

REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 4

INQUIRY INTO MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

CORRECTED PROOF

At Macquarie Room, Parliament House, Sydney on Monday, 5 September 2016

The Committee met at 1:00 pm

PRESENT

The Hon. R. Borsak (Chair)

The Hon. S. Farlow

The Hon. B. Franklin

The Hon. S. Mallard

The Hon. S. Moselmane

The Hon. W. Secord

Mr D. Shoebridge

The CHAIR: Welcome to the first hearing of the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4 inquiry into museums and galleries. The inquiry was established to examine New South Wales Government policy, funding and support for the State's cultural institutions including museum and gallery buildings and heritage collections. It will also consider the proposed sale of the Powerhouse Museum site in Ultimo and whether there are alternative strategies to support museum development.

Before I commence, I acknowledge the Gadigal people who are the traditional custodians of this land and I pay respect to the elders past and present of the Eora nation, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal people present. This is the first of three hearings we plan to hold for this inquiry. Today we will hear from representatives of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Arts NSW, the Museum of Contemporary Arts, National Trust of Australia and community interest groups. before we commence I will make some brief comments about procedures for today's hearing. Regarding web casting: today's hearing is open to the public and is being broadcast live via the Parliament's web site. A transcript of today's hearing will be placed on the Committee's web site when it becomes available.

In accordance with the broadcast guidelines, I inform members of the media who are here or who may be joining us that while Committee members and witnesses may be filmed or recorded, people in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of any filming or photography. I also remind media representatives that they must take responsibility for what they publish about the Committee's proceedings. It is important to remember that parliamentary privilege does not apply to what witnesses may say outside of their evidence at this hearing. So I urge witnesses to be careful about any comments you may make to the media or to others after you complete your evidence, as such comments would not be protected by parliamentary privilege if another person decided to take action for defamation. The guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings are available from the secretariat.

There may be some questions that a witness could answer only if they had more time or with certain documents at hand. In those circumstances witnesses are advised that they can take a question on notice and provide an answer within 21 days. Regarding adverse mention, I remind everyone here today that Committee hearings are not intended to provide a forum for people to make adverse reflections about others during the protection of parliamentary privilege. I therefore advise the witnesses to focus on the issues raised by the inquiry terms of reference and avoid naming individuals unnecessarily. Witnesses are advised that any messages may be delivered to the Committee through the committee staff. Finally regarding mobile phones, would every one turn off the mobile phones or put them on silence for the duration of the hearing.

BARNEY GLOVER, President, Board of Trustees, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences and Vice Chancellor, Western Sydney University, affirmed and examined

DOLLA MERRILLEES, Director, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Mr Glover, would you like to make a short opening statement? Please keep it to no more than a few minutes.

Professor GLOVER: Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee today. As President of the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences I will seek to respond to your questions and where these relate to operational matters or matters of more detail I will seek the advice of the director of the museum, Dolla Merrillees. I will make a short opening statement. The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences commands a unique place at the intersection of science, technology, design and the arts. It is a truly inspiring institution that has been focused on creativity, ideas and innovation.

It has built up a great international reputation with its three venues: The Powerhouse Museum, Sydney Observatory and Museums Discovery Centre, offering a vast range of outstanding engagement activities for people of all ages. Overall the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences holds more than 500,000 objects in its collection. Beyond the museum walls there is an active regional, national and international loans and touring program which combined have reached more than 4.5 million visitors throughout Australia and around the world. Even further afield there were more than seven million visits to the museums website and 1.8 million visits made by people around the world to the online collection.

Over the past two and a half years the museum has experienced unprecedented growth and change driven by the alignment of its vision and strategic direction. This has enabled the museum to invest an additional amount of money each year towards better access and exhibitions. In 2015-16 the museum saw a 30 per cent year on year increase in visits, a strong contribution to the New South Wales Government priority to increase visitation to cultural institutions by 15 per cent by 2019. The museum plays a vital role in supporting the State's visitor economy, working with Destination NSW to deliver a series of exclusive and world premier exhibitions and running the museum's massive late program with its free after hours events boosting Sydney's night economy.

In recent years the museum's partnerships program has significantly advanced. Last year approximately \$3 million in development income and in-kind support was raised through these partnerships. As we continue to work within the New South Wales sufficiency dividend arrangements the trust welcomes the opportunity to discuss with government strategies to further enable commercial and philanthropic activities. The trust recognises the unique opportunity presented by the proposed relocation of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta. It is committed to the development of a state of the art, iconic and world class cultural institution that provides audiences across New South Wales, Australia and the world with excellent physical and digital experiences, as well as optimum access to the museum's remarkable collections.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Thank you very much for being here today. It is terrific. Thank you also for the tour of the Powerhouse this morning. I think we all found it a very valuable experience. As a member of The Nationals, I am obviously more concerned about regional access to arts and culture. To that end, I will ask a series of questions. In your presentation this morning you mentioned that 216 events were held in regional New South Wales in 2015-16. Can you tell us more about that and your general program for regional outreach?

Ms MERRILLEES: The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences [MAAS] and takes its commitment to regional services very seriously. It is also important to state that regional services are the responsibility of all the cultural institutions as well as Museums and Galleries NSW, which is the peak organisation funded by the Government. It has a mandate to provide programs and services to improve the visitor experience, as well as to support museums and galleries to maintain their collections and displays in keeping with Australian standards and industry best practice. We regularly partner with Museums and Galleries NSW on regional initiatives. In fact, I will be presenting later this year at Artlands Dubbo.

In keeping with the museum's regional programs, we have a dedicated regional program producer. We also have an extensive and subsidised loans program, which I think I mentioned this morning. Our staff, including conservation and curatorial staff, regularly provide advice, and our museum's digital studio is increasingly used to provide regional programs and professional development. We also have a touring exhibition program and are currently organising a number of small, bespoke tours regionally and nationally. We have a comprehensive video conferencing program with regional schools, which again extends nationally and internationally. Most recently, for example, one of our conservators provided advice and assisted with the opening of a 100-year-old time capsule at Parkes. That is one of the types of events we mentioned this morning.

We also take a leadership role in hosting an annual regional stakeholders' forum. We bring together regional stakeholders to talk about topical issues. We also have a professional series to support collaboration and professional development across the sector. As you may know, we have partnerships with a number of regional galleries and museums. Most recently, on Saturday, we opened Gravity (and Wonder) at Penrith Regional Gallery. It is a six-year partnership designed to deliver a suite of programs and activities, which include not only our own to collection but also new commissions by contemporary artists. It is a core part of our remit.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: That is great. Term of reference 1 (d) relates to online access, particularly for those who are confronted by the tyranny of distance and who cannot get to the larger centres. Online access is very important for people in regional areas. Is that something on which you are focusing?

Ms MERRILLEES: Absolutely.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Is the entire collection online? How do you handle online access? If not, is that your aim? How do you handle online visitation by those who cannot physically attend?

Ms MERRILLEES: You are quite right, online is an incredibly important issue, and it is an increasingly important part of our remit. Professor Glover mentioned that we have more than seven million visitors to our website. Access to our collection is a core component of the museum's mission and vision. About 60 to 70 per cent of the collection is digitised. This is an ongoing program for the museum and it is one in which we are actively engaged. We provide online access to our collection and to our video conferencing through our digital studios. That is a core part of what we are doing, and we are growing that through our education program. We would like to do more in that area. Our website and our social media channels again are about online access. The relocation of the museum to Parramatta is an opportunity to closely examine the digitisation of the collection prior to the move. We have also recently entered into partnership with the University of Technology, Sydney to pursue 3D scanning of core parts of the collection. In terms of conservation and access, that is the way we need to move forward.

Professor GLOVER: As Ms Merrillees indicated, the move will not only open the opportunity to digitise more of the collection but also give us an opportunity to rethink the way in which the digital experience manifests itself for visitors to the museum. There are many layers on which the digital and online future of the museum is very strong.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: We were very impressed this morning. We were saying that it is long way from things in glass cases.

[An interruption from the public gallery]

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Thank you for the visit this morning. I am a substituting Labor member of the Committee and I am shadow Minister for the Arts. I wish to ask a few questions about 1(e) of the terms of reference for the inquiry, which is about the move to Parramatta. According to your submission, you have had 570,000 visits in 2015-16. What are your projections for when then museum moves to Parramatta? Will those visits go up or down?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The most recent information is 730,000.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: No, you are combining all three venues. I am talking about the Powerhouse.

Ms MERRILLEES: The 730 figure is across the MAAS.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: That is across the three—

Ms MERRILLEES: —across all sites, that is correct.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I am more interested in the Powerhouse, the Ultimo location. According to your submission, you have had 570,000 visits. Will there be an increase or decrease with the move to Parramatta?

Professor GLOVER: At the moment, the audience search that underpins that, a more detailed response to that question, is being undertaken as part of the final business case that is underway at the moment. That is a matter for Government. Clearly the location of the museum in Parramatta and providing access to a very substantial and growing part of the Sydney population gives us every confidence that visitation figures would increase, and we would look forward to seeing substantial increases in visitation over time once the museum is operational.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So you have made the decision to shut this one down—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I was not finished.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: —without any research at all on numbers. It is extraordinary.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: David, I was still asking questions. Sorry, sir. You must have preliminary modelling or research showing that you believe it is either going to go up or down. I would like an indication.

Ms MERRILLEES: If I may, it is important to note that the increase in our audiences that we are currently experiencing is due to a diverse and high quality exhibition and public programs. There is no reason to assume that with that offer that our audience will not continue to grow, regardless of where the museum is located.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: According to your submission, there was a 35 per cent increase in school visits. Of the schools that you currently receive, do most of those come from Western Sydney, the North Shore, south Sydney?

Ms MERRILLEES: As I mentioned to you this morning, our visitation analysis shows overall that 30 per cent of our audiences are national and international and 60 per cent of our audiences are drawn from the greater community of Sydney and that that split is equal in respect of east, west, north, south and visitation, and that includes, to my understanding, the education audiences.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Would it be safe to say that most of your visitors come from Western Sydney?

Ms MERRILLEES: We have a large visitation and repeat visitation from Western Sydney, but the education audience is drawn from across Sydney.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You made reference, Professor Glover, to your corporate partnerships. Do you think that moving the Powerhouse to Parramatta will increase or decrease collaborations and partnerships with the Powerhouse?

Professor GLOVER: I think we have every confidence that partnerships will grow in a whole variety of ways, both in respect of the corporate partnerships that you are referring to with business. We are seeing already significant increases in organisations wanting to partner with the museum around our very exciting exhibition program and, as Ms Merrillees pointed out, with the intent to continue that exciting exhibition program in the long term, we would not be in any way imagining that the level of corporate interest in partnership would diminish. There is significant developments going on in Western Sydney, in a whole raft of ways, both through major infrastructure projects, the Sydney airport development and many other initiatives in Western Sydney, which give us confidence that the business space in Western Sydney would be supportive of partnerships with the exhibition, but as would community groups and other galleries and, importantly, with educational institutions. While I am president of the board of trustees of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, I am also the Vice-Chancellor and President of Western Sydney University, and I know that my university has been engaged for some time in discussions with the museum to strengthen the partnership, as other universities have, and we would hope that many New South Wales universities and, in fact, universities from all over Australia, would see the value of partnership with the museum. I anticipate great opportunities.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: As the president of the board of trustees, do you receive financial statements, financial valuations, and things like that?

Ms MERRILLEES: At the board level?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Yes, at the board level.

Ms MERRILLEES: Of course, yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Has there been modelling or financial statements on the value of the current site at Ultimo?

Professor GLOVER: I think those matters are still underway during the development of the final business case. I have not seen details.

