it also includes vertical transport within the building as well and then pathways within the building to get these objects to their spot where they are going to be displayed. If I used the word "elevation", what I meant was the elevations of the building and the various floors of the building. That is quite a careful process of the design to ensure that the building can function and can display the objects that the Powerhouse wishes to display.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So the elevation of the building in response to flooding concerns will affect what can be displayed in it because of how you move them in and out, that kind of thing.

ANNETTE PITMAN: What I am describing as the planning for the movement of large objects in and out of the building has nothing to do with flooding. There—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But the building is elevated.

ANNETTE PITMAN: The building is elevated, yes. If you are specifically wanting to talk about flooding—it has been engineered to withstand the flooding. I know that you will be seeing some engineers this afternoon, who will talk in quite a deal of detail about that. Alongside that, there is the planning for the museum and how the museum will operate. That is what I was talking about.

The CHAIR: We will draw questioning to a close. Thank you very much, Minister. Thank you, Ms Foy and Ms Pitman.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

(Short adjournment)

Ms LISA HAVILAH, Chief Executive, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, on former affirmation

The Hon. PETER COLLINS, President, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, on former oath

The CHAIR: Welcome, Ms Havilah and Mr Collins. We will throw straight to questioning from the Opposition.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Ms Havilah, probably the big question mark over Castle Hill, Powerhouse Parramatta and Powerhouse Ultimo is actually what is going to happen at Ultimo, what will actually be there. Will it be a fashion museum? Will it be a fashion museum with a plane, a steam engine? What will actually be in the space? I think that is what the community actually genuinely wants to know. People who follow this sector strongly, with much interest, the various groups that do, I guess—they realise that construction or works began in January at the Parramatta site. But it is really what is going to happen at Ultimo and what is the vision and what is going to be there. So, if you—

LISA HAVILAH: Thank you, Mr Secord, for that question.

PETER COLLINS: Mr Chair, we have started proceedings?

The CHAIR: Yes.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: We did not have an opening statement. We just jumped right in.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Sorry, Mr Collins. He threw to me, and I just responded without even—

The CHAIR: It is my fault. I forgot about that.

PETER COLLINS: Can we just defer Lisa's answer to that question just for a moment. Chair, can I thank you for this opportunity and just make a very brief introductory comment. So much has been done since we last appeared before this Committee. We thank you for this opportunity to appear again and to update the Committee on progress that has been made and issues that have been considered since we last met. I want to acknowledge publicly the extraordinary role played by the previous Minister, now a member of this Committee, and just acknowledge that Don Harwin has done an extraordinary job as arts Minister, to whom we answered principally, securing the budget and the operating budget for the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences across our four locations, but three in contention and discussion today—namely, Parramatta, Ultimo and Castle Hill. To have a \$1.34 billion budget for these is extraordinary. We at the museum are deeply grateful for that and for the leadership that he has shown. I could go on but, Chair, I suspect you want to get to the nub of today's discussion. But I thought it would be appropriate to begin by acknowledging that. Since we last met, we have not only secured the capital budget and the operating budget for the museum, but we have also undergone rigorous—

The CHAIR: What was the original figure you mentioned?

PETER COLLINS: It was 1.34.

The CHAIR: How much of that is capital? And how much is on the revenue account?

PETER COLLINS: That is the capital budget for—

The CHAIR: What is the revenue account for running these three museums over the next 12 months, two years, three years?

PETER COLLINS: We are happy to provide that detail to you. But the 1.34 is the capital budget for Castle Hill, currently under construction; Parramatta, currently under construction, now in the hands of Lendlease; and, thirdly, the complete Ultimo refurbishment, which is a very significant amount on its own and compares extraordinarily well with any bequest to any other Australian cultural institution, whether start-up or refurbishment.

The CHAIR: You mentioned three sites out of four. What is the fourth one?

PETER COLLINS: The observatory at Observatory Hill. That is often overlooked when you look at our inventory of assets, but that is not the subject of refurbishment or redesign at this stage. That is an ongoing institution.

The CHAIR: The Harwood Building, what is happening with that?

PETER COLLINS: The Harwood Building is in use today and remains part of our precinct and we have had no instructions to the contrary. We are aware of the strong interest in it and the devotion that a number of people have to that particular building. It remains very much within the arts precinct at Ultimo.

The CHAIR: There are no plans to demolish it?

PETER COLLINS: No, there are no plans to demolish it. Chair, that is all I wanted to say by way of an opening remark. I apologise to Mr Secord for interrupting the answer process. Lisa, I am happy to hand over to you at this stage.

The CHAIR: That was my oversight.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: It was our fault.

LISA HAVILAH: Mr Chair, I also have an opening statement. Thank you to the Committee for allowing me the opportunity to address you today. I would also like to acknowledge the traditional owners, the Gadigal people, and I would like to acknowledge our Powerhouse trust president, Peter Collins, and thank him for his great collaboration and leadership. The trust, the museum and I are incredibly excited to let the Committee know, as you know, that since we last met construction is underway on Powerhouse Parramatta. We are working at the museum very closely with our construction partner Lendlease, delivery partner Infrastructure NSW and ongoing collaborator Create Infrastructure. This is a major milestone for this internationally important project, and I would like to take the opportunity, on behalf of the museum and its communities, to thank the New South Wales Government for its visionary investment into establishing western Sydney's first New South Wales cultural institution.

Since we were last before the Committee, I am also excited to let you know that the Powerhouse team continues to work closely with the communities of western Sydney to develop partnerships and education and cultural programs. As the Committee would be aware, the Powerhouse has a four-year \$75-million philanthropy campaign underway. I would like to thank the Powerhouse Parramatta campaign committee, which is chaired by Tony Shepherd. I would also like to thank our Powerhouse Parramatta campaign patrons who have supported us so generously over the past 12 months: Her Excellency the Hon. Margaret Beazley, Ita Buttrose, Professor Peter Shergold and Professor Michelle Simmons. I am very pleased to let the Committee know that, while still in its first year, the campaign has reached \$35 million of its \$75 million target.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Walker Family Foundation for its visionary \$20 million investment, which will see over 10,000 students from across regional New South Wales and western Sydney experience world-class, immersive STEM education experiences through the establishment of the Lang Walker Family Academy. Many thousands more will experience incredible new STEM programs in schools through the Lang Walker in-schools program that will start in term two of this year and will be delivered across six western Sydney local government areas in partnership with the Department of Education. We have also recently announced Western Sydney University as our foundation university partner and we are already delivering a broad range of community, research and education programs in partnership with WSU.

Earlier this year we announced the establishment of the Vitocco Family Kitchen and the Vitocco Legacy Project, which will establish a full-time curatorial position that will research and collect histories of western Sydney with a focus on agricultural science, manufacturing, changing land use and food production. Over the past 12 months the museum has also continued to extend its programs across western Sydney through a partnership with TAFE NSW to develop creative studio programs in Parramatta and the establishment of a skills exchange and creative science programs in Castle Hill. We have also expanded our partnership with Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council and established a new partnership with City of Parramatta to support research and creative practice at Castle Hill. We are also excited about our new partnership with Google Creative Lab to provide digital access to Powerhouse Parramatta leading up to its opening.

As our president has just outlined, since we last appeared before you, the New South Wales Government has announced a \$480 million to \$500 million investment into the renewal of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo. The trust, our staff, our audiences and our communities are thrilled with this visionary investment that will have a transformative impact for many generations to come. Some highlights of the renewal include the creation of new international standard exhibition spaces that will focus on fashion and design; the renewal of current exhibition spaces to international standard to ensure that we can present more of the Powerhouse collection; new levels of connectivity for the Powerhouse to its public domain and the expanding precincts around it, from Tech Central to Darling Harbour; addressing the many issues our visitors face with wayfinding and clear separation between back of house and front of house to ensure an exemplary visitor experience; and the establishment of a creative industries precinct that will support and engage audiences with New South Wales leading creatives while creating an ecology that will support the growth and profile of one of our most important industries.

The museum is working closely with Create NSW to undertake a two-stage development process in the lead-up to a national design competition, which will be launched later this year. To update the museum conservation management plan, we have been undertaking extensive consultation, and this weekend at Ultimo we have an open weekend that will include community consultations over both the Saturday and the Sunday. I am very proud to let you know that in October last year the museum re-opened following the COVID-19 lockdown, with eight new exhibitions that highlight the extraordinary breadth of the Powerhouse collection. Some of these include Robert Rosen's *Glitterati; Clay Dynasty*, which charted 50 years of studio ceramics and included over 400 works from the Powerhouse collection; and *Five Hundred Arhats*, which was an exhibition that we produced in collaboration with the Chuncheon National Museum of Korea.

Just recently we were really excited to announce the first international exclusive retrospective exhibition of renowned Australian designer Carla Zampatti, which will open later this year. For the first time in the museum's history we will stage a runway show as part of Afterpay Australian Fashion Week in collaboration with acclaimed Australian fashion label Iordanes Gogos. With the return of festivals and events, we will expand Sydney Science Festival and Sydney Design Week across Parramatta and western Sydney. I have the greatest admiration and respect for the Powerhouse team. Not only are we delivering extraordinary programs together but we are also moving into the final phases of the Powerhouse digitisation project, which is one of the largest digitisation projects in the country and will result in 338,000 objects from the Powerhouse collection being accessible to the community online.

We are continuing to transition our workforce to deliver world-class museum outcomes across our four sites and to ensure our workforce is supported and sustained to be leaders in the field. In the past 12 months we have established a director of First Nations who is establishing a First Nations directorate that will embed First Nations perspectives not only across our infrastructure renewal but also across our collections, our programs and the strategic administration of our institution. In partnership with the museum's leadership team, I continue to work hard in the service of the public and our institution to engage our workforce, delivery partners, industry partners and diverse communities to honour and ensure that the investment that has been made into our much-loved institution has reach, impact and relevance. Thank you.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Ms Havilah, you got a taste of the question that I proposed earlier. Construction has begun at Parramatta. The focus is now turning to what will actually happen at Powerhouse Ultimo, including discussion of the steam engine remaining, the plane remaining, and fashion and fabric. To address the community concerns and representations that we are getting about what is actually going to happen there, what is going to happen at the site?

LISA HAVILAH: Thank you for your question, Mr Secord. As you know, we are the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, so we have an incredible encyclopedic collection of over 500,000 objects. It is a very multidisciplinary collection. The way that we intend to focus our exhibitions that present those collections is that in Parramatta there will be a focus on science and technology and in Ultimo there will be a focus on fashion and design. Focus means not to the exclusion of other—you know, there is technology and design, and there is design in technology. The world is not a siloed place anymore, and the way that our curators work so skilfully with our collections to tell stories of innovation and ingenuity really needs that crossover between those disciplines to tell those stories. At Ultimo, as you know, there is a commitment to retain the Catalina, Locomotive No. 1 and the very significant, as you mentioned earlier, Boulton and Watt.

Those stories of industrialisation, including the incredible steam exhibition, will be integrated into broader contemporary stories that we will tell across our collection, but those stories will also be integrated and informed by the work that we do with industry, whether it is industries across STEM or whether it is creative industries across design, fashion, architecture. We strongly believe that, just as the museum has, for the last over 100 years, worked very closely with industry to inform how we collect and how we tell stories and how we engage communities, we will continue to do that. I just want to address your question around specifically the steam exhibition. We will retain steam. But, as you know, that exhibition has been there for over 30 years. Many of the exhibitions have been at Powerhouse for over 30 years and, over that time, exhibitions and the stories they tell need updating, and they need to be relevant to the contemporary communities and audiences that we are in the service of. So I believe, and the trust believes, that it is our responsibility to make sure that we change exhibitions and we change the stories we tell.

One of the challenges with Powerhouse Ultimo, if I may, has been that because those exhibitions have not changed, people—and I think I have told this story before to the Committee, so I apologise if you are hearing this again—only come three times sometimes in a lifetime; they might come as a child, bring their child and then bring their grandchild. I believe we have a responsibility with this level of investment that the museum, both in Ultimo and in Parramatta and in Castle Hill, makes stronger contributions back to its communities, but in a whole range of new ways. Through exhibitions, of course, but also in many other ways, from contributing to the

night-time economy, through being open late and engaging with audiences in different ways. I think the big thing to say about Ultimo is that the world has changed around it and it needs to change to reflect the world, and so the renewal is very much about that—making the museum relevant, bringing its past forward in a respectful way, but making it really deliver for its communities in new ways.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Can I ask a question about the Castle Hill facility. The latest proposal or the latest plan says that it will be 30 per cent bigger than originally proposed. Is that recognition that many of the large objects will simply be stored there?

LISA HAVILAH: No, that is not the case at all. Although our most high-profile, very large objects are the Catalina, Boulton and Watt and Loco No. 1, the museum actually has over 300 objects that are larger than three metres. We plan to show those collection objects both in Ultimo and in Castle Hill and in Parramatta. We have the capacity to do that and we will retain and expand that capacity in Ultimo through its renewal.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you agree that two million visitations at Parramatta is quite optimistic? Taking what you just said, that people visit the Powerhouse Ultimo maybe three times in their life—as a child, as a parent and then a grandparent—if you are saying two million visitations a year, there is 5.2 million people or 5.3 million people in Sydney alone. You are predicating it on the fact that most people in Sydney and/or regional New South Wales, almost one-third of the State, is going to visit the Powerhouse?