Ms MERRILLEES: The responsibility for the divestment of the Ultimo site and the valuations is a matter for Government—Property NSW.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Professor Glover, have you received any briefings or any presentations at the board level involving the value of the Ultimo site?

Professor GLOVER: I do not believe I have had any briefings at board level. We have discussed at board level the obvious issues about the valuation of the site at Ultimo, so I can recall we had discussions about it in broad terms. In respect of an external agency briefing us about the cost, I do not recall.

Ms MERRILLEES: If I may clarify, the valuations are currently being undertaken by Government Property NSW, to feed into the final business case, so we do not actually have that data.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You do not have that data?

Ms MERRILLEES: No.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Professor Glover, in your answer to me you made reference to those informal discussions. Can you enlighten me about those informal discussions?

Professor GLOVER: Naturally, when the board has considered the divestment by Government of the Ultimo site, and as a contribution to the move to Parramatta there were discussions that that would mean a valuation of the Ultimo site would be a critically important part of that consideration, so, yes, those discussions occurred.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What is the official title of that agency?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Privatisation.

Ms MERRILLEES: Government Property NSW.

Professor GLOVER: Property NSW.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So it is undertaking valuations of the site?

Ms MERRILLEES: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are they doing that as we speak?

Professor GLOVER: I understand that to be the case.

Ms MERRILLEES: And that is subject to the final business case, which is cabinet in-confidence.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Professor, it is a competent board of trustees, is it not?

Professor GLOVER: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: One of the key obligations you have as a board of trustees is to understand the finances and the asset position of your organisation?

Professor GLOVER: That is correct.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Would you not say that your principal asset, apart from the collection, is the Powerhouse site at Ultimo?

Professor GLOVER: Principal asset, of course, is our collection. There are 500,00 items in the collection.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yes, apart from that. If you listened to my question, I said, apart from your collection, the principal asset is the Powerhouse museum site at Ultimo.

Professor GLOVER: The principal obligation of the board, of course, is to the collection, the 500,000 items, and to our sites, not just Ultimo; the observatory and, of course, the Museum Discovery Centre.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Was there some ambiguity in my question that you did not understand.

Professor GLOVER: No. I have answered your question.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Of your property portfolio, the Powerhouse site at Ultimo is your most expensive and valuable part of your property portfolio; yes or no?

Professor GLOVER: I have answered your question.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is the Powerhouse site at Ultimo—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Compared to the observatory?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: —the most valuable part of your property portfolio?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: They have several properties.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is the Powerhouse site at Ultimo the most valuable part of your property portfolio?

Professor GLOVER: It is manifestly the most significant site.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yes. If you are a competent board, surely you know the value of it.

Professor GLOVER: Valuations are underway at the moment and as we have said, Property NSW is undertaking those valuations.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You must have known the value of your site before the most recent set of proposals, because any competent board understands the value of its property portfolio. You said you are a competent board, so what was the valuation you had on the site before the most recent proposal came forward?

Professor GLOVER: As I said, we have a competent board and those matters are under consideration by Property NSW.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Before Property NSW started the current valuation process, what was the valuation that your board put on the site.

Professor GLOVER: I am not aware of valuation on the site by the board prior to my—it may have occurred prior to my time.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you want to take that on notice and give a full and thorough and proper answer on notice?

Professor GLOVER: I am happy to take it on notice, yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I just mean: What is the Parramatta Project Control Group?

Professor GLOVER: It is one of the groups that, along with others, are involved in the planning for the move of the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Have you attended meetings of the Parramatta Project Control Group?

Professor GLOVER: I do not believe I have.

Ms MERRILLEES: The Project Control Group has oversight of the proposed relocation of the museum to Parramatta. Lisa Chung, our deputy chair, sits on that committee.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: On how many occasions has somebody from the Powerhouse sat on the Parramatta Project Control Group?

Ms MERRILLEES: All the time. The trust and members of the executive are members of the control group.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: That is very sensible.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Has the Parramatta Project Control Group had any information about the proposed valuation of the current Ultimo site? That is obviously relevant if it is to be a key part of funding the new site.

Ms MERRILLEES: As I mentioned, the valuation is currently being undertaken by Property NSW for the final business case, which is Cabinet in confidence.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: On what basis has the valuation been undertaken—using the site for a public purpose or redeveloping it for another purpose?

Ms MERRILLEES: That is a matter for Government. You would need to direct that question to Property NSW.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You do not know?

Ms MERRILLEES: The museum is not involved in the divestment of the Ultimo site.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: They are not valuers.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is not the question. Do you know the basis upon which the valuations have been done, Professor?

Professor GLOVER: I think Ms Merrillees has answered the question.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Either you do or you do not know.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Point of order: The witness has already said that this is a matter for Government, not for these witnesses. That is not an unreasonable answer.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Either you do or you do not know the basis.

Professor GLOVER: We have answered the question.

The CHAIR: The question has been answered.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Thank you very much for the opportunity to tour the Powerhouse Museum this morning. It was great to go downstairs and underground and look at some of the behind-the-scenes pieces. This question relates to your submission. I could not tell from it whether you are in favour of or opposed to moving to Parramatta.

Professor GLOVER: The board of trustees?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yes.

Professor GLOVER: The board of trustees supports the move to Parramatta.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Okay. I note that your submission mentions the inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan 2015. Has there not been an exhibition of artwork or a relationship with Indigenous Australians in the museum before? Is this the first time?

Professor GLOVER: I think Ms Merrillees should answer that.

Ms MERRILLEES: No. The museum has had a longstanding commitment to the exhibition, display and research of Indigenous cultural material and has an extensive collection, both past and contemporary, of Indigenous material. The Reconciliation Action Plan is being conducted with Reconciliation Australia. It provides a framework for the museum in not only its collections but how it liaises with the community, how it engages with Indigenous elders and how it consults with the community about its collections and does its programming. It is also about ensuring that we embed Indigenous programming in all our practices. To that end, we have recently completed a piece of work with Terri Janke and Company lawyers putting Indigenous protocols around our collection as well. It is an area where we have been very active. The museum has always had a strong remit in that area.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Who instigated the Reconciliation Action Plan?

Ms MERRILLEES: I did, along with the previous director.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I did not see any mention in your submission of Multicultural NSW. What relationship do you have with Multicultural NSW?

Ms MERRILLEES: We have had an ongoing relationship with Multicultural NSW. Cultural diversity is an incredibly important part of our program. As you would have seen today, in the museum we hold extensive collections from communities around Australia as well as internationally. We build that in in all of our programming and exhibitions. There is much more that we can do in that area. It is probably worth pointing out that we have an exhibition on tour at the moment called Faith, Fashion, Fusion that is looking at the modest fashion industry. It is an exhibition that we put together with the Muslim community. I launched it last year in Maitland. It has recently been in Canberra. We are in discussions at the moment with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade about the possibility of it touring internationally. It is an area that we take very seriously and continue to work on.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Thank you.

The CHAIR: I note, Professor, that you said that the board supports the move to Parramatta. I suppose the management supports it as well.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The board does.

The CHAIR: If the board does, I assume the management does too. How does the size and scale of the new Parramatta facility compare with the size and scale of the existing Powerhouse Museum, including the Harwood Building?

Professor GLOVER: Before I answer your question, may I make one clarifying comment. The board of trustees supports the move to Parramatta. However, as the trustees of the collection we believe it is our responsibility to ensure that in that move a number of things are taken account of. One of them is that the site is fit for purpose and appropriate to the construction of the museum, as the Premier and the New South Wales Government have indicated. Secondly, we need to ensure that the capital funding required to build the iconic

museum that the Government has referred to and the operational funding that is required to operate the museum into the future are appropriate to the vision that we have for the museum in Parramatta. Finally, we need to ensure that the remit of the museum to provide access to the collection for the long-term is achievable.

The footprint that is planned for the museum is still in the early stages. The Government is on record as saying that it wants to see a significant increase in the display of items from the collection. That is an important aspect of the outcome of this. With a purpose-built museum you can achieve more with a smaller footprint, provided that there is adaptive reuse of the Powerhouse at its current site. We anticipate a museum of very similar scale but with greater capacity to display and house the collection.

The CHAIR: Thank you for that. You say the board wants to ensure that the building will be fit for purpose. What have you done to ensure that?

Professor GLOVER: We are participating in the process at the moment. There is a final business case underway with government. In my meetings that I have had with Ministers and others I have made the view of the board of trustees very clear on these matters. We look forward to accessing more information as the design and development phase of this museum go forward.

The CHAIR: Would you give the Committee of indication of the time line for that?

Professor GLOVER: I will refer to Ms Merrillees on the time frame for the final business case.

Ms MERRILLEES: The final business case is due to Government at the end of this year. The intention then is to have a design competition early next year. There is no final date for the opening of the new museum. I would be speculating. The time line is subject to the final business case.

The CHAIR: Do you have any idea of the predicted end costs for a project like this in Parramatta?

Ms MERRILLEES: That is subject to the final business case.

The CHAIR: What about funding?

Professor GLOVER: That is a matter for Government.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So you do not know the footprint, you do not know the visitor numbers, you do not know the cost and you do not know the funding, yet the board supports the relocation. How do you get to that position?

Professor GLOVER: I have explained the basis on which we have indicated our support. The board supports the move to Parramatta. It certainly supports the Government's desire to establish an iconic, world-class museum in Parramatta to increase access—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But you are not signing off on a media release; you are changing one of the principal cultural institutions in the State.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Let him answer.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How can you put your support behind it with such flimsy evidence behind you?

Professor GLOVER: I will restate the answer I was giving. As I said, we support the move to Parramatta. We support the iconic nature of the museum. This is a once in a generation opportunity. We use that phrase "once in a generation" fairly loosely because it is more like once in 50 years or more that we have an opportunity to design and deliver a world-class, iconic museum in any city in Australia or around the world. This is an extraordinary opportunity. Clearly, the board of trustees has an obligation, as you pointed out, to ensure that the integrity of our collection is maintained, that it is displayed appropriately and that the outcome of this process is a museum that meets the intent of Government and of the board of trustees, which is to ensure that the collection can be displayed and housed appropriately for the long-term interests of the people of New South Wales. So we are working with government through the processes that are underway at the moment to ensure that is the case. As I have said, I have made it very clear to government that the board of trustees has these concerns regarding the site and ensuring it is fit for purpose to ensure that the outcome is adequately funded, both capital and operationally, and that the remit of the museum is maintained and supported with integrity.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Ms Merrillees, in relation to the Powerhouse Museum's current collection, are you operating on the proviso that you will have the same metreage—more, less or the same when you move to Parramatta?

Ms MERRILLEES: Again, that is subject to the final business case and the final special requirements but we are operating on the assumption they will be comparable between the Ultimo site and the new museum. It is really important to note the Premier's commitment to 40 per cent more of the collection being on display and that is what we are working towards.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: That was my second question. What has been the commitment on the number of objects that will be displayed?

Ms MERRILLEES: The figure that the Premier has used is 40 per cent more and we also see it as an opportunity to really think about how the museum actually uses visible collection storage within the fabric of the building to enhance and show that more of a collection is actually part of the core of the displays.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Glass bricks in the storage room.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you very much for being here today and for showing us earlier. I am a member of the Powerhouse Museum and the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. I want to commend you for the work that you are doing and how you have really revolutionised the space. With the 35 per cent increase you have in the Powerhouse, have you done any figures as to the demographics of that increase?

Professor GLOVER: I will have to refer that to Ms Merrillees.

Ms MERRILLEES: Yes, as I mentioned before, the analysis we have done of the audiences really shows that we are drawing our audiences equally from the north, west, south and east.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But in terms of age demographics as well?

Ms MERRILLEES: We have quite a strong diverse audience. Obviously we have quite a strong family audience; we have quite a strong cultural audience. That is generally around the 35 to 55 benchmark. We also have quite a senior audience, so we cater to a wide broad-ranging demographic reflective of Sydney's population.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: This morning when you were outlining to us some of the things you are doing, one of the things I noted was a partnership with Penrith Regional Gallery, is that correct?

Ms MERRILLEES: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How long is that over and what will that entail?

Ms MERRILLEES: Penrith Regional Gallery is one of a number of partnerships we have. We are very interested in models of collaborating. Touring exhibitions are a really important part of what we do but we are also interested in working with the galleries to develop exhibitions together, so that is a six-year partnership. The aim is to produce a suite of exhibitions over that period of time. Gravity (and Wonder), which opened on Saturday night, is the first of that. In negotiating that partnership and thinking about the framework for it, the intent was very much to look at the nexus of art and science, which is obviously our remit, but it was also very much about how we engage the collection.

I would warmly welcome everyone here to go and visit the show at Penrith. The show looks at gravity. It looks at the notion of mass and gravity but using our collection to tell that story but also working and commissioning contemporary artists to engage with the collection and also to look at notions of gravity. It has been an incredibly rewarding relationship and one that we want to continue developing with other galleries and museums as we move forward.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of the current site of the Powerhouse Museum, of course a wonderful heritage complex in many parts, I imagine that although it is something you have worked with and you significantly now are trying to complement the collections, it would provide some constraints, would it not?

Ms MERRILLEES: The point here is that, as with an adaptive reuse, there are challenges and constraints on the Ultimo site. There are challenges in relation to wayfinding and circulation. As you know, it is a vast open space so the number of discrete galleries is somewhat compromised. As well there are challenges of quite a lot of columns.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have you had to reject any exhibitions because of those constraints?

Ms MERRILLEES: There are certainly challenges with some exhibitions, yes, that have been difficult to adapt within the site.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So in planning for any new space you would be looking at something that would at least not have those sorts of impediments?

Ms MERRILLEES: Absolutely and, as Professor Glover mentioned, one of the opportunities is actually designing a fit-for-purpose institution that can actually take the variety and scale of exhibitions that we want to do.

The CHAIR: Who proposed the idea in the first place to move the museum from where it is located now to Parramatta?

Ms MERRILLEES: The proposed relocation of the museum and its collections was within the Infrastructure NSW report.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How did you first hear about it, Professor Glover? Who told you?

Professor GLOVER: I believe I read it in the media.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Sorry, so the board—at the time were you—

Professor GLOVER: No, I was not on the board at the first announcement.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How was it first reported to the board and by who?

Professor GLOVER: Well, as I said, I was not on the board at the time but I am assuming that it was reported by the director or the president. I am sorry, I cannot comment.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am happy for you take it on notice and if you could provide the actual report that was given to the board on notice, that would be valuable too?

Professor GLOVER: If such a report exists, yes..

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I assume that there was—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It may and he has agreed to do it if such a report exists.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Then, could I ask you to provide us with the first written report to the board—

Professor GLOVER: I have answered that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: —about the relocation. The answer is yes, you will.

Professor GLOVER: If it exists, I will provide it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What I have asked for is the first written report to the board about the relocation. There must have been a written report to the board about the relocation. You say, "if it exists".

Professor GLOVER: Just to clarify your request, Mr Shoebridge.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: There are two.

Professor GLOVER: I am assuming what you mean is that if some external agency provided a written document to the board, is that what you are seeking?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: No. I am asking how the board was first advised and the circumstances in which the board was first advised and if there was a report to that to provide us with that report. That is the first part of the question, do you understand? You have to give a verbal answer for Hansard. Do you understand that first question?

Professor GLOVER: As far as I can I understand what you are saying, yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I cannot ask for any more.

Professor GLOVER: Other than your clarity.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And then, if there was no written report given to the board on the first notification, can you please provide the first report that was given to the board in writing?

Professor GLOVER: If there no written report?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The first written report?

Professor GLOVER: But you have asked for a report even if it was not in writing, is that correct?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I asked for when it was given and who by and the circumstances in which the first report was given?

Professor GLOVER: Whether it written or otherwise?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Whether it was written or otherwise? Correct.

Professor GLOVER: So a verbal report to the board.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I tell you what: I will give you them on notice; it will be far, far simpler than having this.

Professor GLOVER: I think it would be simpler if you did try and articulate yourself a little clearer and then we could follow up on your request.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Okay, I will be very clear.

Professor GLOVER: As I said, if there was a written report, it will be filed.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I will be very clear. The first written report—

Professor GLOVER: But you are going to do this in writing now to me, are you?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The first written report given—

Professor GLOVER: You are going to provide this in writing?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do not interrupt me, Professor.

Professor GLOVER: You interrupt me.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do not interrupt me, Professor.

Professor GLOVER: Do not interrupt me then. Be courteous, please.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Mr Chair, I would ask you to direct the witness not to interrupt my questions.

The CHAIR: Please allow the questioner to ask his question clearly and then I will allow you to answer it clearly.

Professor GLOVER: Thank you.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Will you provide on notice the first written report given to the board about the relocation?

Professor GLOVER: Yes, I will provide that if it exists.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Secondly, could you provide the first occasion upon which the board was notified about the relocation and the circumstances in which that notification was given, and if there was a written report with that, also that written report?

Professor GLOVER: Yes.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Professor Glover, thank you for this morning's tour.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I hear the college relocation from UWS is going well.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Are you finished, David? Did I talk over your evidence?

Professor GLOVER: Does that matter appear in *Hansard*? It seems inappropriate to make that comment.

The CHAIR: Order! It will appear in *Hansard* but interjections are disorderly at all times and that will cease.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I come at this from a position of support for the relocation. I say that upfront. I have given a speech in *Hansard* on that in Parliament. I was born in Penrith and worked in Western Sydney. I have seen issues of inequity of arts investment in Sydney. Are you familiar with the Deloitte report, which we will hear about tomorrow from David Borger, commissioned by Penrith, Parramatta and Liverpool councils, which showed that 5.5 per cent of the New South Wales Government's Arts funding is spent in Western Sydney but 30 per cent of the State's population live in Western Sydney. I come at this from a social equity point of view, which you cannot run an accountant's rule over—I am surprised some are trying to—when considering investing in communities that do not have access.

The CHAIR: Come on; I am an accountant.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Indeed. And Deloitte are accountants, and they have come up with this report which is very good. I encourage members to have a look at it tonight, if they can, before tomorrow.

I am concerned about the lack of access that students in our schools have to the institutions in Sydney—for transport and other reasons. A public school kid—I was one—is lucky to go once to, during their time at school, to an institution in the city. It is harder and harder to do that. So I see moving this iconic facility to Parramatta as a social equity thing with respect to access for students in their careers. Do you agree that it is about social equity and investment in communities in greater need of access?

Professor GLOVER: Certainly the commentary that has accompanied the announcement of the museum's move to Parramatta has picked up on the points that you are alluding to. Certainly the data that you have outlined is stark in terms of the size of the population of Western Sydney region—2.1 million people and growing significantly over the next decade and beyond—and the importance of access to cultural institutes broadly, in terms of the importance of arts and culture to the development of any society or any community.

It is vitally important in the context of Western Sydney—and in Sydney more broadly. There is a social equity element to providing better avenues to enable young people in particular to access our cultural institutes. One of the aspects of government investment in Western Sydney is, for example, in light rail in Parramatta. As well, there has been a range of other projects that will enhance access to the Parramatta region. We hope that those will facilitate even greater numbers of people—whether they be school children or anyone from the community more broadly—having access to the museum at the Parramatta site.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: My second question relates to the evolution of Parramatta. It has been quite dramatic. In relation to Mr Shoebridge's questioning around where the idea of the museum's location came from, my view is that it came from the community of Western Sydney—in terms of this report—and councils looking for opportunities for Western Sydney. There are quite a number of museums and cultural institutions in the City of Sydney. You will be the only significant one in Western Sydney. Do you see this as an international opportunity to be identified with a city—not overshadowed by other institutions—and develop your brand very strongly out there?

Professor GLOVER: Ms Merrillees might like to add to this. I think it is clearly Government policy to create Parramatta as a very important city precinct in its own right in the context of the growth of Sydney over the next 20 years or more. It is geographically in the centre of the Greater Sydney region. I am sure that the Greater Sydney Commission will have views in relation to the planning for the development of Parramatta itself over time. Of course there is considerable investment underway in Parramatta from the Government, the private sector and educational institutions, as well. We are seeing a transformation of Parramatta from that perspective. I think, as a second major CBD in the context of a developing Sydney, it is important that its cultural assets—and its arts precinct and culture precinct—is supported by Government and expanded over time. I think it is important to see cultural institutions emerge right throughout.

We have very good and important cultural facilities already in Western Sydney but the differential in terms of funding that you have alluded to is significant. As the population grows and the communities develop, more investment is needed. Parramatta is central to that.

The CHAIR: While you are talking about visitation, has any modelling been done on the potential change of revenue flows and visitation for the new site at Parramatta? You are talking about it as being a regional thing. In your latest annual report you say that 40 per cent of museum visitors come from interstate, overseas or from regional New South Wales. What would be the impact on that visitation, for example?

Ms MERRILLEES: All of that modelling, including operational modelling, is being undertaken as we speak as part of a final business case.

The CHAIR: So you do not have a feel for what is happening at the moment.

Ms MERRILLEES: That is part of the final business case.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But you support the relocation?

The CHAIR: But you support the relocation?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You do not know who will turn up but you support the relocation.

Ms MERRILLEES: As I mentioned, all of that modelling is part of the final business case.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: On the Labor side, we are certainly in support of some sort of a museum in Parramatta. It is the second largest city—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Everybody is in support.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Even you, Mr Shoebridge?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I do, but you do not have to blow the Powerhouse up for it.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: There are a number of submissions—I might cite a couple—which criticise the potential move and say that it will damage Australia's international reputation if the Powerhouse Museum moves out of the City of Sydney. Another submission says that there is nowhere else in the world where governments are moving major museums away from the heart of the major city areas. So rather than move a major institution like the Powerhouse Museum, they are reinforcing those museums and growing such institutions in satellite areas like Parramatta. Why move such a major institution to Parramatta and leave Sydney without a major museum of this kind?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is not leaving Sydney; it is leaving the CBD.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It is leaving the CBD. People see Sydney as the capital.

Professor GLOVER: The Government has indicated its intention very clearly, subject, no doubt, to the consideration of the final business case.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But you are the board.

The CHAIR: Order!

Professor GLOVER: The Government has indicated its intention, subject to the final business case being agreed, to move the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta. I think that we have an opportunity here. I made this point a little earlier; I will restate it. The Board of Trustees has an obligation to ensure that the collection, and the way it is displayed and housed, is consistent with the very high-quality, world-class museum that we have currently. So we would see it as our responsible to ensure that Government provided the capital required and the operational resources required to ensure that the museum in Parramatta met your first comment, which was to be of international standing. I am hopeful that as the details of what that museum would look like—the scope, scale and iconic nature of it, as the Premier has indicated on a number of occasions—would ensure that the international reputation is not tarnished and, in fact, is enhanced by the creation of a major world-class museum in Parramatta. So I am not sure that one follows from the other.

Ms MERRILLEES: I can also—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: On that point, if you are uncomfortable with the Government's decision—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: He never said he was uncomfortable.

Professor GLOVER: I did not say I was uncomfortable.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I am not saying that. If, when the report comes forward, you feel that it is not going to be of international standing, would you then recommend not to go to Parramatta?

Professor GLOVER: We have had no indication of that. We have had the direct opposite indication from Government about its intention. We need to take that as a guiding principle. There is a final business case under development. There is a design competition for a world-class museum. The board of trustees will be intimately involved in that process to ensure that the outcome does reflect the intent of Government. Until otherwise, that would be the support we provide.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: You have obligations under the Act to enhance the collection and access to the collection. Is that right?