LISA HAVILAH: I think the important thing to note about that—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: That is pretty optimistic.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: We did address this on Tuesday, and now—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I just want to say that the two—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: You actually heard what she had to say, which was that they were not—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: If there is a point of order, let us get one.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: If you are counting online traffic as a visitation then you will meet the two million, I am sure of it.

LISA HAVILAH: No, this is not online. If I may, Mr Secord?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Yes. Sorry.

LISA HAVILAH: That's okay. I think it is an absolutely deliverable number, because the way that we are programming in Parramatta is that there will not be a permanent exhibition, so the exhibitions will change, and it will be a dynamic program with its museum exhibition programs at the core but also those museum exhibitions will be very closely connected with a whole range of education programs and industry programs. We are hoping, or we have planned, that people will come to the museum more than three times in a lifetime. We are hoping three times in a month, because the program will be much more dynamic and fast moving.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Is that really your plan, that individuals will visit three times a month? Quite genuinely, Ms Havilah, is the two million based on a sense that individuals in Sydney would visit three times a month?

LISA HAVILAH: No, I am just—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Okay. I just wanted to check.

LISA HAVILAH: I am just trying to articulate a point. I am sorry.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: That is okay.

PETER COLLINS: Can I just add in closing on this point, Chair, that from the outset the Parramatta museum has built into it the educational role—the Lang Walker academy, the flow-through of particularly high school students from western Sydney. I think that itself guarantees a constant torrent of students coming through and its best educational use. One of the key objects that we have is as an educator and we recognise that this is a fabulous opportunity in Parramatta to do something new and different.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Ms Havilah, earlier on, when the Minister was present, we had some questions from my colleague the Hon. Walt Secord about the Creative Industries Residency Program at Ultimo. The Minister was asked some questions about the approval process and he confirmed that he had not been involved in the approval process for those individual tenancies.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Did you approve it then?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I wonder if you might confirm for the Committee that no ministerial involvement has taken place at any stage in the approval of individual applications for those residencies and just elaborate on the information that was provided earlier by the Minister, which I believe you heard.

LISA HAVILAH: As the Committee is aware, we have a creative industries program where we go out for a public expression of interest. We have an internal group. We also bring in partners. We have had Create NSW members on that committee as we go through the selection process. All of the selection and approval of those creative industry residents, the final approval, is made by myself as chief executive.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: May I just have one more follow-up? From your answer—and let me make sure this is absolutely clear, on the record, because it was asserted yesterday on 2GB by Mr Ray Hadley that I had approved those residencies—you are categorically telling this Committee that I had no role?

LISA HAVILAH: That is correct, yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I just want to do a follow-up to this. Minister Harwin raised this in this session. I just want the record to show this. He is saying that you and the panel comprising four people made the decisions. What is the commercial value of those residencies?

LISA HAVILAH: It is based on the square meterage of space that is available. We do a commercial valuation of the office space and then we apply a 50 per cent subsidy and then we work with creative residents—they work with staff, whether it is curatorial or program staff or education staff, to develop programs with us at the museum.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So a 50 per cent subsidy for the 21 groups?

LISA HAVILAH: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are there groups there that are getting the residencies at 50 per cent of commercial rates?

LISA HAVILAH: Yes, all of the residents. It is applied equally.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: How many applications are received, roughly?

LISA HAVILAH: I would have to take that on notice.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But you were on the panel. You would have a general indication of how many applications there were.

LISA HAVILAH: Just from memory—I will have to find the actual detail for you—usually about 50 per cent move through the process.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: One last question. In the previous session the Minister confirmed that his office spoke after the Ray Hadley interview. Did they raise concerns about the due diligence undertaken involving those 21 groups?

LISA HAVILAH: No, they raised no concerns.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So they were happy with your selection of those 21?

LISA HAVILAH: To be clear and exact, I did not have the conversation; my staff had the conversation with the Minister's office.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But would you not have taken an interest in this matter since it was on the most popular radio program in New South Wales? I would have taken notice.

LISA HAVILAH: No, I had many conversations with my team about it yesterday.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you stand by your decision to fund those 21?

LISA HAVILAH: While I do not agree with different opinions—we have 21 very diverse creative residents and I do not agree with all of their opinions, what I do support and I do think is important for us as a cultural institution is to support a diversity of practices and creative practices.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I appreciate that point and I think it is difficult to say we will only support artists and creatives who create art in a very narrow confine, but because they are receiving a taxpayer subsidy in the form of free or subsidised space in institutions that we fund, is there any sense of guidelines or standards or protocols? Because some things are not acceptable, you would accept that, Ms Havilah?

LISA HAVILAH: Of course.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Some things that are said and things that are done in the name of art are not acceptable to receive any public subsidy. Surely the museum would have some sense of protocol—I am not saying any one of those groups necessarily is in that category, but going forward, is that something that the public can at least have assurance that there are some guidelines that guide how those decisions are being made so that things are not supported that should not be?

LISA HAVILAH: We do have guidelines and criteria and I would be happy to share them with the Committee. Yes, absolutely, we make sure that we broadly are implementing the strategic direction of the museum, but we also ensure that we are in line with overall government direction.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: One final question before I hand over. What is the total budget for the Creative Industries Residency Program? What is the budget for the allocation to it?

LISA HAVILAH: I would have to take that on notice, but I am very happy to provide it.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: It would be useful to get a copy of those guidelines as well.

The CHAIR: Ms Havilah, talking about industry residencies, there was a duo called the New World Daughter listed on the 2021 creative residency program and then they just disappeared. Obviously, they would have been selected under the criteria you are talking about, which we do not know what that is, but on what basis were they then suddenly disappeared? Because if you go to the website they are just not there anymore.

LISA HAVILAH: New World Daughter were a resident of the Powerhouse and during COVID they withdrew their residency formally and we accepted it.

The CHAIR: They withdrew it?

LISA HAVILAH: Yes.

The CHAIR: Can we see something in writing from them that confirms that?

LISA HAVILAH: Yes, very happy to provide that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: For myself, I think the less prescription we have in terms of artists and their ability to create and bring a variety of amazingly different ideas the better. I am assuming that that is the basic philosophy in terms of who would be able to get residency. The basic philosophy is that artists should be free to create. Is that right?

LISA HAVILAH: The way that the program is structured is we also assess it on how those creative industries can contribute to the programming of the museum. So we assess it from that point of view as well.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But you are not running a political lens over artists, are you?

LISA HAVILAH: No.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And there is no intention to do that? Mr Collins?

PETER COLLINS: Can I say that were the trust to become aware that our facilities were being used for any political purposes, such as campaign offices, preparation of some sort of campaign material by creative groups, we would take a very negative view about that, but there is no evidence to that effect.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I think you misunderstood the purpose of my question. To the extent that art is often inherently political—it may be critiquing people in power, it may be critiquing decisions, and I am sure there would be occasions where the trust might think there was a highly political point to an artist. I am hoping there is no intent at all to run that kind of lens over it to exclude artists, is there?

PETER COLLINS: Artists are entitled to have their views, to have opinions very different to those of the trust, of the organisation itself. It is not our job to ensure compliance with a particular set of beliefs with artists.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And sometimes art will offend a proportion of the population.

PETER COLLINS: Exactly right.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And that will not rule out the art and rule out the artists, I hope, will it?

LISA HAVILAH: No.

PETER COLLINS: No. Artists will be artists and they will have their views, and some of those views will be strong and they will express them publicly and get media attention for them.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: In terms of the flooding risk, I note that there have been a number of statements made about the flood level from the rising of the river, and we have all seen the river rise three times

in the last couple of years and flood the construction site, or the majority of the construction site. Is it your position, Ms Havilah, that that river flooding would not threaten the exhibition sites? Is that right?

LISA HAVILAH: That is correct.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You are aware though of the views in Molino Stewart's report, which postdates the most recent Arup report that you have, and I think it is 2020, where Molino Stewart talks about the overland flood risk, because the overland flood risk is quite different to the river flood risk. The report says, and I will read from that report, "To meet that requirement the EIS would need to consider all of the social, economic and environmental risks posed by the full range of floods up to the probable maximum flood," and then says, "There is a real risk that floodwaters will enter the museum. For example, a flood with a one-in-500 chance of occurrence per year has about a one-in-six chance of occurring in the next 80 years. Such a flood would enter the ground floor of the museum to a considerable depth and leave a deposit of contaminated silt within the building." That analysis is based not upon the river height but based upon the overland flood and the potential blockage of the pipes. I have not seen anywhere that you have got a flood study that meets that. Can you point out where it is?

PETER COLLINS: Can I begin the answer to that—and when I say "begin", I am aware, Mr Shoebridge and Chair, that you have Infrastructure NSW and also Arup appearing before the Committee this afternoon to give evidence. I will say as president of the trust that I watched these weather events unfold with more than a passing interest and paid very close attention to the weather events that impacted on the foreshore of the Parramatta River where the museum will be built.

I am very pleased to say as an initial contribution, Mr Shoebridge, in answer to the question that you have raised, that I am greatly relieved that the site has come through those tests with flying colours and almost exactly in accordance with the engineering prediction and modelling. You will be able to cross-examine Arup and INSW this afternoon. We can provide you with some preliminary detail now, but I suspect they will provide you with better detail this afternoon.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am not asking you as flood experts because I do not think that is your role, I am asking you as trustee and CEO, given these concerns are raised in the Molino Stewart report, and given the Arup report talks about a one-in-1,000 event having about a 12 per cent likelihood of occurring over the next few centuries, why did you not commission a flood study to address those risks of overland flooding?

LISA HAVILAH: I suppose the answer to that is that we work very closely with Create Infrastructure and Infrastructure NSW on the delivery of these projects. We also work with Arup, who are world-leading in terms of their engineering and flood engineering. We have very detailed governance around this project. I have complete confidence that the museum is above a one-in-1,000-year flood risk and I feel completely confident.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: My understanding, and you will correct me if I am wrong, is that the stage two design brief said the collection should be displayed above the level of a probable maximum flood. I think that is level two and above. Is that right?

LISA HAVILAH: Not that I am aware of, but I can take it on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What is the difference between a one-in-1000-year flood level and the probable maximum flood level in that part of Parramatta because the probable maximum flood is the probable maximum flood?

PETER COLLINS: Can I say I think the answer you probably require, Mr Shoebridge, is an engineering answer, which is very specific.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We will do this in the flood setting. I suppose these are questions that I thought would be tested and gone through at a trust level and senior management level, when these concerns have been raised in the flood studies. I am just checking, was there a process at the trust level that tested these issues: is this secure from a probable maximum flood; what about the overland flood risk? Did that happen at a trust level Mr Collins?

PETER COLLINS: Can I say to you, the advice we have had from Arup, INSW and Create Infrastructure is that all of the modelling that we were notified of and received from those agencies, came through these weather events very much according to the modelling. There was nothing. I can assure you from a trust perspective, that if there had been anything to suggest to the contrary, if there had been anything to suggest that the figures had not stacked up, that the modelling was wrong, the trust would have shown very deep interest in that. It would have discussed it and would have asked for appropriate reassurances. We have seen no information which would suggest any defect in the modelling on which the museum is relying.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But all of that modelling is about the river flood from the rising river, and the impact of the rising river. But it would appear from the Arup report and also the Molino Stewart report, that the actual risk to the exhibition does not even come from the river rising, other than the river rising, together with blocked pipes and large overland flooding, which produces an even more aggravated overland flood risk. It is the overland flood risk that continues to worry me on these reports. It would not show up in your review of the river flooding because the overland flood risks start kicking in at about a one-in-500-year flood risk when all the stormwater infrastructure gets saturated, the CBD gets saturated and the water pours in overland, every bit as much, in fact, more so than it rises from the river. I do not know if that question has been asked at a trust level.

PETER COLLINS: No. That is because there has been nothing to suggest that the total impact of inundation, whether it be from the rising river or overland flooding, has done anything to suggest that the modelling was in any way defective.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But I read to you from the Molino Stewart report, which states there is a real risk that floodwaters will enter the museum, for example, a flood with a one-in-500 chance of occurrence per year has about a one in-six-chance occurring in the next 80 years. Such flood would enter the ground floor of the museum to a considerable depth and leave a deposit of contaminated silt within the building. It seems to be consistent with figure 16 in that report, which has the overland flood risk significantly above the seven-metre level.

PETER COLLINS: Yes. While we are aware of the report that you are referring to, that is not a report that we adopt or which we see as overriding the Arup, INSW and Create Infrastructure advice to the museum.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But the Minister told us in estimates hearings earlier this week that Molino Stewart is one of the premier flood experts for Parramatta, and I separately believe that. They are raising those risks.

PETER COLLINS: As they are entitled to raise the risk. They have stated a view. Arup, INSW and Create Infrastructure have taken that view into account and have stood by the modelling that they provided to us in the first instance. The trust is reassured by that and the museum is reassured by that. We see no reason, particularly given the extreme weather events that we have seen just in between this meeting and the last meeting of this Committee—we have looked very closely, I can assure you.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But they are not the events that present the risk. As I said, it is not the river rising, it is the river rising and then being met by extreme overland flows.

PETER COLLINS: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is the risk, and we have not seen it demonstrated.. We have seen the construction site inundated, which causes anxiety, but we have not seen anything like the one-in-500-year flood risk or the probable maximum flood risk that creates the overland flooding risk. So it is cold comfort what we have seen to date.