Professor GLOVER: Absolutely.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Is that how it works?

Professor GLOVER: Yes.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: So that is what guides the trustees.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Who is developing the business case?

Professor GLOVER: Ms Merrillees wanted to add to that answer. Is that possible?

The CHAIR: Yes.

Ms MERRILLEES: I just wanted to add to the point about international reputation. I have recently been invited to give keynote lectures in Venice and Quebec in relation to the opportunity to build a new

museum. My talk in Venice is at the behest of Martin Roth, the Director of the Victoria and Albert [V&A] Museum. My professional colleagues internationally are very interested to see what we are thinking about in terms of building a contemporary museum for the twenty-second century. They see it as a great opportunity to engage in that discussion with us and see what we are doing. I think there is a real perception or interest in the fact that we may be presenting something that is really quite unique. Far from damaging our international reputation, I think there is actually a huge amount of interest in us.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So, it would be fair to say that from an international perspective this has never happened before—it is unique?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Mr Shoebridge, you have had five bites at the cherry. My questions were stopped by the interjections.

Ms MERRILLEES: No, museums have been relocated and then—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You said it was unique.

Ms MERRILLEES: May I answer?

The CHAIR: Yes, please do.

Ms MERRILLEES: There is actually a major relocation project taking place at the moment in Oslo, where a number of the museums are being amalgamated into one building and are being moved out of the centre of the city down onto the waterfront. There are precedents for relocation and for adaptation of museums.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: You mentioned that the board supports the relocation for the myriad reasons that you have outlined. Do you have any indication as to what the view of the staff would be about the proposed relocation, and if they would support it or not?

Ms MERRILLEES: Yes, I do. This is an opportunity for me to put on public record that we have an extraordinarily dedicated, committed and passionate staff with great expertise. I am extraordinarily proud of all that they have achieved over the past couple of years. We have a policy of a very open and frank discussion in terms of our workforce, and we talk about Parramatta all the time. Our staff are very committed to the opportunity to build a new experience. I think it is fair to say that as museum professionals one of the things that drives us is about how we engage with our audiences and our community. Our staff are very actively engaged in the process of how we might translate that into a new museum. We have been doing some planning with them and some thoughts about what the new content might be. Yes, the staff are very committed and engaged in this process with us.

The CHAIR: To turn to another matter, Ms, Merrillees, what has been the cumulative effect of the efficiency dividend that has been imposed on the museum every year since 2000?

Ms MERRILLEES: The efficiency dividend is a government policy. I as the director of the—

The CHAIR: I know it is a government policy. I am asking: What has been the cumulative effect on the ability of the museum to run itself within a budget when it has continuously been asked to cut 1 per cent or 1½ per cent efficiency year in, year out compound for the last 16 years?

Ms MERRILLEES: I will let Professor Glover also answer this, but I certainly have a responsibility as a director of the institution to deliver a balanced budget and deliver programming based on my allocation. That is my role as a public servant.

Professor GLOVER: I think efficiency dividends, wherever they apply at any layer of government, are very challenging to the organisations that endure them. We understand the reasons governments from time to time find it necessary to impose efficiency dividends. I would make the comment, however, that the efficiency dividend here applied to cultural institutes, to my mind, is something the Government should reconsider. It is very challenging to continue to manage museums, or any cultural institute—or any public agency, for that matter—when funding is cut in that way. But I would also say that it applies across the board to all forms of revenue received by the museum, as it does for other museums and cultural institutes, and not simply to the government allocation. That might be something that the Government would be willing to consider the impact of.

The CHAIR: Do you know how, for example, your annual budget, as it applied for the last financial year, would compare to the year 2000?

Ms MERRILLEES: I would have to take that on notice.

Professor GLOVER: We will take that on notice; we would not have that figure.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Who is developing the business case?

Ms MERRILLEES: That is subject to Cabinet in confidence.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: No, the entity. Which entity is developing the business case?

Ms MERRILLEES: I understand that, but it was not a public tender. I would have to take that on notice. My understanding is that is not public information.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Which government department or agency—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: The witness has taken the question on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I think Ms Merrillees may have narrowed it down further. Which government entity is undertaking the process of developing the business case?

The CHAIR: Which part of government is managing that process? Do you know?

Ms MERRILLEES: The project control group has oversight of the project.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Who runs the project control group?

Ms MERRILLEES: The Secretary of the Department of Justice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What value does the institution place on its existing facilities in Ultimo, in terms of heritage and in financial terms? For example, do you know the replacement value of the facilities?

Professor GLOVER: On the collection itself, we spend a lot of time and obviously we are concerned with that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: No, the facilities.

Professor GLOVER: We also spend a great deal of time concerned with ensuring that the facilities that we have at Ultimo are fit for purpose and are maintained appropriately. We access funding from the Government as necessary to ensure we continue to do that. One of the challenges that will obviously confront the museum should the Government decide to go ahead, after considering the final business case, with the move to Parramatta will be that the Ultimo site will remain a very vibrant part of the museum for several years. We need to ensure that it is maintained appropriately, ensure that the exhibition program there is as exciting as it has been for many years and certainly is at the moment, and ensure that we continue to exhibit the collection in the best format possible within the constraints of the existing facilities. We are very committed to its maintenance; we certainly appreciate its deep heritage value, as does government. I am sure that will be a consideration should it be redeveloped.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: My question was: Do you know the replacement value of the existing facilities at Ultimo?

Professor GLOVER: We will take it on notice.

The CHAIR: Ms Merrillees, you mentioned today when we were going around the exhibition that having a heritage building has its challenges. How is the existing site not meeting the needs of the community or not meeting the needs of the collection?

Ms MERRILLEES: I think for the reasons that I outlined before. An adaptive re-use building—one with an ageing infrastructure—poses a set of challenges in relation to the navigation of the site. As you will have seen today, in order to move the collection across the site we have to go through a pedestrian thoroughfare. There are challenges in relation to the plant operations and some of the ageing infrastructure. These are challenges all institutions face, and certainly we are working to try to improve those so that we can improve the visitor experience as we move forward.

The CHAIR: On the existing site, do you mean, or at a new site?

Ms MERRILLEES: I thought you were asking me about the Ultimo site.

The CHAIR: That is right; I am.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: If it is a question of infrastructure issues—ageing infrastructure as it is a 30-year-old building—surely it would be far cheaper to fix up the infrastructure in the current building than build an entirely new building many kilometres away?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: In Parramatta, heaven forbid.

Ms MERRILLEES: That is a decision for government.

The CHAIR: Thank you for appearing before the Committee today. I note that you took a number of questions on notice. The Committee has resolved that answers to questions taken on notice be returned within 21 days. The secretariat will contact you in relation to the questions that you have taken on notice.

(The witnesses withdrew)

SAMANTHA TORRES, Deputy Secretary, Justice Services, Arts and Culture, Arts NSW, sworn and examined

The CHAIR: Would you like to make an opening statement?

Ms TORRES: No, I will move straight to questions.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Ms Torres, there were three witnesses listed: Mr Michael Brealey, Acting Executive Director of Arts NSW; Ms Stacy Warren, director infrastructure; and Mr Robert Ridley, Director of Arts Development and Investment. Whilst I am glad you are here, what happened to them?

Ms TORRES: My understanding is that the Deputy Premier's request was for me to attend as the representative for arts and culture as I have overall responsibility.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What was your title?

Ms TORRES: Deputy Secretary, Justice Services, Arts and Culture.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do Mr Brealey, Ms Warren and Mr Ridley report to you?

Ms TORRES: Yes. Mr Brealey does, and Ms Warren and Mr Ridley report to Mr Brealey.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: With decisions involving Arts NSW does the buck stop with you?

Ms TORRES: Yes, it does.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: When was the last discussion you had with the Minister involving the relocation to Parramatta?

Ms TORRES: I would have to take that on notice. The exact date escapes me but it is a regular topic of discussion.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Could you give me a timetable on the decision-making this year?

Ms TORRES: Certainly. As Ms Merrillees mentioned, I meet on a Thursday with the Project Control Group and steering group for the Powerhouse Museum. The following day I generally meet with the Deputy Premier's office and provide them with an update as to what was discussed and decided in that steering committee. It is at least once a month.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: When was the last discussion on the valuation of the Ultimo site?

Ms TORRES: At the moment the valuation of the Ultimo site is a subject of work by Property NSW. There has not been a decision made as to what will be done with that site. The last discussion would have been immediately following the steering committee. I believe it was about 10 days ago.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Has your department made any suggestions on what future use of the site should be?

Ms TORRES: We are awaiting advice from Property NSW and then we will work up an options paper with Property NSW for the Government to consider.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: When will this options paper be available?

Ms TORRES: It will form part of the final business case.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Are there any options or proposals to retain the current site for public use?

Ms TORRES: I believe that the Premier has publicly committed that the Ultimo site will be retained for public use. I could be wrong and I am happy to check the records. My understanding is that so far there are a number of different groups that have come forward with suggestions as to how the site could be used and no final decision has been made and we have not completed the analysis.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What have been some of the suggestions brought forward by groups?

Ms TORRES: The obvious one is keep the Powerhouse where it is. It has ranged from parks to reusing the building for different community purposes. There are a wide variety of suggestions.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Have you had discussions with the neighbours surrounding the Powerhouse site?

Ms TORRES: Not as yet.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Was one of the suggestions for use of the site high-rise development?

Ms TORRES: Not to my knowledge. However, I do not know what has been submitted through Department of Premier and Cabinet [DPC] or other avenues. To my knowledge the majority of suggestions are around public uses.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: The Project Control Group, do they report their decisions back to the board of trustees?

Ms TORRES: The Project Control Group, no. The board of trustees is a member of the steering committee chaired by the secretary of justice, as is Ms Merrillees. The Project Control Group that is working specifically on the divestment of the Ultimo site reports to that project steering committee. It is layered.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Ms Merrillees would report back to the board of trustees?

Ms TORRES: Absolutely. And I have also reported back to the trustees.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: The professor would know everything that was going on with the Project Control Group?

Ms TORRES: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is nice we got an upgrade.

Ms TORRES: I have not been in the role particularly long.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: When did you come into the role?

Ms TORRES: On 1 April. Please do not make the requisite joke.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How was the decision made to relocate the Powerhouse? On what basis was that decision made? Was there a report or a costed model? What was given to the Government to allow them to make that decision?

Ms TORRES: As you understand this puts me in a delicate position. My understanding of the process was that the State infrastructure strategy, developed by Infrastructure NSW, suggested quite strongly moving a cultural institution to Sydney's west. As part of the Government's election commitments at the last election they announced that it was the Powerhouse that would be that institution. The Government called it a "once in a lifetime opportunity" and is focussed on the Powerhouse being that institution. The modelling was done by Infrastructure NSW in developing the State infrastructure strategy.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you have a copy of the modelling produced by the Infrastructure NSW?

Ms TORRES: No, I do not. The State Infrastructure Strategy is publicly available on the web site.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: If the impetus came from Infrastructure NSW it would make enormous sense to get the modelling and details they have produced and show the public and say here is what started it?

Ms TORRES: I can take on notice whether Arts NSW has that modelling in its possession. I personally have not read it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: To the extent you can find it, could you provide a copy to the Committee?

Ms TORRES: I will take that on notice as to whether it is able to be done.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: As I understand good government, you develop a business case and you make a decision, would not that be the way good government operates?

Ms TORRES: I do not believe I am able to comment on that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You are the one implementing it. It seems to me a decision has been made and now you are trying to wrap a business case around the decision. Does that make it difficult for you?

Ms TORRES: The process that we are going through at the moment is a final business case, there has been a preliminary business case that was done around site selection that was put to Cabinet and is Cabinet in confidence as to the site choices at Parramatta. Prior to that is before my knowledge.

The CHAIR: What if it were found there was no business case, would it still go ahead?

Ms TORRES: I cannot speculate; that is a matter for government.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Have there been any parameters given to you such as, if it is going to cost X we will not go ahead, or if it will cause irreparable damage to a key cultural institution we will not go ahead with it?

Ms TORRES: We have been given the task of designing a fit for purpose museum in a new location that is the cornerstone of the cultural precinct for Parramatta.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is the business case looking at any potential or certain damage that will happen to the delivery of the museum at the current Ultimo site? Is the damage that will be done from the shut down of the site at Ultimo part of the business case?

Ms TORRES: The business case is still being developed. I cannot speak with any authority about its total content. What I can say is that there is analysis of the number of models happening as to the impacts of the move.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Has anybody looked to see whether the people currently visiting the Powerhouse will relocate their visits or go to the newly located site? Has there been any analysis of that?

Ms TORRES: Not as yet. Not that I have been in control of. It is a 25 minute train ride.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The most obvious research would be to put someone with a clipboard or iPad at the museum to ask, "Would you have gone to the Powerhouse if it was at Parramatta? Yes or no". And you find out from the current population of visitors whether or not they would go. Has that happened?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: You could do the same at Parramatta Westfield.

Ms TORRES: In that form I could not comment. It will be modelled up as part of the business case. The visitation at the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo fluctuates quite markedly. Over the years it has gone from 700,000, down to 500,000 and back up again. It is difficult to predict year on year what the visitation impact will be. It depends largely on the exhibitions available.

The CHAIR: Previous witnesses have spoken of this nebulous organisation called the project management control group. Who is in that?

Ms TORRES: There are a couple of levels of governance around the project. There is the project steering committee, which is made up by the secretary of the Department of Justice, myself, a member of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences board, Ms Merrillees—that is off the top of my head—the Department of Premier and Cabinet. I can provide the full membership to you, but that is who comes to mind. Project control groups, depending on the aspect of work they are looking at, are the doers as opposed to the strategic oversight and governance. The divestment and site acquisition conversation is a project control group consisting of Arts NSW, the museum and Property NSW.

The CHAIR: Can you take that on notice?

Ms TORRES: I can give you the full governance framework.

The CHAIR: And tell us about the management control group and how all the implementation groups work and who is who in the zoo?

Ms TORRES: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The starting point for consideration for the project management control group would be understanding what the value of the current site is, there must have been a preliminary valuation you got off the Powerhouse's books.

Ms TORRES: Do you mean the dollar value of the site?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yes.

Ms TORRES: That would be presuming that the Government intends to sell the site and the funds were available. At moment that decision has not been made.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: There must have been a figure at the outset. Whatever the museum's current valuation of site, it would have to have been dropped on the table for the project management control group. Someone would have had said, "That's what they currently value it at." Perhaps we should look more deeply into this.

Ms TORRES: Not that I have seen. Again, the project steering committee and the project were well advanced by the time I joined. I am happy to go back through the minutes to see whether that is available.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Thank you.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I am not an accountant, but surely that would be in a financial statement. Would a financial statement give us the value of the land and the Powerhouse Museum? Surely that would be provided under international accounting standards?

The CHAIR: I believe that the annual budget papers and the Government balance sheet would show a value for that site.

Ms TORRES: I believe that it also values the collection. However, I am not sure that it provides a valuation depending on the use of the site. The value would obviously vary depending on whether all or part of it were to be sold. The actual land value—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I return to my question. I am not an accountant, but I know from my interactions with Treasury that you must provide a valuation of the assets. You would have the land value and the collections value. Will you provide that information?

Ms TORRES: If it is available, absolutely.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: I would like the value of the land and the value of the collections, separately rather than as a collective figure. I would like a broken-down figure.

Ms TORRES: Certainly.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Can we also get the replacement value of the existing facility at Ultimo? I am obviously asking on the basis that you already have it; I am not asking you to establish it. If there is a figure for the replacement value of the existing facilities, it is essential that it be made available to the Committee.

Ms TORRES: Of course. If it is available, we can provide it. However, I would speculate that it is difficult to create a value for the replacement of a modified, adapted, heritage building in a new building context.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We will find out.

The CHAIR: There must be an insurance value.

Ms TORRES: That is probably the best we will be able to provide.

The CHAIR: We should be able to get our hands on an insurance valuation.

Ms TORRES: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: My question was specific, but if there is an insurance value as well, that would be great.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: As part of your research on this financial issue, can you also provide the Committee with details of any discussion or investigation of the value of the air space above the Powerhouse Museum?

Ms TORRES: Yes.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: As I assume you know, the terms of reference of this inquiry are fairly broad. I will now move to another issue. At page 8, under point (h), the Government's submission states:

Arts and culture play an important role in NSW's economy, with cultural and heritage tourism generating \$11.2 billion in 2015.

Is that correct?

Ms TORRES: Yes.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: What is the value of cultural and heritage tourism to regional New South Wales?

Ms TORRES: I do not have that broken down by region, but I can certainly get it from Destination NSW, because they are its figures.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: It would be much appreciated if you could take that question on notice. Without having that figure, would you agree that the economic impact of cultural tourism in regional New South Wales is strong and important?

Ms TORRES: Yes.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Would you agree that that can have an outsized impact on a regional community compared to a metropolitan community because of the flow-on effects that those sorts of economic drivers can have?

Ms TORRES: Yes, I would.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: What specifically is the Government doing to expand the reach and impact of museums and galleries in regional areas?

Ms TORRES: At the moment, the Government has a policy called Creating in NSW, which is published on the Arts NSW website. It has three main pillars: access, excellence, and strength. You are interested in access. We have a number of programs in place across cultural institutions through which we collaborate and encourage them to collaborate to form new partnerships outside the Sydney central business district and to bring Western Sydney kids in for education projects. For example, the Sydney Opera House is running a satellite program involving streaming important talks and presentations into cultural institutions outside the central business district.

We are also working with regional development officers and local councils through the Arts and Cultural Development Program, which funds local and regional arts and culture initiatives. In addition, we are working on a program with the Government around increasing participation across the State by 15 per cent by 2019, and that is well on track at the moment. A number of different initiatives are happening at the moment, through Arts NSW mainly but also in partnership with the cultural institutions, to drive and share those collections more broadly.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Do you think that we can do more in this space to support regional New South Wales, particularly with regard to museums and galleries?

Ms TORRES: Yes. I am a big believer that arts should not be only about the arts we fund. That is not surprising given my role. It should be about embedding arts in the every day and driving the reach of the arts and arts policy as a social policy question rather than as some "other".

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: What else can we do?

Ms TORRES: I believe we can provide stronger strategic and policy advice to the Government. We are working on strengthening the internal structures to ensure that can be done. We can ensure that the cultural institutions collaborate with others—not only the other cultural institutions but also State significant organisations—and partner better. Government can work more closely with local councils, which we are also working to do.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I am sure you would agree that providing more funds to regional museums and galleries would also be of assistance.

Ms TORRES: Money is always a nice thing to have, but in constrained financial situations you have to find other strategies, which is what I am working on.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I am interested in the Creating in NSW program. Of course, Western Sydney would be mapped as one specific region.

Ms TORRES: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Can you outline some of the initiatives, apart from the Powerhouse relocation, that you see as being advantageous to increasing access to the arts and museums and galleries in Western Sydney?

Ms TORRES: Of course, related to the Powerhouse relocation is the opening of the Castle Hill Powerhouse Discovery Centre. That is a \$33 million commitment from the Government from 2012 to the last financial year. That opens up a nearly 9,000 square metre storage facility that will allow the Powerhouse to display certain parts of its collection. We have a strong commitment to Western Sydney in growing arts and culture, and obviously Creating in NSW articulates that. We have increased funding to Western Sydney by 46 per cent over 2014-15. That is \$4.4 million directed to support artists and cultural organisations in Western Sydney. It is still significantly less than is spent in other regions, and there is a direct focus from the

Government to push more money in that direction. We have spent \$100,000 on the new National Theatre of Parramatta at the Riverside Theatre. That has been done in partnership with Parramatta City Council.

We have also been working on a Western Sydney arts fellowship, which will provide \$50,000 to an emerging local artist. Of course, we also have the Powerhouse, which we do not need to talk about any further. The Government has also invested in festivals and projects in 2015-16, such as driving Tropfest and other events out to Western Sydney. That investment was \$800,000 in total, but of that \$600,000 was about production and finance for screen and about \$180,000 for industry and audience development programs for screen. We have also been working with the cultural institutions to support a range of activities out there. The Australian Museum also did the Kermadec Islands exhibition in conjunction with Liverpool City Library.

The museum has worked on designing regional programs with the South Western Sydney Institute of TAFE. As I said, the Opera House is involved in the satellite program, which involves live streaming talks from the Festival of Dangerous Ideas and other events to cultural institutions outside of the central business district. We also have what is known as the Art Pathways program through the Art Gallery of New South Wales, which brings about 600 Western Sydney kids into education programs in the gallery.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: From going to Western Sydney and then coming back to Sydney, Sydney Living Museums is part of Museum of Sydney.

Ms TORRES: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Of course, there have been suggestions recently of the Museum of Sydney moving. From your perspective, is the Museum of Sydney at the moment achieving the sort of visitor numbers you would like to see or engagement?

Ms TORRES: Sydney Living Museums and Museum of Sydney are actually outside of our responsibilities.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay.

Ms TORRES: They sit with a different portfolio, but I always think we should do better.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Fair enough. You were asked some questions before about visitors to the Powerhouse Museum. Have you done any research of the Western Sydney community and the need for arts and museums in that area and the likelihood to visit facilities if they were located closer to that community?

Ms TORRES: There is a piece of work being done by Infrastructure NSW to develop a cultural infrastructure strategy. It has looked and done a complete needs analysis of all of the cultural infrastructure needs across the State, not just Western Sydney. That is subject to Cabinet consideration by the end of the year.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you.

Ms TORRES: You are welcome.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Ms Torres, can you point to an international example where the closing down of a premier cultural institution and its relocation many kilometres away from the central business district of a global city has worked?

Ms TORRES: Apart from the Oslo example that Ms Merrillees gave you before, no.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You are aware that Oslo is one-seventh the size Sydney?

Ms TORRES: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: In fact, it is not moving out of the centre of Oslo but right next to the Opera House on the waterfront, which you could throw a stone at.

Ms TORRES: My understanding is that it is consolidating a number of museums—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Next to the opera house.

Ms TORRES: —and it is actually just outside.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You could almost throw a stone at it from the CBD.

Ms TORRES: I will have to take it on notice, Mr Shoebridge.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Apart from Oslo, can you also answer on notice whether or not you think it is comparable, as Ms Merrillees suggests. Can you think of any other example?

Ms TORRES: No.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: This is—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Innovative.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: —a step into the unknown, is it not, whether a cultural institution will thrive or survive in these circumstances. You are willing to risk the future of the Powerhouse to deliver on an election commitment for the Government?

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Which has a mandate.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Like a date with whoever it likes.

Ms TORRES: Mr Shoebridge, I cannot comment on Government policy. My role is to implement Government decisions once they are made, and we are doing that in the best possible way with the best possible outcomes for the museum.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Ms Torres, I will put this proposition to you and you can answer it however you like. In the absence of a single international example where this has worked, it is an enormous risk for the Powerhouse, is it not?

Ms TORRES: Again, it is not my role to comment on that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You must be dealing with the risk. I assume that is part of your job—

Ms TORRES: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: —to do a risk analysis and work out what is the potential damage to one of our core cultural institutions? Have you looked at the risk analysis? Have you done a risk analysis for the Powerhouse?

Ms TORRES: That sort of consideration will form part of the business case, which we will put to Government.