PETER COLLINS: Can I suggest we are not engineers and we are not the technical advisers. We have to act on the best technical advice available to us. We have had sign off by Arup, the consultant providing the independent analysis, and we have had sign off by the two agencies whose job it is to technically evaluate and test that modelling—that is, INSW and Create Infrastructure. There is nothing to suggest anything is defective in the modelling that was done originally and on which the museum has relied. That is as far as I can go technically but optically, Mr Shoebridge, all of us have looked aghast at rising levels around Sydney with record inundation and the effects that it has had on infrastructure and proposed infrastructure. I can assure you the trust has shown great vigilance over that but we have been reassured that the modelling—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Chair, I have a related question.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I think we need to move to timed questions because we cannot get a word in.

The CHAIR: Sorry?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I beg your pardon?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: We might need to move allocated questions.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: We may because the question has been asked now three or four times. There was one very quick question. It was stated by our colleague David Shoebridge earlier that "The majority of the construction site has been inundated at each of the flood events over the last three years." They were his words "The majority the construction site". Is that correct?

LISA HAVILAH: No.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That could be a lie, maybe.

LISA HAVILAH: The last three flood events would not have got within four metres of ground level of the museum.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is different to the construction site.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No, it is not.

The CHAIR: Order!

LISA HAVILAH: Mr Gellibrand can elaborate further this afternoon. There was only a partial incursion on river level on to the construction site.

The CHAIR: Can I ask a question, getting away from that? Ms Havilah, in budget estimates you were asked a question in relation to staff turnover. You made a statement that since you have been there, only 3 per cent of the staff have turned over.

LISA HAVILAH: Yes.

The CHAIR: I find that hard to believe, but can you tell me: Since you took over—or certainly since this project started—I believe something like 90 per cent of the staff have turned over and there are very few curatorial staff left at all in focus positions. Can you support your assertion that only 3 per cent of staff have turned over?

LISA HAVILAH: Yes. I have done further work on this since budget estimates. If I may, I will read through this detail. I am advised that the average Powerhouse staff turnover rate over the past three years to 31 December 2021 is 3.7 per cent, which is considered well within the range of healthy turnover.

The CHAIR: Sorry, say that again. In the past 12 months it is 3.7 per cent?

LISA HAVILAH: No, over the past three years the average—

The CHAIR: What about since the start of this project?

LISA HAVILAH: I am only speaking to my period of time in my role.

The CHAIR: Can I ask you to take on notice that you will produce for us a document showing us what positions have been vacated, what has been renewed and what the actual staff turnover has been since this project got started, when Mr Troy Grant announced it? Is that possible?

LISA HAVILAH: Yes, I am happy to look at that.

The CHAIR: Because I think talking about the past three years gives a very artificial view in terms of the focus relationships of the jobs that are there.

LISA HAVILAH: Yes.

The CHAIR: Although staffing may be very stable under you, how does it compare to the way it used to be?

PETER COLLINS: Chair, we can provide that information, but the comment that you made referring to 90 per cent turnover is categorically incorrect. We will provide you the detail that you need.

The CHAIR: So you are saying that 90 per cent of staff who have left in fact did not leave and they are all still there, going back to when this project started in 2014-15?

LISA HAVILAH: I am only referring to the past three years, in the period that I have been in the role.

The CHAIR: That is what I am saying. Only referring to the past three years does not give a true impression of what has been going on with the staffing levels.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It does give a very fair view of how she is performing.

The CHAIR: I am asking some questions now. I have given you a fair go. I would like to see what has actually happened since the project started.

LISA HAVILAH: I am very happy to provide that.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Ms Havilah, you began to answer a question in response to Mr Borsak's original question. Can you complete the answer that you were prepared to give? I would still like to hear what you were going to say.

LISA HAVILAH: Sure. Our HR team have the actual numbers. I am happy to provide them. The three-year average is 3.75 per cent. As background, turnover of around 10 per cent is considered normal turnover. I have also got some details here around our people matters survey, which I would be happy to speak to. The decision to invest in the renewal at Ultimo mid-last year has provided renewed certainty for our staff. We are seeing that reflected in the results of our most recent people matters survey, where employee engagement rose by 6 per cent. Other highlights of the people matters survey include: wellbeing rose by 8 per cent, teamwork and collaboration rose by 11 per cent overall, employee voice rose by 5 per cent, and job satisfaction rose by 10 per cent. At the senior level, I acknowledge that some staff turnover has occurred over the past three years. As a large renewal project, our needs are evolving constantly, and my role as the CEO is I need to be able to bring in the necessary skills and shift functions to best support our endeavours. I am very proud of the work that the staff have done, and I have been able to recruit an incredible executive team, who are leading and working closely with myself, the trust and the Government on the renewal project.

The CHAIR: Ms Havilah, I have a quick question. You said also in budget estimates that the Parramatta Powerhouse project had six Green Star credentials. Can you support this with documentation?

LISA HAVILAH: Yes, I would be very happy to.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I had a couple of questions. The undercroft space at Parramatta Powerhouse, is that intended to be a functional space?

LISA HAVILAH: No.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: So there is no intention ever to use that space at all? It will be vacant at all times?

LISA HAVILAH: Yes. Currently the planning approval is that it is not for use.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Who has the responsibility for the cleaning and maintenance of that space because in flood events—and I am not talking about water getting anywhere near the building, although I accept that there is evidence that that is possible—it is certainly possible that debris and other rubbish is swept up into that undercroft space. So who has the responsibility for maintaining that?

LISA HAVILAH: The facilities team of the museum.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Is there the intention for adequate resourcing for that to ensure that, as I say, debris and other rubbish does not wash up there and sit there for quite some time, potentially creating a hazard and also just being an eyesore?

LISA HAVILAH: Absolutely.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: You can assure us?

LISA HAVILAH: We will take responsibility for that, yes.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: The last question that I have for now is in the Minister's evidence this morning and also in your evidence, when you talk about the intention of the museums, other than the high school visitations, which Mr Collins mentioned, I do not hear a lot of language that necessarily directs the idea that there will be an engagement with young children. I worry a little bit about these concepts for these museums that have all these lovely, pretty things that no-one could possibly touch, and all these fancy words that sound good. But as someone living in Sydney who is happy to see taxpayer dollars go towards things like museums, you want them to be places where young children can go. One of the best things about the existing Powerhouse from my point of view—problematic as it sometimes was—was that you could. There was the Wiggles exhibition, your kids could climb on the trains. Some of the exhibitions were not ideal, to be honest. They were not meant for kids, sure. But there was at least a sense that you could take your kids for a day out there and there was stuff that they could do and touch. I wanted to ask a little bit about the vision for that part of the museums and that is quite different to STEM et cetera.

LISA HAVILAH: Yes, of course.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I am talking about children under the age of 10 or 12 who want to pick things up and break them and poke them and try things on. That I have not heard a lot of talk about as being a feature of the museums.

PETER COLLINS: Can I begin, because I only talked about the Walker Academy and its 10,000 high school students a year from western Sydney high schools. I absolutely share what you have just said. Let me assure this Committee that our principal focus, our principal audience, is the children of western Sydney. We will take them in from strollers up. It is about turning the lights on, exposing them to ideas and giving them excitement in learning, and that is our principal role and function. Indeed, if we do not succeed in exactly what you are referring to, we might as well all pack up and go home.

LISA HAVILAH: I think that one of the great things about Ultimo and why it is so well loved, as you mentioned, is the ability for kids to have hands-on experiences. One of our most popular exhibitions, of course, is experimentations and the space and transport halls, because kids can touch and learn through that type of immersive experience, which is informal. That absolutely will be integrated into the museum exhibitions that we create in Parramatta. One of the things that is a central premise of all the programming in Parramatta will be to reflect not only the cultural diversity but the actual demographic of western Sydney. As we know, it has the youngest demographic in New South Wales. So when we are working on the exhibitions—and we are starting the process of starting to develop those exhibitions—early learning and hands-on experiences will be embedded into those.

The CHAIR: Ms Havilah, quickly, to add to the last question I asked, could you also tell me in your response how many curators who have that role are left at the museum?

LISA HAVILAH: How many curators? Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: On that note, in your answer, Ms Havilah, you acknowledged that there was some movement at the senior level, and that when major changes happen to a museum that does occur. Can you expand on that? There has been a number of senior departures. I will not embarrass them by naming them, but the positions are Director of Public—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Is that not a separate question? Should we not have an answer rather than confusing Lisa?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: She was getting ready to—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Should we not just have question and answer first?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I am sorry, I thought she—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes, it is quite different. You are talking about senior staff and we were talking about curators.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: She was getting a note, so she was preparing her answer.

The CHAIR: Ms Havilah, I do not expect you to answer that right now. Just put it on the list of other questions that you are going to come back on.

LISA HAVILAH: We have 21 curators in total. They work across all disciplines, from science and technology to design and fashion.

The CHAIR: How does that compare with the number of curators that were there before you arrived?

LISA HAVILAH: I believe there are more.

The CHAIR: Can you document that for us, please?

LISA HAVILAH: Yes.

The CHAIR: Again, that is going back to when the project started. Thank you.

LISA HAVILAH: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Ms Havilah, you acknowledged that there was some movement at the senior level.

LISA HAVILAH: There has been in the past, yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Can you expand on that, please?

LISA HAVILAH: About some of the changes in the executive team?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Yes. I was going to nominate some of the positions—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Are we talking about voluntary redundancies? Are we talking about forced redundancies? Are people just moving on because they have other opportunities?

LISA HAVILAH: It is a combination of all of those things, actually. One of the—

PETER COLLINS: There are multiple—not a lot overall, but there are some significant senior management changes that have been undertaken in the last 12 months. We are happy to detail those for you.

LISA HAVILAH: One of the key changes is that we added a chief operating officer once Ultimo was confirmed. That was really to strengthen that element of the delivery function of the executive team.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: There was a CFO that left and a new one that came on, is that correct?

LISA HAVILAH: No, the position was changed to a much more senior role of chief operating officer.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Was the person made redundant?

LISA HAVILAH: Yes.

The CHAIR: Ms Havilah, where has the arms and armour collection gone? Has it been moved to Castle Hill?

LISA HAVILAH: No, I believe it is still in Ultimo but we are preparing to move it to Castle Hill.

The CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Where currently is Willow Grove?

PETER COLLINS: Mr Shoebridge, it is completely dismantled. It is undercover. Ms Havilah can tell me the precise location of it. I visited Willow Grove in the process of dismantlement to see how it was going. Ms Havilah will correct me if I am wrong but I think we have got something like 50,000 reusable bricks out of it. We have got all of the woodwork, the glass et cetera. It has been meticulously dismantled as opposed to demolished. I think the Willow Grove that emerges, even though we will not control it and it will not be part of the museum, will be a superior Willow Grove to the one that was dismantled. I know that sounds odd. Ms Havilah, where have we physically got it stored?

LISA HAVILAH: It is in storage in western Sydney. As you would have heard from Ms Pitman this morning, the project is managed by Create Infrastructure.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are you on the community consultation group, Ms Havilah?

LISA HAVILAH: No.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is there a Powerhouse rep on it?

LISA HAVILAH: No.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Mr Collins, are you aware of the nature of the community reference group?

PETER COLLINS: Of the—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: For the relocation of Willow Grove.

PETER COLLINS: No, we are not aware of the relocation or the repurposing of Willow Grove. I say that it is an opportunity for Government to look at very carefully at where Willow Grove is relocated and how it is used and whether the building which we have in storage at the moment becomes part of some larger government agency. For example—I am just putting this out there as an example—a future use could relate to women and children and so on. It could relate to domestic violence. There are various things for Government to consider, but that is now a whole-of-government decision and it is outside the ambit of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is fine. Ms Havilah, one of the proposed functions for the museum going forward is education. You say a big program for the school kids is planned, is that right?

LISA HAVILAH: Yes. Sorry, are you speaking about Powerhouse Parramatta?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am speaking about the museum more generally—MAAS.

LISA HAVILAH: For Powerhouse Parramatta we have embedded an education program into the infrastructure. We have the Lang Walker Family Academy, which is an immersive STEM program. We are working very closely with the Department of Education on that program. We will start early this year delivering in-school programs across six local government areas in western Sydney, as I mentioned—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How many education staff do you have?

LISA HAVILAH: I would have to take that on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is it four?

LISA HAVILAH: We have a number of casuals that deliver our program. I would have to take that on notice. I could not tell you off the top of my head.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is it four? Is it less than—

LISA HAVILAH: Yes, it is around about four.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That does not seem consistent with a large education outreach program, having only four staff, Ms Havilah?

LISA HAVILAH: We have just recruited a head of the Lang Walker Family Academy that is going to lead the delivery of that program. We will continue to expand our education team in line with the expansion of the museum.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Finally, I just want to show you this one document. It is figure 16 from the Molino Stewart report, which incorporates all the Arup flood modelling. Have you seen that document before? I opened it up to figure 16, which is found on page 5. This is Molino's charting of the Arup flood modelling. In the middle of figure 16 there are six horizontal black dots where it says "Proposed Powerhouse Museum floor level" and it is about 7½ metres above the riverbed. Do you see that?

LISA HAVILAH: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you see the line that is about 3½ metres above that with a flood level? Do you see that that is Arup's prediction of the flood level at a probable maximum flood? Do you see that? It is about 3½ metres—maybe even more—above the museum level.

LISA HAVILAH: I am not sure, respectfully, that I am the right person to analyse this diagram.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: No, I am asking have you seen this before, the analysis of Arup's actual flood modelling, which shows the probable maximum flood level 3½ metres above the museum ground floor level? Or is this the first time you have seen it?