The CHAIR: You mentioned earlier that the project was not put to public tender.

Ms TORRES: I did not. Ms Merrillees mentioned that in her testimony, yes.

The CHAIR: It would seem to me it would be more appropriate that you would be able to answer a question as to why it was not put to public tender.

Ms TORRES: The initial tender was released before my appointment, so my understanding was that there was—I will have to take on notice what the actual process was that was followed, but from recollection it was a limited tender to a number of parties. It was still a competitive tender, but it was a particular specialist expertise that was required.

The CHAIR: Can you take that on notice—

Ms TORRES: I certainly can.

The CHAIR: —and provide us with the information as to when it was tendered, who it was tendered to?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Who the parties were.

The CHAIR: Who were the parties in the tender process?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: How much consultation was conducted with interest groups?

Ms TORRES: In Western Sydney?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: People in the arts world and Sydney and Western Sydney.

Ms TORRES: On the decision to relocate the Powerhouse?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: To relocate, yes.

Ms TORRES: That I do not know, I am sorry. That decision was taken some time as part of the election campaign, which well predates—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It was at the ballot box, actually, Shaoquett, when they voted.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: But there was no proper consultation with people with expertise who would know?

Ms TORRES: I am unable to comment on that, I am afraid. It was a Government decision.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: We have a decision that says that some of the key groups were ignored.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Well three councils have done a report.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Can I listen to Ms Torres?

Ms TORRES: Again, I am unable to comment on that I am afraid.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I want to ask a general question around a budgetary issue—

[An interruption from the public gallery]

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: —around the acquisition budgets for Government-owned institutions. Do they have access to capital funds for acquisitions or is it wholly their responsibility to raise that money from the corporate sector and philanthropy?

Ms TORRES: Acquisitions are generally a matter of philanthropy.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Has that always been the Government policy? You probably do not know since—

[An interruption from the public gallery]

The CHAIR: Talk into your microphone.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Everybody wants to hear you.

The CHAIR: Everyone wants to hear your detailed forensic examination.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I might not want the audience to hear.

The CHAIR: And the Dorothy Dixier.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: No, it is not Dorothy Dixier. I am interested in the acquisition budgets for State institutions. I noted that the State archive does not have that from the State budget. You might take it on notice if that is historical. I was not aware there was ever an allocation in budgets.

Ms TORRES: My understanding is that some many years ago it changed, but I will happily provide that on notice.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Obviously we struggle in Australia, compared to internationally, to develop a strong philanthropic and corporate partnership. Are there measures in place through your area to encourage and develop that more strongly, not just from the millionaire clubs, but average people donating to art galleries?

Ms TORRES: I believe one of the issues around corporate philanthropy is having, I guess, a type of show-stopper marquee to be able to sponsor. I understand that the Sydney Opera House, in particular, has been very successful in engaging with corporate Australia and getting some fairly good sponsorships of events and various things. In relation to acquisitions, it is much more difficult because philanthropists prefer to have something they can name. That is difficult. We have only so many hallways and so many galleries. The Government, certainly, and my department worked very closely with the corporate identities, and we are working on corporate strategies and various other things to assist them in encouraging philanthropy. At the moment, it is mainly a matter for their various foundations and charitable work.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Having done some work at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, the strong local ownership—the Lewis bequest, which, in effect, is itself a bequest, of course, and there is strong community ownership—I am leading to the issue that the relocation of the Powerhouse to Parramatta and Western Sydney taking ownership of it will be an opportunity to develop stronger—not the major corporations as partners, although I am sure that will happen, but the average people in Western Sydney becoming partners in donating and supporting the Powerhouse. Do you think that is an opportunity?

Ms TORRES: I do. I believe from discussions I have had with Ms Merrillees that once Government has finalised its decision, there will be a strong community engagement program over the next couple of years. The details of that, obviously, will be fleshed out. It is to encourage participation and to increase the broader awareness, because Western Sydney is not just Parramatta, and to actually get that buy-in across the community, or develop it further.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Thank you.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Have there been any discussions internally involving changing the name from Powerhouse Museum or the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences?

Ms TORRES: No.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: There have been no discussions?

Ms TORRES: No. Internally it is always referred to—it is only externally it is referred to as the Powerhouse.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Just by everybody in New South Wales, Ms Torres.

Ms TORRES: Yes, I know, but in Government it is always referred to as the MAAS, which is the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. I learnt that the hard way when I started in April.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: In correspondence internally and in briefing papers and submissions, it is referred to as the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, and what is this project described as in submissions to Cabinet and things like that?

Ms TORRES: Submissions to Cabinet I cannot comment on, but generally speaking it is the establishment of the Parramatta MAAS.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You think the new name will be Parramatta Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences?

Ms TORRES: I have no idea.

The CHAIR: It will be called a car park museum.

Ms TORRES: I assume the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences is what it will be called, as far as I am aware.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: For the purposes of discussions and things like that, it is called Parramatta MAAS?

Ms TORRES: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Ms Torres, we have heard a lot about the visitor numbers at the Powerhouse, and you remarked earlier that it was 700, it dipped down to 500, and now it is up to 700. In respect of your other museums, what have their visitor numbers been like?

Ms TORRES: I can tell you. Just one second. The only other museum is the Australian Museum. The visitor numbers in the Australian Museum in 2008-09 were 290,500, approximately. That increased to 438,454, roughly—it is a very precise number—in 2012-13, and in 2014-15 financial year it was down to 377, and then back up in 2105-16 to 421,155, so it fluctuates.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What dives that fluctuation? Is it in respect of what the exhibitions are at that stage and what is visiting? Is that the main determinant or are there other factors?

Ms TORRES: There are other factors. Certainly blockbuster exhibitions help. Some years ago the MAAS had the Harry Potter exhibition, which was hugely successful and drove very large visitor numbers in that year. More recently there was a switch by both the Australian Museum and the Powerhouse Museum to admit children under 16 free. That has increased visitor numbers. For the past two or three years there has been a week a year where entry to the museum is entirely free. That has driven huge visitor numbers.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How do visitor numbers compare with those in other States? Do you have access to such numbers?

Ms TORRES: I do not, no.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Are interstate and overseas tourism the main drivers in determining the programs and exhibitions of museums and galleries? What sorts of numbers do you see coming to exhibitions from interstate and overseas?

Ms TORRES: The cultural institutions engage very closely with Destination NSW because of the strength of cultural tourism. We can provide on notice the numbers of overseas visitors. We have reasonably strong data on that. There is an ongoing discussion—I had a meeting with Destination NSW last week—on how we drive into particular areas and make sure that cultural tourism continues to grow.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are you in any communications with Destination NSW about the impact on cultural tourism of relocating the Powerhouse?

Ms TORRES: We have been working with Destination NSW on a number of things, not specifically on the impact of relocating but on the management of cultural tourism strategies more broadly. I will see if there is any information that on that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I ask that in the context of the 2012 PricewaterhouseCoopers [PwC] report that Infrastructure NSW commissioned. Are you aware that it identified the Powerhouse as one end of an extremely important arts ribbon that wraps around the harbour and is essential for tourism?

Ms TORRES: Yes, I am aware of that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The 2012 report from PwC, in talking about the arts ribbon that starts at the Powerhouse then goes to the Exhibition Centre, Walsh Bay, the Sydney Opera House, the State Library of New South Wales, the Art Gallery and the Australian Museum, said:

This configuration of NSW's world class cultural facilities presents an opportunity to continue to target investment in these iconic venues, build on their strengths and promote access to them as part of the visitor economy.

Are you aware of that?

Ms TORRES: I am not aware of those words specifically but, yes, I am aware of the report.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What has changed since 2012 to make it a good idea to rip apart the ribbon?

Ms TORRES: It is not my role to comment on Government decisions. The Government decision was made.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are Destination NSW involved in working on the business case or is the damage to the internationally significant arts ribbon considered external to the business case? Will it be part of the business case?

Ms TORRES: I know the impact of the relocation. I think it is a presumption to assume that it is damage.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Given that it is one part of a ribbon that is iconic and driving tourism to New South Wales and Sydney, if you remove it you are surely damaging it, are you not?

Ms TORRES: I have no comment on that other than to say that there are other elements to the "ribbon". I am sorry; air quotes do not show up in *Hansard*.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: They do now.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You can tell it is a consultant's phrase.

Ms TORRES: You can.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It came from PricewaterhouseCoopers.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Other areas deserve a ribbon too, surely?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It describes that arc of cultural institutions, and the Powerhouse is really important, is it not?

Ms TORRES: The Government is investing funds into other areas, such as the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct, the Opera House and the consideration of the Sydney Modern Project and where it is heading, so the ribbon is getting some fairly good attention.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: That is a good answer.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I have a question about your oversight role. Is there any policy oversight of the Government's museums and galleries from your department? Is the board of the Powerhouse entirely independent or is it subject to instruction?

Ms TORRES: The boards are not subject to instruction. Not only the MAAS board but each of the boards has a charter and various legislative responsibilities, depending on the legislation that establishes it. I have very strong relationships with the chief executive officers of the cultural institutions. I have a quality oversight role with them. It is not a true oversight role. Their employment is a matter for the Minister. He has asked for day-to-day management of that to sit with me, but not of the boards.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So the board has a policy role.

Ms TORRES: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But the employment is departmental. Is that right?

Ms TORRES: Yes. They are public servants under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So in making policy decisions in the institution is it a little bit of each?

Ms TORRES: No, it is not. The Government leaves the cultural institutions to make policy decisions for themselves through the boards.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Has the board communicated to you any red lines? Has it said, "If we do not get this much money or this much floor space or this many commitments then we cannot support the relocation"? Or has it given in-principle support the relocation?

Ms TORRES: The board's position to date has been that the museum must deliver on the objectives under the Act. It must deliver in a way that the board members are able to satisfy themselves that the interests of the museum are being appropriately dealt with. Other than that, functional business case work on the design work will guide the board. It is not about specific floor metreage.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Have they given that the department that in writing?

Ms TORRES: No. It was discussed at a meeting that I participated in by teleconference a week or so ago.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You got an oral direction about a week ago?

Ms TORRES: They had had earlier discussions but it was the first one I had participated in.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Would you provide the Committee on notice any written communication the board has given to the Government about its position?

Ms TORRES: Certainly.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: At the moment, you are not aware of it ever having done that?

Ms TORRES: Not that I have seen, no.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So you can say that since April it has not done it.

Ms TORRES: Yes, I can say that since April it has not done it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But you are not aware of whether it did before?

Ms TORRES: No.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much, Ms Torres. I note that you have taken a number of question on notice.

Ms TORRES: I have.

The CHAIR: You have 21 days to respond to those questions. The secretariat will contact you about them. Thank you very much for appearing.

Ms TORRES: Thank you.

(The witness withdrew)

LIZ ANN MACGREGOR, Director, Museum of Contemporary Art, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Welcome. Thank you for coming. Would you care to make an opening statement?

Ms MACGREGOR: Yes, I would. Thank you for this opportunity. I greatly welcome this inquiry. It is fantastic that the importance of museums and galleries in New South Wales is being recognised. I have much to say about many points, but I am aware that the Committee probably most wants to hear about my role in Western Sydney and, in particular in relation to the Powerhouse. I will address that in my comments. The Museum of Contemporary Art [MCA] for the past 15 years has been engaged in a series of partnerships in Western Sydney known as C3West. We like to think that we have developed authentic partnerships, working very closely with our colleagues. I also have a very strong passion for access to the arts and, in particular, equitable access to the arts, for which I am very well known. It goes back to my days of driving a bus around Scotland and making sure that everybody had access to art.