LISA HAVILAH: I would have to refer you Infrastructure NSW and Create Infrastructure.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: If you have not seen it before, that is okay. I am asking you if this is the first time you have seen it.

LISA HAVILAH: I have seen this report.

PETER COLLINS: I have seen the Molino Stewart documentation before. Whether I have seen this particular document and the particular page you are referring us to I cannot tell you today. I may have in discussion with Arup. But my understanding is that Arup would have seen this report, or that INSW and/or Arup would have seen this report and taken into consideration the points that Molino Stewart are making.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But you agree with me, do you not, that what it actually shows is the floodwaters being 3½ metres above the proposed ground level in the probable maximum flood? That is what that actually shows.

PETER COLLINS: I cannot say yes or no as to whether I do agree with you, Mr Shoebridge.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is all right.

The CHAIR: I think questioning has come to an end. Thank you very much for coming today.

PETER COLLINS: Chair and Committee members, thank you very much. We have undertaken to provide the Committee with further information. We will do so as expeditiously as possible. I extend an invitation to the Committee, collectively or individually, to please contact us if we can assist with further information. We will do our best to provide accurate information in response to any of your questions.

The CHAIR: Thank you.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Mr TROY WRIGHT, Assistant General Secretary, Public Service Association, on former affirmation

The CHAIR: Do you want to make an opening statement?

TROY WRIGHT: Thank you, Chair. I would like to make a statement on behalf of the Public Service Association of NSW. May I first acknowledge the land we meet on today, that of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, land that was stolen, never ceded, and further pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. I would also like to thank the Committee on behalf of the PSA and its members for its ongoing focus on our State's cultural institutions and the opportunity to appear before the inquiry today. By way of introduction, the PSA of NSW is a State-registered union of approximately 39,000 members, including well over 1,000 employed at our cultural institutions, which include the Powerhouse Museum, the Australian Museum, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the State Library and Sydney Living Museums. They are the curators, the historians, the librarians, the researchers and the technicians who are responsible not just for recording our history and culture of our State but providing access to it and educating our next generation about it. In preparing for today's appearance, we could not help reflect on how much water has passed under the bridge—pardon the pun—since it commenced.

The CHAIR: And debris too.

TROY WRIGHT: We first provided written submissions to the Committee in May 2020, before appearing before it in August that year. In the intervening period, one of our primary recommendations has already been adopted by government—namely, that the Powerhouse Museum be spread across sites at Parramatta and Ultimo, not Parramatta in place of Ultimo. Our other recommendations to the Committee in our written submission—namely, funding for conversion for permanency for the largely casualised workforce, emergency rescue funding to cover for the loss of income during the pandemic and the creation of a New South Wales country roving museum—have either been ignored or have had their opportunity for enactment lapse.

The experience and observation of our membership at the Powerhouse Museum since the announcement of the retention of the Ultimo site, in July 2020, has been somewhat chaotic due to a number of factors. There is a clear and contradictory approach to workforce management. While many of our members' roles remain in limbo or not filled, we have witnessed exponential and unprecedented growth in the managerial class at the museum. With the closure of the Ultimo site for renovations scheduled for December 2023, our members currently employed at Ultimo are still very much in the dark as to who will be doing what at which site and when. Finally, like all members of the public and, we suspect, the Committee included, our members have witnessed with grave concern the proposed site disappear between murky floodwaters on an annual basis, firstly in February 2020, which was the Committee's initial inquiry, secondly in March 2021 and now as recent as this month.

In summary, the expansion of the Powerhouse Museum across two and possibly three sites is perhaps the largest and most expensive cultural project our State has embarked on for many a decade, if ever. After seemingly every announcement being shrouded in secrecy before being released without notice, that the implementation is being managed in a very similar manner gives no confidence to our members that this is being done competently or with the necessary levels of scrutiny and expertise.

A similar and equally concerning situation is unfolding at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and its addition of the Sydney Modern Project. The new extension is scheduled for completion in June 2022 and to open in December 2022. But, even at the time of appearance, less than nine months from opening, we are yet to receive any official confirmation as to the proposed staffing numbers or the staffing structure that will be in place when it is to be operated. In light of the magnitude of that project and one that we recognise as beneficial to the economy of this State, we find it astounding that there is a delay in determining what the size of this agency will be, so close to its opening. I am available for questions if the Committee pleases.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Mr Wright, thank you for coming along, and thank you for that statement. I just wanted to ask you to elaborate a little bit on the concerns that you raised about the lack of clear information to the staff at the Powerhouse. Are there staff briefings? Are they weekly, monthly? Is there any formalised structure at all? That is my first question in terms of keeping staff updated. If there is, what is that?

TROY WRIGHT: The structure at the moment is two parallel operations, if you like. Two divisions is what we understand it to be. There is the BAU division, as it is colloquially called, for business as usual. Then there is the project group. What we are seeing are the two groups treated very separately by management. BAU is just chugging along. Positions are not being backfilled. The project group has been getting all the attention.

What we have not seen—we have asked for it since the announcement by the Government in June 2020 that Ultimo would stay—is some sort of project plan about how many people will be at Ultimo, what will be happening at Ultimo, how many people will be at Parramatta, how many people will be at Castle Hill, where will they be in the intervening periods when each of the centres is either being demolished and reinvigorated or built

completely, in the case of Parramatta. Our members are not clear about that. We have a regular consultative committee. We are told regularly that plans are still being developed. But we have not heard. It creates a fair bit of anxiety and uncertainty for our members. This far since the announcement and with the deadline coming closer than actually when the announcement was made, it makes them very concerned about the competency of the decisions being made.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Just to be clear, you and representatives of the staff are attending those regular consultative committees, putting the questions there that you just put to us and not receiving answers. For how long has that been going on?

TROY WRIGHT: Since the announcement in June 2020. Since the announcement in June 2020, we have been asking questions of management. "What will operations look like at Ultimo up to its closure in December 2023? How is it going to be staffed? Where will the staff in"—forgive me for checking my notes because I forget the name of the actual building, the building beside it, the Harwood Building. That is largely used for a lot of office space and curation space. People work in there to manage the—they do not work in the museum itself. The Harwood Building is being turned over into a creative project. Our staff are saying, "Where will we be located? Will be we at Castle Hill? We won't be at Parramatta. That's not built yet." We are not getting any answers as to that yet.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Just in relation to the BAU group, as you called it, you mentioned positions not being backfilled. Could you give us a sense of the scale of that? Is it one or two? Is it a dozen? How many positions are we talking about?

TROY WRIGHT: What our members are observing is that we find the two approaches to workforce management very contradictory. The BAU group, by our numbers—it could be more, but we can track at least 41 staff that have left since 2019. The majority of those roles have not been filled. There is no backfilling. We are told that is because there is going to be a restructure with the move, with the new centres opening up, with the new museum. But we have not got that restructure yet. In the meantime, our staff is sitting in limbo.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Presumably, potentially, picking up some of that work that is not being done by people being backfilled, as well. Is that causing a bit of an issue as well?

TROY WRIGHT: Absolutely. There is the additional work of taking the collection down and cataloguing it and moving it and trying to keep the Ultimo site some sort of functional museum until December 2023 while that is going on. There is additional work. There is no doubt that the work is there, that they are all juggling this old and new role at the same time, simultaneously. But the positions of people leaving are not being backfilled, because of a restructure, a pending restructure. That is very contradictory to management's approach to management. At this time it is our observation the organisation has become increasingly top heavy. This is the list of directors that are currently at the Powerhouse Museum alone.

We can work out, in addition to the chief executive, there are two directors or two people that have organisational divisions below them. They are the chief operation officer and the director of collections, programs and curatorial. In addition to that, we have a director of strategic projects, a director of communications, a director of campaigns, a director of strategy and operation, a director of the office of the chief executive, a director of design and delivery, a director of First Nations, an associate director of campaign, an associate director of First Nations. Many of those roles are new if not all of those roles are new. In addition to that, we have had a number of roles created without comparative assessment—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Sorry, Mr Wright, could we do it in bite-size chunks?

TROY WRIGHT: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How many directors and assistant directors have been appointed, did you say, in the past few years?

TROY WRIGHT: I can point, on these notes we have been provided in consultation with our members, to a number. I will have to provide the Committee with the exact number. There are a number that have been created beyond the current structure and a number that also were not just created on the current structure but created as temporary roles under clause 21 of the rules that have been extended well beyond 12 months, which that clause permits.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you know what the entry salary point is for an assistant director or director?

TROY WRIGHT: We do not, unfortunately.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I know you had more to add, but I just thought we would try and do it in bite-size chunks.

TROY WRIGHT: I apologise for that. I have names but I do not want to provide names.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: That is fine.

TROY WRIGHT: Our point is there is a significant growth in the managerial class. Not only that, it is a significant growth of temporary managers that have not been competitively appointed or assessed. The positions have been sort of made as temporary positions, but those temporary positions are extending. They are also positions beyond the current structure, well beyond the current structure, that we are not sure how they were created, by whom and under whose authority.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: To be clear, those temporary positions that are intended to only last for 12 months do not require a full, open appointment process. Is that right?

TROY WRIGHT: Correct.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: You can just pick someone up and appoint them temporarily for 12 months, except that those people are working for years and years.

TROY WRIGHT: Correct. That is the observation of our members.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: The position is never then openly advertised with a full process of appointment.

TROY WRIGHT: Correct.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Mr Wright, is it your evidence that those positions you have referred to, the managerial positions, were appointed without competitive application processes?

TROY WRIGHT: Not those positions. This list of positions, however, I understand were from our members. I am happy to confirm this in writing with the Committee.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes. Your evidence is that all of those position descriptions that you read out, from COO right through to assistant director First Nations I think was the last one you mentioned, were filled through a competitive application process.

TROY WRIGHT: I will double-check but I believe at least three were not.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Right.

TROY WRIGHT: Which would be the chief operations officer, the director of collections, program—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No, I can tell you that absolutely was. But go on.

TROY WRIGHT: Okay, so that asterisk is incorrect. I can detail at least 10 here that are senior positions that our members have identified that were created or filled without comparative assessment. They are all senior roles. They are the director of the office of chief executive—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That is also untrue. I know for a fact that that was advertised and filled through a competitive employment process.

TROY WRIGHT: Okay. I apologise if that is not correct but that is the information I have been provided with.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It is Susanna and I know Susanna.

TROY WRIGHT: The creative director of Sydney Design Week.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: She had to apply for it.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: The person who was here before?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes, absolutely.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Don, that is not fair to the witness, you going through and challenging each one, because we have to accept your word for it.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No, but it is important that the evidence that is given is accurate. That is why I actually asked him the question.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Point of order: Let this witness give the evidence, and if my colleague wants to question him, then the questions should happen after the evidence.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes. Thank you, that is fair enough.

TROY WRIGHT: My information from my members, delegates and industrial staff is that the following roles were created or filled without comparative assessment. I will leave aside the position that is in dispute. We can go on to the creative director of Sydney Design Week, editorial and publishing; the senior curator of exhibitions; the senior curator of culinary archive; the head of digital engagement; an advisory role in the office of the chief executive; the artistic consultant; creative producer, and there are two creative producer roles. Most of those, with the exception of the head of digital engagement, are created new roles that are not in the current structure. I would submit that even if our facts are wrong on one or two of those positions, the observation of our membership is there are a large number of managerial roles being created, the majority of those roles are not in the current structure, the majority of those roles are not being competitively selective, they are being appointed for 12 months, and the majority of those roles are going well beyond 12 months. At the same time, we are witnessing our own roles, the roles of our own members, not being backfilled.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: That was going to be my question—if you could draw it together. What is your concern about all these temporary positions and positions made without a competitive process? How does that impact on the morale of the organisation? What does it do to the organisation? What does it do to permanent and existing staff?

TROY WRIGHT: Our members are currently, as any workforce is, concerned about the pending restructure and concerned about the uncertainty and their futures. Where will their jobs be? Will they exist? Where will they be working from? What will they be doing? Who will they report to? To have additional managerial positions and director positions to be pointed above and around them at a time of that uncertainty when their own positions are not shored up adds to that anxiety.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: We have had evidence about morale, departures and disputed figures about 3 per cent to 4 per cent of staff leaving and 41 staff leaving. Is there an exodus or departure of staff at the non-director level and then they see the appointment of temporary positions? Is that what is occurring in the organisation?

TROY WRIGHT: The 41 staff I cited earlier are people that are not in managerial positions. They are people that are within our management, within our workforce, the workforce we seek to cover, the sort of positions I outlined at the start. I understand that 41 is from there. We are not talking about the managerial class that are leaving. It is the workforce that is turning over. I would say 41 of the staff numbers at Powerhouse Museum, which I estimate probably to be around 400 from memory, that is a significant turnover in a couple of years. That is adding to the morale and concerns of those who are remaining that people are leaving and not being backfilled and the uncertainty about the operative model that is going to be in existence, not only up to December 2023 but after that.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Mr Wright, can I just ask you to specify what the period is during which those 41 left? Sorry, I do not think I actually caught exactly the number of years.

TROY WRIGHT: On the position I have been provided, it is since 2019.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: In relation to the staff that have concerns about the lack of certainty going forward, are the majority of those casual staff? What percentage of those are in casual employment?

TROY WRIGHT: The ones that have—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Those of your members who are expressing concerns in relation to the uncertainty going forward.