When the Premier asked me if I would take on the role of Cultural Ambassador for Western Sydney, I initially hesitated. I consulted with colleagues in Western Sydney. They suggested that this would be a good role and that they would be very happy for me to represent their views, to consult and, if asked, to help to guide Government's priorities. There was a very strong feeling that Western Sydney, although there had been some fantastic initiatives in the past under past governments, had not been given a share of the cultural pie. So I accepted the task. I set about doing that by consulting with my colleagues to find out what their needs were. I was very pleased to discover initially that the arts in Western Sydney had come together. It can be rare in the arts that people come together and lobby for one cause rather than everybody asking for their own bit of the pie.

So I met regularly with one group—the Western Sydney lobby group. I also had conversations with other colleagues. Our starting point for those discussions was this question of equity; the fact that just over 5 per cent of the arts and culture funding is allocated for Western Sydney—that is the big issue for everybody—and a general recognition that that needed to change. When we looked at that further we realised we had a further problem in addressing equity, which is that 90 per cent of the funding goes to five State institutions. That makes it very difficult to in any way make any real difference in Western Sydney.

Being a bit of a realist and recognising that it would be very unlikely that any government would find, say, an additional \$40 million or \$50 million a year in revenue to run a new institution, if that were the call from Western Sydney, my colleagues and I looked at the possibility of how we could actually still make a difference. The idea came up that one way to do that would be for Western Sydney to have a State institution in Western Sydney. That was how it began. There were further discussions about other kinds of funding and other projects. There were discussions with Arts NSW and also discussions with Infrastructure NSW because obviously any fundamental changes were going to involve capital funding as well as ongoing revenue.

I think somebody here referred earlier to the PWC report.¹ My understanding of the PWC report, which I learnt later is that it actually requested \$200 million from the Government by the Powerhouse to make good or improve or make better fit for purpose the site at Ultimo. So it became, I think, almost an inexorable logic the idea to relocate the Powerhouse would be made by the Western Sydney lobby group and me. There were a number of very good reasons for that. The Powerhouse has incredible collections. Like all museums, it is facing challenges. Museums were devised in the nineteenth century. We all put on artworks, scientific objects, animals, fashion, whatever it is, for the education of the masses. That is clearly no longer the case, so everybody across the world in museums is looking at how to rethink their mission, how to rethink their engagement with audiences. The opportunity for the Powerhouse to reinvent itself as an extraordinary institution for the twenty-first century is what has been proposed here.

I totally understand people who are concerned about change and loss and some facilities changing but I think that is the reality and the upside, the gain for Western Sydney—and the decision was made to put it in Parramatta; Penrith did have a shot at seeing whether it would go there but Parramatta for obvious economic reasons became the preferred location and it is an extraordinary opportunity for a wonderful institution to rethink itself and really be at the forefront of museums for the twenty-first century and make a significant contribution to the economy and the living—the cultural life of Western Sydney, which I believe very strongly deserves it.

¹ Ms Macgregor subsequently advised that the correct name of the report author is Ernst & Young. See answers to questions on notice, Ms Elizabeth-Ann Macgregor OBE, Director Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, dated 12 September 2016.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Is it safe to say, yes or no, you support the move of the Powerhouse to Parramatta?

Ms MACGREGOR: I do.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Have you held that position for a long time?

Ms MACGREGOR: I have held that position since I started consultation with my colleagues, which was in 2014.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So that was prior to the State—

Ms MACGREGOR: Yes, I think it was about the same time that the *Telegraph* began their "Fair Go for the West" campaign, so early 2014.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What are your views on post the mass moving to Parramatta, the site itself? What are your views on the site at Ultimo?

Ms MACGREGOR: What are my views on the site if it moves? I do not have anything to comment on that. It is really nothing to do with me. I comment on cultural matters and what the Government chooses to do with that site is not an issue for me to comment on.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You comment on cultural matters?

Ms MACGREGOR: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Would you like to see the Ultimo site retained for cultural matters?

Ms MACGREGOR: If there was a proposal that was—I am a Scot—economically viable. Having run an institution myself when I first came here that was not economically viable, I think all cultural institutions have to have a proper business plan that shows it can be run, so if there are other uses for Ultimo that are economically viable, I do not see any reason why not. I certainly would not be opposed to it but nobody has put anything to me. My commenting on cultural matters at the moment is very much about Western Sydney, as I am sure you would appreciate.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: On that note, I want to make sure I have the title correct, you said you were Cultural Ambassador for Western Sydney?

Ms MACGREGOR: That is correct.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: When were you appointed to that position?

Ms MACGREGOR: I think it was in May 2014. Again, I think it coincided with the launch of the *Telegraph* "Fair Go for the West" campaign. The Premier appointed a cultural ambassador and a sports ambassador at the same time.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So you were appointed by the Premier?

Ms MACGREGOR: Yes, absolutely, as an advisor.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Is that a paid position?

Ms MACGREGOR: No, it is not.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So it is completely honorary?

Ms MACGREGOR: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you provide advice to the Government without fear or favour?

Ms MACGREGOR: Absolutely.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: In that position what kind of advice do you provide to the Government on cultural ambassador questions?

Ms MACGREGOR: I have given the Premier and the Deputy Premier and his advisers at various times advice about a whole range of issues that have come up to the Western Sydney lobby group—the kinds of investment that is required not just in relation to the Powerhouse, which was regarded as the flagship, the game-changer as my colleagues put it, but also investment in other cultural facilities: the Riverside, the Parramatta National Theatre. Extra project funding that the Government announced in the last election was not as much as I had hoped we would be able to give but it was a good start and it made a very significant difference to a whole

range of organisations. The Western Sydney lobby group prepared a very extensive plan of what needed to happen.

The CHAIR: Who is the Western Sydney lobby group? Who is it made up of?

Ms MACGREGOR: The Western Sydney lobby group is where all the arts organisations got together, so representatives of the major visual arts, performing arts, dance and individual artists. I think there are about 20 formally on the group and the point I was making—

The CHAIR: Out of Western Sydney or out of Sydney?

Ms MACGREGOR: Out of Western Sydney, nobody from the CBD, which is why when I was first asked by the Premier, I did not feel it was appropriate initially that a CBD person would do this role, so I consulted with my colleagues in the west to see if they were comfortable with it. It is a very political situation to be a spokesperson when you are not actually based—

The CHAIR: Have they suggested that the Museum of Contemporary Arts [MCA] move to Western Sydney too?

Ms MACGREGOR: That is a very interesting question. Yes, of course, and I totally understand it. The MCA is not a State institution so, sadly, moving the MCA only shifts \$4.5 million of funding to the west not \$40 million. The point about this is not just about money; it is about State significant institutions. We love to think we are State significant but we are not State run so we do not have that level of investment and, to some extent, prestige that the big historic institutions have and I am sure someone else will ask me about a branch. That is another issue we discussed and my colleagues in Western Sydney quite rightly said, "Why should we have a branch? Why shouldn't we have the headquarters, the main focus of a major institution? What is it that makes Western Sydney have to have second-best? And I am afraid a branch is always second-best. That was where that conversation went.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But you are run out of the University of Sydney, aren't you?

Ms MACGREGOR: No, we are not. That was a long time ago. We divorced the University of Sydney back in 2000. We are now an independent organisation with charitable status run by a board of directors totally independent of government. We receive an annual grant from the Government, from both the State and Federal governments, which is about 20 per cent of our funding.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And you were given the building by the State of New South Wales?

Ms MACGREGOR: We have a lease on the building from the State of New South Wales.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is that a peppercorn rental?

Ms MACGREGOR: That is a peppercorn rental.

The CHAIR: It was funded for their own extension?

Ms MACGREGOR: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: When does that lease come to an end?

Ms MACGREGOR: That has another 40 years, I think.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What is the annual value of that lease in real terms if it was commercial?

Ms MACGREGOR: I have absolutely no idea.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It would be a great deal more than the \$500,000 that you suggested is the State Government's support for your institution though, wouldn't it?

Ms MACGREGOR: Yes, indeed.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is an enormous support?

Ms MACGREGOR: We have an in-kind support, that is true, but you would not to save that money if you moved us to the west. I do not understand the relevance of the question in this context but I understand why you are saying it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The relevance is this: you run a premier cultural institution right in the heart of the city?

Ms MACGREGOR: I did.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You are based in the city yet with your Cultural Ambassador for Western Sydney hat on you are pointing to another premier cultural institution and saying, "Send that one to Parramatta". You surely realise how conflicted that looks?

Ms MACGREGOR: Not at all. I mentioned it in the conflict of interest question: one, the MCA does not stand to benefit, lose or gain, by this decision whatsoever, nor me personally and, as I tried to say at the beginning, my concern and interest in Western Sydney is longstanding and on the record, that I really believe very strongly that Western Sydney deserves to get better access to cultural facilities.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But you are loudly saying, "Take them, take them."

Ms MACGREGOR: Not at all. There is a very logical argument. If you examine each of the State cultural institutions, at their collections and at how they could be made relevant to Western Sydney, and if you look at the problems that the Powerhouse Museum identified in the report—which I think you referred to, Mr Shoebridge—you will find there is a very logical argument.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Can you provide us, on notice, the documents about—the critique, if you like—of the 2012 PriceWaterhouseCoopers report: the requirements for the \$200 million upgrade?

Ms MACGREGOR: I have never seen them. I was told about them by the previous director.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So it is a hearsay proposition.

Ms MACGREGOR: It is not hearsay.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You have not seen the document saying that that 2012 report was based upon an unfunded \$200 million—

Ms MACGREGOR: It was a bid to Government, as I understand it. So it is not hearsay; it was a proposal for capital funding.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is this figure found anywhere in the 2012 PWC report?

Ms MACGREGOR: I am not sure, but I know it was part of it.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Have you seen the PWC report?

Ms MACGREGOR: No.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Ms Macgregor, you were outlining some of the characteristics of the Powerhouse Museum that led it to be a cultural institution that could be transferred to Western Sydney. Could you outline some of those factors. I imagine demographics and visitors would be one of the things taken into consideration. You talked about the nature of the collection, as well, and its application and how it could be made relevant. Could you go through some of those factors.

Ms MACGREGOR: Those, of course, were questions about Parramatta. The conversations with my colleagues were precisely on the matters I just spoke about. It has a wonderfully diverse collection which encompasses a whole range of different disciplines. Applied arts, science and technology are very interesting disciplines which you could make incredibly accessible. When I said it is about rethinking the nature of the museum, that is very much a question for the management of the Powerhouse Museum. It is not a matter for me to tell them how to re-envisage it. I know they are very excited about it. I know the director thinks that it is a fantastic opportunity. There are many different ways in which it could be shaped to work in Western Sydney, in a building, above all, that is fit for purpose—that is designed to serve as a museum for the twenty-first century and not the last century.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You were talking about that before, in terms of the constraints of a nineteenth century museum, and working within heritage buildings. You have that constraint in your facility, as well.

Ms MACGREGOR: I do.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I know that you may not necessarily be able to comment on this—the director may be able to. What sort of opportunities do you see in having a purpose-built facility with respect to what could happen with the collection and opportunities for visiting exhibitions?

Ms MACGREGOR: The first thing that has impacted on museums is technology. You can have all kinds of different ways of interacting with visitors. A museum cannot now just put out objects and have people come and look them. You can look on the internet; things are more exciting. How do we make this whole draw of the power of the real—whether it is a real work of art, a real steam engine or a real scientific instrument—

exciting and engaging, particularly for young audiences? Young audiences are frankly not interested in the old model. We have seen that around the world. I have taken part in many discussions with colleagues internationally about the challenge of the future and the impact of technology. A new building can build in all those technological things but those of us in old buildings are really stuck. **It is potentially a great challenge and a great opportunity.**

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You were talking before about your interest in accessibility of the arts. With your institutions what sorts of programs do you run in terms of visiting exhibitions to Western Sydney or regional New South Wales?