TROY WRIGHT: When we appeared before the Committee on the last occasion, we were very concerned with the increasing level of casual employees at all cultural centres, but Powerhouse was a very good example of it. We can report that there has been a significant effort to increase the permanency around the visitor services officers, which was a large area of casual engagement that we thought was very unnecessary. People that meet, greet and guide around the organisation, we did not think they needed to be casual roles. They could be converted to permanency, and many have. However, we have seen an increased level of temporary roles and casualisation instead in the public programs area. They are the people who are coordinating the programs around the exhibitions, whether they are things that the people do or the public do as they enter. Whilst one area is decreasing in levels of casualisation, another is increasing. Again, it is adding to the uncertainty about the museum.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: The reason that I ask is presumably for casual employees that uncertainty is even more profound because—have those people been given any assurances in relation to actual future employment? Presumably for permanent employees, at least they have some sense of, "I don't know where I'm going to be working or exactly what role I'm doing, but I will probably have a job." What assurances have the casual employees had, if any, that they are likely to continue to have roles in the organisation going forward?

TROY WRIGHT: I will take that on notice, if I may, but I will double-check. To my knowledge today, none. It is an issue that we have been pursuing with museum management; I am aware of that. The grave concern for us is if they are casual in a public interfacing role, they are engaged essentially as a casual on an hour-to-hour basis. They will be lost because there will be a period between Ultimo closing in December 2023 and Parramatta opening in 2025 I think. It is well after 2023 that there will be no work for casuals. I do not know how they are going to be expected to be engaged in the industry meaningfully during that time. We would support some sort of transfer system between other cultural institutions in the State, but none of those discussions have been had to my knowledge.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I wanted to ask, in terms of some of that workforce, is it fair to say that a number of those people are younger people who have an interest in a career in the creative arts but maybe they are still at uni part time or doing other things, it is a bit of a stepping stone to get into these institutions while they are younger and there would be a concern about the kind of pipeline and the workforce if that group is lost?

TROY WRIGHT: I think that is fair to say. My observations have supported that, that a lot of them are younger people who are interested in a career in culture and arts. But I suspect there are other people who are outside that, that have worked there a long time in those roles and enjoyed them as a career themselves. But, yes, that would be my observation, that a number of them are younger people that really seek to—that is their entry point job.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Mr Wright, if you were to take a snapshot of the number of permanent staff we had before Mike Baird made the announcement and the number of permanent staff we have now, have you got those numbers?

TROY WRIGHT: I can get them for you, I believe. I think they would probably reflect whatever is in the annual reports. But our observation is that the number of positions is not the number of staff either. The annual reports are only reporting the number of positions and that may not be accurate.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Correct. I know you were asked some questions about the morale of the staff at the moment. How would you describe the culture and the sense of belonging amongst the workplace, your members, at the MAAS?

TROY WRIGHT: Prior to all the announcements about the relocation of the Powerhouse, I doubt I would find a group of our members more devoted to their job than those who work in the cultural sector, and particularly at the Powerhouse. I doubt there would be a group that are more passionate about the delivery of what they do. Since the up and down, and certainly I went out and met a large group of them after the announcement, they were pleasantly relieved that Ultimo would stay. But I have to say, the culture is one of anxiety—it is just, not knowing. And given the magnitude of this project—this is not a relocation of a community corrections office from Tamworth to Armidale and 10 people affected; this is a massive, massive project—I think they are very excited about the possibilities of having both Parramatta and Ultimo, and different purposes. I think we all, as members of the public, are excited about that—possibly Castle Hill as well.

But, as a workforce, I think they deserve to be kept better informed than they currently are. They are in the dark, and as this project looms closer it just leaves them very uncertain. You have to remember that the announcement about Ultimo closing was dropped on them, the announcement about Ultimo staying was dropped on them, so they also live with perpetual anxiety about another announcement and a change of tack at some point down the track. All they have ever asked for is to actually have these plans revealed. Presumably these plans are made, presumably these plans have been well thought out about how things are going to operate—we would really hope so, given how close we are to the date of Ultimo closing—and all they ask for is for knowledge that they can plan around. You cannot underestimate the significance if they are going to work at Castle Hill for a couple of years and they have worked at Ultimo and they live near Ultimo. You cannot underestimate the impact that is going to have on their lives. That is one small part of that anxiety.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Have you, on behalf of your members, made overtures to management and said, "When can we sit down? When can we talk about this? When can we get some answers?"

TROY WRIGHT: I will confirm that in writing to the Committee, but I am very, very certain we have. We have a regular consultative committee as part of the award and I am certain that that has been raised on almost every occasion we would have met with management. I know it certainly was when the first announcement was

made in June 2020 that Ultimo would stay. We certainly immediately started seeking out "Okay, how will it operate until its renovation date? What sort of operations are going to occur there?" I do not think we were getting satisfactory answers then and I suspect we have not been receiving many answers since.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: For my part, I think those answers are urgent.

The CHAIR: I think we have come to the end of questioning today, Mr Wright. Thank you very much for coming.

TROY WRIGHT: Thank you for the opportunity.

(The witness withdrew.)

(Luncheon adjournment)

Mr GREG ROGENCAMP, Associate Principal, Surface Water Engineering Leader, Arup, sworn and examined

Mr TOM GELLIBRAND, Head of Projects NSW, Infrastructure NSW, sworn and examined

Mr RICHARD DEWAR, Technical Director, WMA Water, affirmed and examined

Dr JOHN MACINTOSH, Flood/Hydrological Engineer, Water Solutions, before the Committee via videoconference, on former oath

The CHAIR: Thanks very much for coming. Does anyone want to make an opening statement?

TOM GELLIBRAND: Mr Chair, if I may? At INSW, I am responsible for the planning and delivery of a number of complex infrastructure projects, which includes the Powerhouse at Parramatta. I have got 30 years' experience in planning, development and infrastructure delivery through positions held at Infrastructure NSW, Sydney Metro, the Department of Planning, and Sydney Water. In terms of the Powerhouse Museum at Parramatta, my role is to deliver the project in line with the plans approved by the Department of Planning and Environment. That project has been through a development approval process and has received consent. The planning consent has been reviewed by the Land and Environment Court as well as the Court of Appeal and the consent was found to be valid on both occasions. Flood risk has been a key consideration throughout the design and development process. The museum design responds to the NSW Floodplain Development Manual and the relevant City of Parramatta Council requirements.

The riverfront public domain does include what is referred to as an undercroft space and that has been specifically designed to accommodate and convey floodwaters. The extensive flood modelling that has been undertaken and included in the application and other forms has been undertaken by Arup, which is an internationally recognised engineering firm. It confirms that it would take a flood event in excess of one that could occur one in every 1,000 years to enter into the ground floor of the finished museum, which of course would have far-reaching impacts on other parts of Parramatta as well as western Sydney. The recent inundations that have been observed throughout Sydney and other parts of New South Wales saw flood levels in the Parramatta River approximately 1.6 metres above the river's edge, which is about four metres below the finished floor level of the museum when it is completed. It is also important to note that the majority of the museum's collection, let us say 80 per cent, will be located on floors above all possible flood levels, along with the emergency power supply. Finally, it is my view that the Powerhouse Parramatta will be a very safe museum for the people to visit as well as a place to house the museum's collection. Thank you.

JOHN MACINTOSH: I would like to make an opening statement. For those that do not know me—I recognise there are two members of the select committee who were not on the Committee the last hearing that I was at—I am a chartered professional engineer of more than 40 years' professional engineering experience. I have significant expertise in the area of flooding, its hazard, mitigation and, very importantly, the consequences of flooding. My concern here, as an independent person, is really focused on overall flood hazards surrounding the Powerhouse Museum site area and I am very pleased to have this opportunity to be of service to the select committee today to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Thank you all for your attendance. There is an enormous pool, if I can say that, of flood expertise in the room. Could I just start with getting some baseline understanding about the flood studies that underpin the current flood controls adopted by the Parramatta City Council? I have had a number of people contact me and indicate that the rain data and the flood data on which Parramatta's current controls are based is 1987 rain data and flooding data. Is that right?

GREG ROGENCAMP: I may take that question and try to clarify the terminology that you might have heard relating to the Parramatta River flood studies that council relies upon. If I can explain it this way: There was a document published in 1987 called *Australian Rainfall and Runoff*. That becomes, if you like, the standard, or, technically, it is a guideline for determining flood levels, flood risk. There is a set of procedures set out there as well as a comprehensive set of rainfall intensities; that is what we call the 1987 rainfall depths and intensities. They were derived in the mid-eighties and published in 1987. So it was a collection of all data up to 1985-86 published in 1987 and that is what the official council flood models have been based on. Since then there has been a publication of a much-improved revised revision of *Australian Rainfall and Runoff* published in 2019.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The Parramatta flood studies and the controls adopted by the council rely upon that 1985-86 data?

GREG ROGENCAMP: Let us call it 1987.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yes, that makes it simpler. The data that was published in 1987.

GREG ROGENCAMP: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is no criticism of Parramatta Council; that is pretty much the data that is used by council and planning authorities across the State because it is the most comprehensive statewide or national data. Is that right?

GREG ROGENCAMP: It is, and there is obviously a period of transition going on across the State where councils are moving from the 1987 to the 2019. Council has got a draft study using ARR 2019.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do your collective conclusions about the flood heights, whether it is the one in 100, one in 500, one in 1,000 or PMF, would they be altered by looking at the more current data about where those flood heights would be?

GREG ROGENCAMP: The work that we published in our assessments, in both the EIS and the addendum report, identified that the draft council flood study using ARR 2019 actually results in lower flood levels than the ones that we used in the assessment—lower by half a metre as well.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How is that the case given we have comprehensive evidence, broadly accepted, that we have got more intense rainfall and there is a substantial increase in the hard surface area in the Parramatta CBD? How do you have 25, 30-odd years of more intense development, more hard surfaces and climate change impacts and have a lower flooding risk?

GREG ROGENCAMP: It is a good question and it might sound counter-intuitive, but it is worth understanding that the way that the 1987 guideline was phrased and worked was that it relied upon a single temporal pattern of the rainfall and, in Sydney, the temporal pattern that commonly becomes the most dominant temporal pattern is the nine-hour temporal pattern. I know we are getting into a little bit of technical discussion, but the temporal pattern, if you like, is the distribution of the rainfall across a set duration.

As I said, the nine-hour duration is the duration that commonly becomes quite a strong, dominant storm in lots of Sydney and that has been the case with the 1987 publication. It is a very, if I could call it, aggressive rainfall pattern. It is very conservative. So it was always seen as being, if you like, an overestimate the way that the temporal pattern was derived. The ARNR 2019 guidelines require the use of a range of temporal patterns. We actually use 10 temporal patterns and take the median of those 10.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I had had some basic understanding that that was some of the thinking in 2019 underpinning that. It just seems to be directly contradicted by the experience we have had of extreme rainfall in Brisbane, in the Northern Rivers and at different times in Sydney just this year, the intensity over a nine-hour period being quite extraordinary. I cannot marry that analysis with just our experience this year. Do you have any views about that?

GREG ROGENCAMP: Nothing that would change your view, without diving into the actual statistics of the rainfall analyses. All I can give you confidence in is that the Bureau of Meteorology used a substantial dataset to come up with these rainfall intensities that was much more comprehensive than those used in 1987, and a longer period of record as well.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Your flood data is referenced in the Molino Stewart report, and the one that I have here is a July 2020 report. I think there was a later report too, but the data I have is in figure 16 in that Molino Stewart report. Do you have that?

GREG ROGENCAMP: Are you talking about the July 2020 Molino Stewart—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am. Flood risk review—the Molino Stewart Powerhouse Museum Alliance Parramatta Powerhouse EIS Flood Risk Review. The one I have is dated July 2020 on page two.

GREG ROGENCAMP: What page are you on?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is page five.

GREG ROGENCAMP: Replicating our figure 16. I see, yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yes, that is your figure 16, is it not?

GREG ROGENCAMP: It is his figure 2, our figure 16.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You are right. It is his figure 2, your figure 16. Can you explain to me, starting from the bottom—if we start at the river bed—what the lines are on that document?

GREG ROGENCAMP: Bottom line is the river bed. If we are talking about the lines, and I am working off a black-and-white copy—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Mine goes red, blue, yellow, green, a slightly different red.

GREG ROGENCAMP: Yes, I have got a colour version here but I can read the legend as well.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you want me to hand you this?

GREG ROGENCAMP: No, it is logical, the order. The next line up is the 5 per cent AEP line based on—if we are talking lines, the next line up is the 5 per cent AEP line based on Arup's two-dimensional model that was developed for the purposes of this assessment.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You will have to explain what AEP is.

GREG ROGENCAMP: Five per cent AEP means that, in any one year, there is a 5 per cent chance of that happening, or a one-in-20 chance of that happening. Moving up, the next line is the 1 per cent AEP. That is a one-in-100 chance of that happening in any one year. The line above that again—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is a variation on the one-in-100.

GREG ROGENCAMP: It is the 1 per cent with the climate change added. One per cent plus CC implies 1 per cent plus climate change rainfall intensity, increases included. The one above that is what we call the probable maximum flood, which is about a one-in-10 million probability.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Alright. There are six dotted lines between seven and eight, that is the height of the Powerhouse Museum, is that right, the ground level of the Powerhouse Museum?

GREG ROGENCAMP: Yes, the dashed line is a representation of where the Parramatta Powerhouse finished floor level would sit at 7.5.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You say that the probable maximum flood event is extremely unlikely? You have put it at one in 10 million in any given year. Is that right?

GREG ROGENCAMP: Roughly one in 10 million.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I assume that it gradates downwards as you get closer to the one-in-1,000 and closer to the Powerhouse Museum floor level. Is that right?

GREG ROGENCAMP: Yes, there is an obvious relationship between the rarity of the flood and the height of the flood.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yes, and it is probably not linear?

GREG ROGENCAMP: No.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Had you done any modelling to show what the likelihood of inundation of the ground floor level actually is? Did you do that modelling?

GREG ROGENCAMP: Yes, and that modelling is documented in the addendum report. The level that gets—if we are talking river levels—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We will come to overland levels next. I assume this is all river level?

GREG ROGENCAMP: We should preface that by saying all of this discussion is around river level. Again just prefacing it—and this is without climate change included—the river level that we would get about half a metre within the floor level is about a one-in-1,000 AEP.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: When you factor in climate change, that is the extra half metre and it touches the ground floor about one-in-1,000?

GREG ROGENCAMP: No, I do not think climate change would add half a metre to that. Climate change would add considerably less than that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am just looking at this graph here and it seems close to half a metre.

GREG ROGENCAMP: But you are talking about a flood level that is lower; therefore, the sensitivity of the rainfall intensity increases is more significant at the lower levels. Are you talking about the difference between the 1 per cent, and the 1 per cent with climate change?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yes.

GREG ROGENCAMP: The difference between the 1,000 and the 1,000 with climate change would be less than half a metre. For argument's sake, let us say 0.3 of a metre would be my judgement on that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Within 20 centimetres or so and that is the river flood level?

GREG ROGENCAMP: That is the river flood level.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am happy to hand over.

GREG ROGENCAMP: Okay.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I was going to then go to overland flood levels.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I was going to say okay but then you layer it on top. The earlier evidence we had is that it is not a concern primarily with the flooding of the river but it is all the hard surfaces and all the other on-surface water that adds to that.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Why do you not put your questions, David? We have only less than half an hour.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you want me to explore?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Yes, go, David.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Can I just check with other witnesses? Does any other witness have any observations that may shed light on what Mr Rogencamp has said to date, before I go to overland flooding?

JOHN MACINTOSH: I have an observation I may add. First of all, when it comes to rainfalls and so forth, I think the most important thing to recognise is that the one-in-1,000 and so forth is a design level and it has been accepted, or it is an adopted design level. Now there is always uncertainty with regard to what will actually happen because no two floods are the same. The recent flooding was quite unusual and indeed in Queensland, for example, we have never ever seen a flood or rainfall like that extend for so long. The response to catchments to different sorts of floods varies dramatically, and particularly so if the area of concern has a dam above it because if you have long extended rainfall you will lose the flood retention capacity of that dam and so forth. So there is a lot of stuff going to it. I think the most important thing is to recognise it is a design level for that purpose and what happens in reality will always be different to what you see in the design. Thank you.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do we agree with that—that there is inherent risk in this modelling in the way that Dr Macintosh said?

RICHARD DEWAR: That is why we have a free board. The free board accounts for uncertainty.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yes, and my understanding with climate change impacts on this, the one-in-1,000 is a free board of about 20 centimetres. That is where I thought we got to. Is that right?

GREG ROGENCAMP: That is an estimate. We could probably take that on notice and come back with some detail.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is the river flooding but, of course, in an area like we are talking here, where you have got the river flooding on one side and increasing amounts of hard surface and streets on the other side where water can channel down, you also have the overland flooding that can come and run into the river flooding. Is that right?

GREG ROGENCAMP: There is overland flooding that would occur, and probably has occurred, in the past down Phillip Street from the local catchment. The southern extent is not much further than the railway line, the western extent is old Government House—that sort of size catchment; it is a small catchment. It is almost completely impervious and has been for a long time completely impervious. And that rain—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It channels down Phillip Street basically.

GREG ROGENCAMP: The low point is around Dirrabarri Lane—that area there.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yes, so it channels down Phillip Street from the park, heads down east, some of it comes from the south and it channels down roughly where the site is?

GREG ROGENCAMP: Yes, and augmented by the pipe drainage network underneath.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: There are two large pipes underneath to take some of the stormwater away. Is that right?

GREG ROGENCAMP: Yes, in the existing situation and the design.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Of course, in a serious flood you get a huge amount of debris and that can often block the pipes. We have seen in the most recent flooding huge amounts of debris in that space. Do you agree with that?

GREG ROGENCAMP: Debris can block inlets. That is why there have been assumptions around the blockage of the inlets in the modelling already.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So we have got 20 centimetres free board from a river flood, and then we have overland flooding coming in. Where does that take the water level in an extreme weather event, let us say the one-in-1,000 weather event? Where does that take the water level at the Powerhouse site? Is it below the river, which I would find hard to comprehend, or is it the same level as the river, or is it above the river height?

GREG ROGENCAMP: There are a couple of important concepts to understand here. The overland flooding occurs in a different event, a different year, a different month than what the river would occur at. The river flood occurs from a long duration rainfall event of the order of six or nine hours long. The overland flooding occurs in a 20-minute storm, so they are two different events. It is sometimes confusing to conflate them to think because they are on two maps that they occur at the same time. If they did, that is not what we call probability neutral. That means you have actually looked at the chance of one-in-100 occurring with overland, coinciding with the one-in-100 in a river. That is actually rarer than one-in-100. You then drift into a much rarer event. We need to keep the two flooding mechanisms understood as being likely to occur at separate times, in separate years.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We might come back to that analysis and see what, if any, analysis has been done of that. Let us then stick to the overland flooding as a discrete point.

GREG ROGENCAMP: Yes, and I do not think I answered your question fully because you are asking what happens to the overland flooding; what is the river doing at that time? I think that was the intent of your question.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Why do we not make it even more simple? Let us assume we have a torrential downpour of Brisbane-like intensity. What does that do? Where does the overland flooding—how high does it get on the site? The pipes are blocked, debris is in there, what happens to the overland flood?

GREG ROGENCAMP: It is interesting you referenced Brisbane because that is where I live and I have lived through this event in the last two weeks. The Brisbane event was a long duration event. It was a three- or four-day event.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Let us just say we have a torrential downpour which absolutely saturates the catchment—a one-in-1,000 kind of event in intensity for the overland flooding. Where does it take the water?

GREG ROGENCAMP: In a one-in-1,000 event for the short duration 20-minute storm that occurs on the overland flooding catchment, in a one-in-1,000 AEP event, we estimate that would get to probably 7.6 metres.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is over—

GREG ROGENCAMP: That would be 100 millimetres above the floor level. I think those are the examples that have been quoted in the report.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: May I ask one simple question because I am mindful of the time. So that we can understand it, if the event that occurred in the North Coast of New South Wales, in the northern rivers region, occurred for the same duration at the Parramatta site, with the river, with the on-land flooding, with blocked drains, where would the flood levels be at the site?

GREG ROGENCAMP: That is not something that is easy to—but I can give you my professional opinion. The events that occurred in northern New South Wales and south-east Queensland—and this is the point I have been trying to make—are long-duration events. There were not events where there were very short, sharp 20-minute rainfall intensities that would have caused the sort of flooding that we have mapped with the overland flooding around the Parramatta site. The sort of rainfall event that is required to cause flooding from overland flooding in the Parramatta CBD is a short-duration rainfall event more like a thunderstorm, if you like.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: A rain bomb.

GREG ROGENCAMP: If you want to phrase it that way. What we saw in south-east Queensland—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: If you want to just finish answering Mr Secord's question, what would it therefore have done to the river?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: No, the site.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Sorry. With the river, what would it have done to the site with a North Coast-style event?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Would it have passed the 20 centimetres that Mr Shoebridge referred to, that tiny little buffer? Would it have entered the building?

GREG ROGENCAMP: I could not answer that question directly, and I am not too sure there is relevance in taking rainfall intensities from a latitude that is that far further north and assuming that they could occur in Sydney. The rainfall intensities that are predicted to occur in Sydney are a lot less than the rainfall intensities that are predicted to occur in northern New South Wales and Brisbane for the same rarity. As soon as you say if that rainfall fell here, you are probably talking about a one in 10,000 or a one in 20,000 event.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But we have had three consecutive events where there has been flooding. On the North Coast we have had two significant floods in the last five years. It is not within the realm of possibility that it could not occur and we find that, in fact, we are going to experience weather patterns similar to what we have. What would have happened if a North Coast event had occurred at Parramatta?

GREG ROGENCAMP: If I can answer it this way: If we had a four-day event of an intensity or a rarity of, say, one in 1,000 occur over the Parramatta River catchment the flood level would be, I would suggest, well below the floor level. A four-day event is not what brings the Parramatta River to its peak level. It is what brings the Hawkesbury-Nepean to its peak level because it is a big 20,000 square kilometre catchment.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: We will see.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Dr Macintosh, I could be wrong, but my understanding from the evidence we have got from Mr Rogencamp—I will go to Dr Macintosh and then we will come back to you, Mr Rogencamp, or any other witness if they wish to challenge the assumption—is that on a one-in-1,000-year level with climate change impacts the modelling would suggest the river flood would get to within 20 centimetres of the ground floor; and with a one-in-1,000-year flood impact in the overland flooding it would top over the ground floor by about 10 centimetres.

GREG ROGENCAMP: Sorry, I will correct that because I have just read it. It would actually be 10 centimetres below the floor level.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Well, there would be a 10 centimetre freeboard on the overland flooding. Dr Macintosh, do you have any views about that kind of safety buffer when we are talking about an institution like a museum and the exhibits and the like—and the people in the museum?

JOHN MACINTOSH: Yes, I most certainly do. The first thing I would like to say is in relation to Mr Rogencamp's talk about the different sorts of design storms. The overland flow design storm is that which is looking at overland flow only. That, for the flooding of the Powerhouse, is for flooding of the river only. The design basis which those rain supports have been arrived on—this is Australian Rainfall and Runoff—has not considered the combined situation. In other words, you cannot use the ARR and put those two together to try and look at a combined one as it currently stands.

Moving on to answer your question specifically, the primary issue here, I feel—and this is one which looks at hazard, loss of life and exposure of the general public to loss of life and limb—is not so much concern with flood levels associated with the Powerhouse Museum itself. It is associated with the circumstances when you have got large flooding up to about floor level of the Powerhouse Museum site and then you look at the broader area of what is going on in the community. You see that the community surrounding that—that is, Parramatta CBD and so forth—is in a flood hazard area. You have got an issue, all of a sudden, where you have the Powerhouse site, which is effectively an island and separated from all emergency egress routes from that area. That is a recipe for real problems when it comes to flood hazard. That probably is the area which dictates further looking into.

When we look at protecting the general public from increased exposure to flood hazard, we are looking at how they will escape the area as the flood levels rise. If you have a situation where they get trapped at a particular locality, that is an issue which is of concern for loss of life. That is an area which I think really needs to be addressed. When we are talking hazard, it is not what little changes there are to flood levels about the building; it is what is going on in the area around the Powerhouse site. Bear in mind, gentlemen and ladies, that the whole idea of locating the Powerhouse where it is proposed is to attract thousands and thousands of people there 24/7. That in itself really lifts the ante with regards to the number of people that are exposed to the hazard. That is one thing I would like to draw the topic of the conversation towards in relation to looking after the community's interests.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I will go back and ask Mr Dewar and Mr Rogencamp to respond to that community hazard risk in a second. But could I ask you, Dr Macintosh, you said there is an inherent unpredictability in this flood modelling. Given there is inherent unpredictability in how it will impact in a particular catchment, is that 10 centimetre and 20 centimetre freeboard sufficient to deal with that unpredictability?

JOHN MACINTOSH: No, I believe it is quite insufficient to do that. The notion of a freeboard to take into account uncertainty is one where you have got reasonable understanding of the hydrology and the rainfall situations that you are dealing with, and joint probability situations as well. It takes into account the uncertainty of the modelling and the data that goes into the modelling. Adding on top of that uncertainties with regards to what rainfall patterns you used to design and so forth is a different kettle of fish. I think it is insufficient.

I refer to the Brisbane River catchments floods study, which I was on the independent panel of review for, which has recently completed in Brisbane. In that study for the entire Brisbane River catchment, they did not use the ARR design storms because they were not sufficient. They went back with the Bureau of Meteorology and other consultants to come up with a completely new set of temporal patterns which suited the situation because of the importance. That gives you a flavour of it. But I have answered your question.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The likelihood of a one-in-1,000-year flood event over the next 100 years is something like 12 per cent, is it, or 10 per cent? Is that about right, about 12 per cent?

JOHN MACINTOSH: That is correct. There is quite a simple calculation. There is approximately a one in [inaudible] chance that it will occur, or be bigger or be larger, in any one year. Multiply that by 100 years and that approximately brings you up to the 12 per cent chance that it will occur within the life of the structure. It only has to happen once and the damage is done. That is the key thing. It is a 12 per cent chance that in its life the design levels will be exceeded.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Could I ask any of the witnesses here to respond to those concerns that Dr Macintosh has made clear about the flood island? If you have got 2,000 people in the museum, in an overland flood you may have almost no notice of warnings of floods, where in riverine floods you may have slightly more. You have got a flood island. Does any of your learning and study show how you safely evacuate 2,000 or 3,000 people from a flood island in a situation like that?

RICHARD DEWAR: I will maybe say something. Sure, if you put people in the flood plain, there is a risk to life. We cannot get away from that. We do studies in Sydney, and I could name places where you are going to get a metre or so of water and people could die in it, unfortunately. There is a risk to life in every flood plain. Obviously, the safest thing to do is to put everything on a hill. But we cannot do that. We have got a city in Parramatta. We have got a city in Maitland, a city in Lismore. We cannot do that. I do not make the decision where the museum goes, but we have got to look at it as what we call best practice, to see what we can do to ensure that we minimise the risk to life. We cannot eliminate it; it is just not possible. Sadly, people drown in floods, even though we all say, "Don't drive through floodwaters", and, sadly, they come to harm in it. In answer to your question, the evacuation—our view is not to evacuate people from the building in a flood. The flooding on the Parramatta River is not going to last for days; it is going to last for a matter of hours. We have this term called "shelter in place", which is—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: May I—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: No. I think he should be allowed to finish because he is giving a technical opinion. Then, I think, we were going to hear Mr Rogencamp as well. Why don't you wait? Sorry.

RICHARD DEWAR: "Shelter in place" means to stay in the building until the hazard has gone. Certainly, it is a big-enough building to protect people. It has got staff in there who know what to do about it. There is some sleeping accommodation. That is an additional issue to consider because obviously there will be a sleep—"I don't know when I will get out." But there is qualified staff there who can look after people, give warnings, close doors and things like that. We would say, "Do not evacuate from that building." If it is chucking it down with rain outside, the people in the building, the office managers or whoever they are—they should close the doors and say, "Stay in the building until this passes."

TOM GELLIBRAND: If I may, Chairman, to build on Richard's comments about staying in place, the building will have an uninterrupted power supply, which is a back-up supply. It is independent of the grid and actually exists inside the building. That will be adequate to keep it operating as a normal, functioning building of the order of about 10 hours. Richard was not clear on the number of hours the flood would take to subside, but I think it is less than 10.

RICHARD DEWAR: Yes.

TOM GELLIBRAND: Obviously, Greg needs to add something. But, in terms of flooding impact, it is really important that we consider what is the duration and how much warning people will have of a flood event. I think, if you go back to Nyngan, some in the Bureau of Meteorology were giving warnings of up to two weeks of a flood event. We have got to think about how much warning do people have and then, in terms of the overland

flow path that the members have identified, what might be the depth of that water in an extreme event. I think they are two things that are quite relevant.

GREG ROGENCAMP: I was just going to add to this topic by explaining what we mean by "risk". Risk is a combination of probability and consequences. That needs to be kept in mind when we are talking about probabilities of one-in-1,000 in any particular year—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I have a lower risk tolerance when I am in a plane than when I am on a bike, as a general rule.

GREG ROGENCAMP: Yes, if you want to use that analogy. But I think in terms of just keeping it to the principles of the probability of the event occurring and then the consequences of the event occurring. What we are saying in terms of overland flooding is that there is, just to correct the numbers—with a one-in-1,000 AEP event over a 100-year design life, we would be talking about a 10 per cent chance of that occurring in the design life. So there is a 90 per cent chance that, throughout the whole design life of this project, this water would not get within 20 centimetres of the floor level. Then we need to consider the consequences of that happening. We need to consider the consequences of something else bad happening, that might cause the water level to be higher, as you say, an error in the rainfall data and the cloud that John creates around potentially there will be errors in the rainfall for Parramatta River, which I am not aware of. All of that needs to be understood in terms of the consequences of what could happen and the rarity of it happening.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But I want to take you to the SES advice and to your earlier answer about sheltering in place. What you are recommending is in direct conflict with what the SES says.

RICHARD DEWAR: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You are agreeing. The SES says, "Do not shelter in place." Based on the numbers that the Government is putting forward, we could see 5,000 people sheltering in place here, when the SES' policy is that you evacuate during a flood; you do not shelter in place.

RICHARD DEWAR: I think you would find it is completely impossible to evacuate the whole of Parramatta in a flood. It is not humanly possible to do, the same as, sadly, at Lismore and places like that. It cannot be done. So we look to see what is the safest way. I write a whole bunch of reports, and I say, "Stay where you are. Do not move." If it is a three-day event, if you are on the Hawkesbury or even in Lismore, where you are on the roof overnight, then, yes, we have got to get you out of there. There is a risk to your life. But in a flood on the Parramatta River, where it lasts for only several hours, you are safest staying in the building. You are definitely not safe driving on the roads. There are trees falling, there are powerlines coming down and the SES cannot rescue you. They do not have the resources to do that. So the safest thing to do is to stay where you are, unless the building is on fire. Or, obviously, if you are going to have a heart attack or whatever, then you can call up. But the safest thing to do is to stay where you are, rather than to venture outside.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: One of the reasons they recommend against sheltering in place is that it is particularly dangerous for the frail or elderly, or people with significant health concerns. It can be particularly dangerous. You give the example of a heart attack. This is one of many reasons why the SES policy is, wherever possible, not to shelter in place, is it not, Mr Dewar.

RICHARD DEWAR: No. I would say again it comes down to—I commend the emergency services. But, practically speaking, they just do not have the resources to evacuate everybody in Parramatta in a flood. It is impossible for them to do it. So we have to come up with a way to manage the risk. Certainly, in a new building, we can build it high enough above the flood level and we can guarantee that it is not going to fall over in the flood. So you are safer to stay in that building. There is no need for people to move. There are toilet facilities, there is food, there is water, there is heat and there is power. There is no need to move. If you go outside, you are going to risk your life in floodwaters, with cars crashing, trees coming down and powerlines. It is just not a safe thing to do.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Some might say it is not a great spot to build a museum, Mr Dewar. Could I just ask one final question? It comes back to a matter you observed, Mr Rogencamp. Nobody has done the modelling of the river rising and the overland flood in combination. That modelling is just not available or the predictability of it of one-in-100, one-in-1,000. First of all, is that right?

GREG ROGENCAMP: No. It would not be a complicated exercise, because you are combining an event that might have a probability of one-in-100 with another event that might have a probability of one-in-100. You would end up with a very rare event.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: My understanding of Dr Macintosh's observations on that—I could be wrong, and he will speak for himself—was it would be wrong simply to conflate them as two separate events, that

indeed the events that may produce prolonged flooding may also produce intense rainfall. But Dr Macintosh may speak for himself.

JOHN MACINTOSH: I agree. The issue here is making sure you are using the most appropriate temporal patterns of rainfall to meet with the situation. I do disagree with the point that they cannot be overlaid. It is very, very possible and probable that you will have a one-in-100-year or one-in-1,000-year design rainfall event which is suitable for coming up with peak flood levels in the Parramatta River and that those real, live events, which also included high-intensity bursts for local catchments, were not included and considered in the development of those design curves, purely because, for the purposes of Parramatta River, they were not critical. Looking at both of them, that is the case. So I am saying it needs to be looked at and it is a realistic scenario to consider.

The whole issue of what happens in the flooding around the Powerhouse Museum site is the critical one because we are looking at how do you evacuate people from the area in a timely manner and we are looking at not, basically, making the hazard worse. It comes back down to have you got a choice here about exposing the public to increased flood hazard? We have got a choice because the building is not there yet. That is the choice and that needs to be taken into consideration when we are talking about loss of life risk, and putting probabilities on loss of life is a difficult thing to do. I suggest it is not the same as setting out a floor level for a building. Thank you.

The CHAIR: We have come to the end of questioning for this session. Thank you very much for coming.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

Ms DONNA DAVIS, Lord Mayor, City of Parramatta, on former oath

Ms SUZETTE MEADE, North Parramatta Residents Action Group, on former affirmation

The CHAIR: Welcome, Ms Davis and Ms Meade. Thank you very much for coming in. Would either of you or both of you like to make a short opening statement?

SUZETTE MEADE: I think we both are.

The CHAIR: We will start with you, Ms Meade.

SUZETTE MEADE: Thank you, first, to the Committee for inviting me on behalf of the North Parramatta Residents Action Group again to address the inquiry. I wanted to mention today that people from all over Sydney fought valiantly for the 1890s Victorian Italianate villa Willow Grove for just over three years and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge every single one of them for their efforts, enthusiasm and endurance to try and save our heritage from unnecessary destruction. It broke our hearts to see the New South Wales Government give a special exemption to HAUS building services to carry out the demolition of Willow Grove all while the construction industry was in a pandemic lockdown and the suburbs of just western Sydney were under curfew watch of the ADF.

The distress over the loss of part of Parramatta's history has not disappeared. The community members still comment that they cannot bring themselves to walk past where Willow Grove once was as it is too upsetting. Many declare that they will never set foot in the Powerhouse convention centre over this betrayal. I think the damage this project has made to not only the heritage but to the people of Parramatta is deeply underestimated by the people involved in the Powerhouse project and this Government. The sadness is real, and when you see any news on the Powerhouse Parramatta, the overwhelming comments that follow are the words "flood" and "heritage destruction".

The North Parramatta Residents Action Group, as with the National Trust, does not support the remains of Willow Grove being rebuilt and especially not to be rebuilt on the grounds of the Cumberland Hospital Precinct, otherwise known as the North Parramatta Heritage Precinct. This would be a double crime to the heritage of Parramatta by disrespecting the First Nations and colonial heritage of this world-heritage-worthy estate. This site of such national significance must be the home of our museum and cultural precinct.

For years this Government has argued with our community campaign to have the museum funding redirected to this 26-hectare, non-flooding site for the suitable world-class museum, but it argued that it was too far away from the Parramatta CBD for people to visit, despite it only being 950 metres with a light rail stop in the middle of it. However, on 1 December last year the Government finally acknowledged this site would make a perfect location for a museum when the former arts and heritage Minister Don Harwin announced \$3 million of funding for a business case into a museum on the Female Factory convict site. I quote from Linda Morris' article in the SMH where Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Arts Don Harwin said:

The funding would enable the government to plan the transformation of the Parramatta Female Factory into a public museum and plan the development of an arts and cultural precinct for western Sydney creative organisations to operate out of and collaborate from.

This is exactly the proposal our group made to the Minister and his office in 2017 and we also met with the Treasurer at the time Dominic Perrottet's arts advisor with the vision for this entire precinct. We were also requested to make a business case plan for this, which we delivered to this inquiry. However, the public are still totally confused about what is being delivered to the riverbank as anything more than a commercial convention centre. All the details the public has been made aware of is a 200-seat *MasterChef* theatre, a Lang Walker Academy, a dormitory for students and a retail strategy that includes a brewery and an e-gaming hub. All of this is fine and every city should have these things; however, this should not be coming from our cultural funding model and this is not a community support project. There is no excitement behind it. The NPRAG members urge this Government to redirect the cultural funding for the museum for families, as we were promised, to North Parramatta where we can celebrate our social history of First Nations and migration from colonisation to the diversity we enjoy today in an open-air precinct which is free from flooding issues. Thank you.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Madam Lord Mayor.

DONNA DAVIS: Thank you for this opportunity. As a long-time resident and the Lord Mayor of the City of Parramatta I am passionate about seeing our city continue to flourish. One of my priorities is achieving a redeveloped Riverside Theatres and working to ensure Riverside and the Powerhouse Parramatta complement each other so that we can realise the long-term vision of Parramatta as the primary arts precinct outside the Sydney CBD. I have always welcomed State Government investment in our city; however, it cannot continue to be at the

expense of our heritage. The preservation of Parramatta's rich built, environmental and First Nations heritage is also a priority for me and our city and I will continue to advocate for our heritage to be protected. I will expand on this shortly.

With such intensive growth across our LGA, our council has proven itself to possess the expertise necessary to ensure much better planning outcomes than in the past. What is critical to the success of our city is recognition by the State Government that our council understands our city, and most importantly our community, better than anyone. It is with this in mind that I would like to focus on a few critical aspects of the City of Parramatta's submissions in response to the Parramatta Powerhouse project.

Parramatta is a low-lying catchment area, hence it is prone to flash flooding. When it floods in Parramatta, water levels rise very quickly. The City of Parramatta has invested significantly on flood mitigation measures; however, we cannot stop floods occurring. We can only work to minimise risk and endeavour to keep our community safe. Since the idea was first floated for the Powerhouse Museum to be built on the riverbank site, the city has constantly raised three critical elements relevant to the site: connection to its sense of place, the river and Civic Link, as set out in the Parramatta City River Strategy; protection of heritage on the site; and flooding.

The DPIE has approved a design for the Parramatta Powerhouse with an undercroft. In council's submission of 12 November 2020, it recognised the efforts made to modify the design to align with the competition-winning visualisation that showed a landscape that included a sloping embankment and a seamless relationship with the Parramatta River. However, Council maintains its view that the undercroft is not an appropriate solution for the site. Our position is contrary to the view that "the proposed undercroft area is the best and only outcome for the site to mitigate and appropriately manage riverine flooding", and instead maintains its concerns regarding the undercroft due to potential threat to life, property and critical building services in a flood event, including evacuation via a single, limited-capacity lift.

Council considers this to be a contradiction of the Floodplain Development Manual and New South Wales Flood Policy, and holds the view that there are alternative solutions, including removal of the undercroft from the design, to be replaced with a suitable sloping riverbank section as a potential viable solution to manage the conveyance of floodwater. This would have the benefit of creating a more integrated foreshore landscape, where the natural sloping riverbank profiles that existed before the former car park was originally constructed could be considered as the baseline for predevelopment conveyance capacity and afflux considerations. The recommended conditions of consent confirm that no consent is granted for the use of the undercroft for any purpose other than flood mitigation. Fixed, permanent and permeable undercroft screens must be provided and construction and operational flooding emergency management plans are required.

What is so disappointing about this outcome is that a central selling point of this arts and cultural institution was to be its interface with the community, and that opportunity has been missed. This space, this undercroft, was sold to us on the premise that it would be valuable community space for our city to use for recreation, for creation and for any activity that our community wanted to engage in with the institution or with each other. The inclusion of the undercroft that is off limits for any purpose other than flood mitigation prevents this. Our city sees an opportunity to redesign the interface between the buildings and the surrounding public space. Replacing this vertical transition will improve connections between the building and the river foreshore, providing opportunities for a range of civic events that are more in keeping with the original vision of a river square public space that was envisioned in the original Parramatta City River Strategy.

If the recent flood events have not taught us anything then I do not know why we continue to have these conversations about flood mitigation. For our city, we have invested a lot of money and we are seeing the fruits of those labours. We have just experienced a very mild flooding event for our city—not so for other parts of New South Wales. We have benefited from investment. What concerns us is that we may miss an opportunity here to ensure that this Powerhouse Parramatta is designed in a way that meets the needs of the community and is safe and actually engages with the place that it is located—it actually sits within those environs and actually has a relationship with the river. We feel that this current design does not allow for that.

I would like to quickly touch on St George's Terrace. As you are aware, Council's prior resolutions demonstrated unanimous support for the retention of both Willow Grove and St George's Terrace on the site. Council supports the revitalisation of St George's Terrace, but we have asked Infrastructure NSW to reflect on more of the original elements of these buildings. Our City does not oppose the removal of more recent additions, as this would allow for the retention, conservation and integration of the remaining original brick structure. Whilst it is understood that the removal of the internal walls allows for greater flexibility, from a heritage perspective it would be sensible to conserve and restore those existing and visible features that are typical of its architectural style.

Based on the heritage advice to date, we request that the applicant retain chimneys and reinstate the verandah floor, balcony floors, roof and balustrades, opening sizes, installation of doors and windows to match original proportions. Given that it is now the only heritage building on the site, it would be a wonderful opportunity to actually celebrate what remains. If there is one lesson to be learnt from the Powerhouse project, it must be the importance of acknowledgement and incorporation of local expertise and feedback for all future State Government projects across New South Wales. Parramatta has a torrid history of getting what we are given and being expected to suck it up if it fails to meet our needs, respect our places or be fit for purpose. We, the residents, leaders, employers and investors of our city, know what we need to succeed. Together, we can shape our own future and ensure it is in keeping with what we need to achieve and flourish. Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Questions?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I will kick off with a few questions. Thanks, Councillor Davis and Ms Meade, for coming along. I want to start on St George's Terrace. I would like you to elaborate a little bit more on what you think would be a more appropriate use of that part of the site. I understand that, currently, the idea is really just to keep the front facade, but that almost all of the rest will be lost. I just wanted to talk a little bit more about the opportunity to actually keep more of the footprint of that building and integrate that into the design.

DONNA DAVIS: We have not got a lot of detail on how the building will be incorporated and what the eventual plans are for that building.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: That makes it hard.

DONNA DAVIS: But, as a City, we really feel that it is important to respect those terraces, because they are the only terraces remaining in the City of Parramatta. They talk to a particular period in time. They are actually older than Willow Grove. We are very fortunate as a Council that we have our own heritage expert employed by the Council. On the advice that we have received, they really do believe that it would be a very missed opportunity if we do not try to restore that building. Definitely, incorporate it in with the Parramatta Powerhouse, but reinstate those features that I mentioned—the balcony floors, the chimneys, the verandah floor—all of those features of the building that speak to that point in time.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Yes, give it life; give it a story. I recall when we went to Willow Grove. You can see it from the outside and it looks gorgeous, but when you go inside it is often those features that are much more powerful.

DONNA DAVIS: Yes. One thing to note is that the Heritage Interpretation Strategy that was submitted with the original DA did not include the built heritage retention of St George's Terrace. Our Council is asking that this should be prepared and presented prior to any further decisions being made about the future of St George's Terrace.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Thank you. I just wanted to move on quickly to the Willow Grove relocation community consultative committee—and I am probably getting that name wrong, but—

SUZETTE MEADE: It is something like that.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Before we change—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Yes, if you want to ask about St George's Terrace, that is fine.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I will ask Donna a question, if that is alright? Lord Mayor, those submissions in relation to Willow Grove—have you made them directly to the Minister, or to Create Infrastructure, or to Lisa Havilah as chief executive of the museum trust?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You mean St George's Terrace?

DONNA DAVIS: Do you mean St George's Terrace?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Did I say—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You said Willow Grove.

DONNA DAVIS: You said Willow Grove.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That is because I took over from Rose.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Sorry, I had moved on. But we are going back to St George's Terrace?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I apologise for that. Yes, I meant St George's Terrace.

DONNA DAVIS: Yes, that submission has actually been made in response to the call for submissions—

SUZETTE MEADE: Yes, there was a call for submissions.

DONNA DAVIS: —and it was made to the Department of Planning and Environment. So it was in relation to the modification report.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Did you provide copies to the museum and the Minister?

DONNA DAVIS: I would not be sure, but I can—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Could I just encourage council to do that?

DONNA DAVIS: Yes. Yes, thank you.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: That was all—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I have one question on St George's Terrace.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Yes, go now. Yes, let's finish up on St George's Terrace.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Lord Mayor, the intent of council is to retain them as terraces. That is one core part of it, is it not? And the internal structure and the flow between the buildings is one core part of the historic importance of St George's Terrace. Is that part of council's concerns?

DONNA DAVIS: Yes. We understand that there would be a desire by Create NSW to possibly—well, for want of a better word—gut the building so that it can be used as exhibition space. But we believe this is an opportunity to actually highlight the heritage and use that as part of the exhibitions that are part of the museum. We do not know what the purpose of that building is going to be; this is one of the challenges. I attended a meeting with Lisa Havilah, I think it was on 22 February, with our CEO and senior staff, and it was very light on in terms of detail about what will be going where. That is why it would be very disheartening to actually see damage done to that building if there is not any clear view yet of what its future use could be. I would think, as I have said, given what has already happened on that site, it would really be a very wise move to actually respect the heritage that is left.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We do not want façadism, where it looks like a terrace on the outside and it is a big box on the inside.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I think my suspicion is that the buildings have been so altered that there is so little left but the façade, that the work would largely have to be reinstated. But anyway, I am doing what I should not be doing.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Lord Mayor, have you had your heritage officers go into St Georges Terrace after having access to the site?

DONNA DAVIS: I would assume that the current officer would not have had that access, given that we do not own that site any longer. It would have been based on information that they had prior.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But you would like a collaborative approach with council and its heritage officers and the museum to retain it and celebrate the heritage as much as possible?

DONNA DAVIS: Yes, definitely. As I mentioned, given that we did not even have the heritage interpretation strategy to work off, which actually would have provided a lot of detail about the condition of the buildings so that we could have made a more informed assessment and a more informed submission, we were sort of flying blind a little bit.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I was just asking about the Willow Grove relocation consultative committee. Ms Meade, are you on that committee? Is your group represented on that?

SUZETTE MEADE: Annette Pitman from Create NSW asked us to put an expression of interest in to be a part of the committee at least three times. Our executive committee and members decided that that would be against our principles, that heritage should not be relocated, as per the Burra Charter, I think article 8, which is on location and setting and its spiritual connection to site. So we could not be involved in that. It would set too dangerous a precedent for us and all the other beautiful heritage in Parramatta to support the relocation of the committee's intention—which is to put it in Cumberland Hospital—which we feel would be another heritage crime, to put a rich businesswoman's Victorian Italianate villa in a convict site.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Accepting that is definitely not the outcome that you want to see—the outcome you want to see is the one that the Government has made impossible in a way, which is retaining it on that site—is there anything else you would like to add, using this opportunity, in terms of what is next, or any

ideas that you do have about the future for the building, the elements of the building, or have you just decided you are not going to expend your energy on that?

SUZETTE MEADE: I think we should let Willow Grove and the memory of Annie Gallagher, the strong pioneering woman, rest in peace where she was. I think a Blue Plaque nomination in remembering Annie Gallagher as a strong female of Parramatta being put on the site where her house was would be the most respectful thing to do.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Thank you. That is an excellent suggestion.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: For full disclosure, I agree and indeed I supported that Blue Plaque proposal. I hope it succeeds.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Can I ask a follow-up question? Suzette, given that is your view, that it should not be reassembled, what should happen to the materials?

SUZETTE MEADE: I would like to see some of them shown to the public, I guess, and if there was ever to be a museum of New South Wales celebrating our fine history of Parramatta, I think the story of Annie and all the people that were born in Willow Grove and all the women that owned Willow Grove I think is an exceptionally important part of Parramatta's history. Parramatta is made up of exceptionally strong women's stories which are yet to be told, which I think is a really exciting element that we have not even dived into and what makes us so enthusiastic about trying to get funding for these wonderful stories, instead of getting stories brought in, because we have so much to say.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I have one last question on another topic. I know we have limited time. Ms Davis, I understand that there has been some revision of the plans and that the rooftop space has been reduced. Do you have any reflections on that in terms of the overall open space on the site.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Are you sure?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I may be wrong; I would not profess to be as expert on these things as other people. But it seems to me that open space on the site is obviously important, that is, interface both with the river and the city. Do you have any comment on that?

DONNA DAVIS: Yes, with the most recent modifications there were two aspects to that. One is the change to that eastern roof terrace and the other was the proposed changes to St George's Terrace. Council also noted that the eastern roof will allow for additional event space, which is welcome; however, the reduction in landscaping, when compared to the original approval from the department, needs to be addressed. Our view is that there should be an increase to landscaping elsewhere on the site to ensure that there is no net overall loss to green space. As you know, in planning these days a rooftop terrace counts for greenspace somehow.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: That is right. There is a rooftop terrace and then there is a rooftop terrace, and they are used very differently.

DONNA DAVIS: Yes. So that is just one of the concerns that council has raised that needs to be addressed as part of this re-design. There are still these key issues that have not been addressed from the original submission and that is why I focus so much on the undercroft.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Can I go back to the undercroft because part of the initial pitch about putting it on the river was to have that interplay between the museum and the river to enliven the riverfront. But because of the enormous difficulties dealing with the flooding, there will now basically be a concrete cage underneath the museum. How does that impact on council's vision for activating the riverfront and making that a cultural precinct?

DONNA DAVIS: Significantly because we believe, and have stuck to this as a key issue throughout this whole process—it has been a real sticking issue—that the river needs to integrate with the site. We see that green space between the river and the building as an opportunity to have open public space to be able to have outdoor events, to activate it, whether or not it be by the museum or by council or others. It is an opportunity to connect with the Civic Link as well, even though the civic link does not actually meet with our original vision in terms of its width, at least it still does carry through from Horwood Place, so it does still exist. We want to ensure that is an active space.

Right from the outset, when I first got on Council and we were shown the original concepts for the museum, we were sold this concept about public accessible space. One thing that we know about creative arts is that you need places and spaces to rehearse to bring those ideas and visions to life. I think a really good example of where it works well is down at the ICC where every day you see people practising their dancing in the windows along that alleyway between the two buildings. It is such a lovely thing to see people using that public space in a

creative way. They are people who cannot afford to go and hire a rehearsal room. They would not be doing what they are doing if they did not have that public, free, accessible space.

When we were told about this area under the building, we felt that that was an opportunity because even in terms of structured rehearsal space—something we struggle with currently at Riverside Theatres—we do not have rehearsal space there. This has been a challenge for years. It was such a great opportunity to not only have that active riverbank but to lose access to any free community space under there, is really disappointing. When we first saw that design we were not told that it was not going to be accessible.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You were not told it was basically a flood mitigation?

DONNA DAVIS: Yes, and that is why, as I have mentioned today, council still is of the view that it is not too late to actually revisit that and focus on directing the floodwaters down through the river as a natural flow, rather than across the site. As I have said to you before, we have got a lot of experience in Parramatta when it comes to flooding. We have spent a lot of money, investment from State Government as well, on flood mitigation. It does not stop the floods but we are learning a lot more about what we need to do to manage those sites along the river. I just feel that at some point in time, and now is the perfect time, someone has to sit down and listen to the expertise.

Today I believe Jen Concato and Brett Newman, our CEO, were invited to speak at the inquiry. They decided not to speak. That is because they felt that until the current flood modelling is completed for Parramatta that it would not be wise to speak publicly. Now that is not going to be completed until July. That is an extremely important body of work. We have been waiting on it for a long time. I think it is still very critical to this development. We have been banging on about it for a long time and it has been falling on deaf ears. I really think it is very important that that is taken into consideration.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: One of the recommendations the Committee might make would be that there be an urgent review of the plans on the publishing of the flood models in July. Would you support that?

DONNA DAVIS: Yes. You all know that there has been a lot of discussion about flooding and the concerns, and one-in-1,000-year floods, one-in-100-year floods. It is about that fast-rising water and ensuring that people can evacuate safely. The evacuation plan does not have to be presented until the occupation certificate is issued, so that is a long way off. We need to make sure now that everything is in place and we do as much as we can now to ensure that when we get to the other end we do not say, "Oh gee, we probably should have done that because now we have got a problem." We have not even had the sod turning yet, so this is the time to be doing it.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for attending.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

The Committee adjourned at 14:50.