Ms MACGREGOR: Our biggest commitment has been through a partnership with six galleries in Western Sydney called C3West, where we work with artists, in partnership with those galleries, to come up with projects that address social issues, community issues, community engagement and, sometimes, the corporate sector. For example, we had a six-year partnership with the Penrith Panthers. We delivered a number of projects in partnership with the Panthers. That was very much part of my strategy to address the idea that the arts are elitist. We believe it should not be thought of like that. We can work with a rugby league club, which might not seem like an obvious partner. Our strategy all along has been to be an institution that does not have the status of a big State institution and the finance that goes with that. So, our partnerships have been very important to us.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: You mentioned earlier that it would take around \$40 million to \$45 million to run the museum. Is that the museum in Parramatta?

Ms MACGREGOR: That is roughly what it costs to run any State institution. I think you will find that if you look at the ongoing funding for, say, the art gallery or the Australian museum and the Powerhouse Museum, that it will be around that level, annually.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: So this figure is not based on the particular reports that you may have seen?

Ms MACGREGOR: No; it is all in their annual reports. That is what it costs. People are often surprised at that. Someone said to me the other day, "Why don't they just build another one?" I said—this goes back to equity—"If you really want an institution that is equal to your CBD institutions, it is not the MCA at \$4.5 million; it is the art gallery, the museum and the Powerhouse Museum at \$40 million to \$50 million."

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That fails to include the extremely large amount of value you get from the peppercorn rental.

Ms MACGREGOR: Yes, we do get a large value from that. But we cannot take that with us if you move us to Western Sydney. I do not understand. That equity does not shift; it is not real. It cannot be realised.

The CHAIR: They can shift you out, as they did with the greyhounds.

Ms MACGREGOR: I think the art gallery has the same arrangement. The Powerhouse Museum has the same arrangement. That is on top of the \$40 million I am talking about. If you throw that in, you will just inflate it for everybody.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: With respect to this equitable argument, are you saying that it is equitable to remove, as you said, a cultural pie from Sydney and have it in Parramatta?

Ms MACGREGOR: Currently five per cent of the cultural funding goes to Western Sydney, whereas I think over 30 per cent of the population is there. That is predicted to grow substantially.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yes.

Ms MACGREGOR: The point is: What is fair for Western Sydney? Is it fair that they do not have access? I happen to live somewhere where I can get to Parramatta almost as easily as I can to Ultimo. So I do not think it is a big deal for the CBD. For people who are strongly attached to an institution of course change is difficult. I went through it with my own institution 17 years ago, when we had to make very dramatic changes for financial reasons. These things are difficult but if you really believe that Western Sydney should have access to cultural facilities this is, in my view, a good way of doing it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is an incredibly divisive way of doing it.

Ms MACGREGOR: I do not know—I am not seeing divisiveness as an issue in the Western Sydney. There are a lot of cultural workers out there. It is fantastic, because they could easily have said, "No; we would rather have \$10 million for each of the cultural institutions in Western Sydney." The fact is that they did not say that. They came together and said, "Actually, this is a game-changer. This really changes the dynamics of Western Sydney."

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What is the board structure of the Museum of Contemporary Art? Who do you answer to?

Ms MACGREGOR: I answer to my chairman.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Is there a board structure?

Ms MACGREGOR: Yes, there is a board of trustees.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Have any members of the board of trustees made any observations or comments to you about the movement of the Powerhouse Museum?

Ms MACGREGOR: I talked it through with my chairman. He is totally supportive of my role in it. There are no problems with the board—none at all.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do they have any concerns about what will happen to the land afterwards?

Ms MACGREGOR: One of my board members did sign the petition. This was outside a board meeting, by the way; it was not raised with me. When I asked him why—I was curious—he said that it was because he was against commercialisation of Ultimo. He had no problem with the Powerhouse Museum moving but he did not like the idea that there would be more apartments in Ultimo. That was the only board conversation that I had.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What did you say to him in response to his observations?

Ms MACGREGOR: I said that I understood. I said, "Fair enough."

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Would you have concerns apartments and the sale of air space on that site?

Ms MACGREGOR: I do not really think it is my role to comment, to be honest with you. There are lots of areas of Sydney where there are things built that I do not agree with. I may not agree with lots of things. If that is a corollary of the Powerhouse Museum moving—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: There is an impact of your actions if you are involved in encouraging the Government to do certain things. I support the movement of a cultural institution to Western Sydney—I want to draw that line—however I have concerns with what the Government is going to do with the land. There is an impact from your decision. You are a cultural ambassador. You have taken this leading role, so there is an impact. That is why I am asking these questions.

Ms MACGREGOR: Sure, but I do not really feel that I can comment on it at the moment. I really do not; it is not my business. My business is talking about Western Sydney, as it happens. That is my passion. There are lots of opportunities in the CBD for cultural engagement. There is a whole new precinct being built down at the wharf. There is talk about the Bays. The Sydney Opera House has just had the most fantastic plans unveiled. There is the MCA; there is the Art Gallery. There is so much in this wonderful city of ours. Sure, Ultimo, but it is also tricky. There is the big Sydney Convention Centre. There are difficulties with public transport. Cultural facilities need to be where there is a critical mass of people, so I have no problems with it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Problems with public transport to Ultimo—it is next to public transport nirvana. It is central; there are bus routes and there is light rail.

Ms MACGREGOR: I talked with someone this morning who has a small child. She said to me, "I do like to go to the Powerhouse, but I have to admit it is really tricky for me with a small child". There is not easy access. Yes, there are buses but Central is a long walk.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: There is light rail; there are trains; there are buses. If you are talking with the Western Sydney cultural ambassador's hat on and you are talking about public transport issues with Ultimo, you had better get out and about in Western Sydney.

Ms MACGREGOR: Oh, I have been out and about in Western Sydney.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Ultimo is right in the centre of public transport.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: In terms of your comments about becoming the leader of the Western Sydney lobby, I recall the discussion in the arts community, with the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre and others, and they grabbed you with both arms because you are such a high-profile champion for them. I think you have done a great job in advocacy. I want to comment on the generation of jobs and economic growth through cultural investment. Western Sydney is not just about building an airport, road infrastructure and new

housing estates for workers. They have a right to access to direct and indirect jobs in cultural institutions. Would you like to talk about the economic opportunities the relocation could present for Western Sydney?

Ms MACGREGOR: Totally. Jobs—every cultural institution employs people, and there are endless opportunities for training programs and all kinds of things that will come out of a major State cultural institution. I cannot remember what the factors are, but \$40 million a year of funding being spent in Parramatta will have a significant impact on jobs, indirectly as well as directly. There is a very, very clear economic indicator. Also, if we want to shift perceptions of Parramatta and shift perceptions of people wanting to go there—visitors going to Parramatta—it is an incredible place with the beautiful park and the river, and amazing old buildings.

It is the original centre of Sydney, with Old Government House. If we want to encourage visitors to go to Parramatta, which I think we should be doing, you need cultural facilities as well as a drawcard. I think the long-term aim is very much about cultural facilities, and even tourism, even though everybody acknowledges that will take a long time. It is very important for jobs and growth, and so that Parramatta and Western Sydney do not just have the transport and housing and jobs that we know they so desperately need.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I know the answer to this question, but do you think there is an underlying, untapped, unmet demand from the artistic community embedded in Western Sydney looking for opportunities to have greater expression and recognition?

Ms MACGREGOR: Absolutely, and that is why the Powerhouse is intended to be the catalyst, if you like, for a Parramatta arts precinct. This morning I was with someone talking about the way in which the redevelopment of the city centre is actually going to unlock land further down the river, which could be for artist studios or performance space. A major change like this will act as a catalyst for an extraordinary renaissance, I think. There were some international consultants out here very early on in the piece who had a look at it at the behest of the Powerhouse. They were astounded when they went to Parramatta. They thought that this was like some weird suburb, and they went out there and said, "It feels like the old argument about Brooklyn and Manhattan". You would never go to Brooklyn from Manhattan 10 or 15 years ago; now everybody goes to Brooklyn. Parramatta has the same potential; it could be the CBD's Brooklyn and nobody will think twice of jumping on a fast train to get out there in 20 minutes or half an hour to visit an amazing show at the Powerhouse.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Ms Macgregor, you mentioned earlier that you were the Cultural Ambassador for Western Sydney. Do you find yourself when engaging in that role coming into conflict or in disagreement with cultural institutions [CIs] in the CBD?

Ms MACGREGOR: No, not at all.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Earlier in your evidence you referred to the Sydney Modern project. As the Cultural Ambassador for Western Sydney, what do you say about the Art Gallery of NSW's Sydney Modern plan?

Ms MACGREGOR: I do not think there is anything to say about it from a Western Sydney perspective. It is an expansion plan, which has a lot of merit.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you have a view on it? Do you support it?

Ms MACGREGOR: Yes, I think it has a lot of merit. I always ask: What is in it for everybody? Anything that grows the arts in this city has to be welcomed. We are an international city. Why not?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: As the Cultural Ambassador for Western Sydney, are you throwing your support behind the Sydney Modern plan?

Ms MACGREGOR: I have no reason not to. I am slightly bemused by the question, to be honest, because I am not sure where it affects Western Sydney.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I suppose it goes back to this limited pool of funds. You criticised arts funding in that there was an overspend in the city, yet you do not criticise this plan. Is that horses for courses?

Ms MACGREGOR: I did not say there was an overspend in the city. I said there was an equity problem in ongoing funding. Capital funding is a different issue altogether. I do not know what extra funding Sydney Modern is going to need.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: No, Ms Macgregor, in earlier evidence you lamented that only 5 per cent of the State's budget was going to Western Sydney.

Ms MACGREGOR: Correct.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Therefore, I presented you with a massive project, and that would have been a perfect example for you to point to.

Ms MACGREGOR: Let me correct what I said, in that case; I have clearly not made myself clear. I was talking about ongoing funding. I have no idea what the Sydney Modern project will cost the State Government ongoing, so I cannot possibly comment. If someone tells me that it will require another \$50 million of funding I will not be supporting it, I can assure you.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: More than \$50 million.

Ms MACGREGOR: No, you are confusing capital with revenue. I am making a very clear argument.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You are making a differential between capital injection and ongoing costs?

Ms MACGREGOR: Yes, absolutely. That was when I said the 5 per cent that goes to the west.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: In line with the argument about equity, why not support maintaining the existing institution and having another institution in Parramatta? Everybody supports the idea of having an institution in Parramatta.

Ms MACGREGOR: I wonder how many votes you would get if you went to the Government and asked for another \$40 million annually to fund a new institution.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: There have been significant developments in Parramatta and huge returns for the Government. I am sure the Government can reinvest those funds.

Ms MACGREGOR: I am not seeing an aptitude for a massive increase in the arts budget like that. If it is there then why not, but it is not there and never has been.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: As a lobbyist would you push for that?

Ms MACGREGOR: As a lobbyist we pushed for \$20 million in additional money, and I think \$7 million was allocated in the first year. Yes, but I am a realist; I do not think there is going to be \$40 million a year for a new institution. Anyway, how do you create a State significant institution out of nothing? The point is that collections take years to build up. They are really important, and there are people who have done that over the years. That is the significance of this project; it is an incredibly important State significant institution being given this amazing opportunity.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: One way of funding a large cultural institution in Western Sydney would be to take a slice of the funding that goes to all the existing institutions and share it equally amongst the existing institutions, including your institution. But, of course, you saved your institution from that prospect, did you not?

Ms MACGREGOR: I think that if you talked to the cultural institutions about efficiency dividends you will know what the impact of even small cuts like that have on those institutions. It is not a viable proposition.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am not proposing it. One of the other options—and one that you have saved yourself from—from pointing to the Powerhouse as taking 100 per cent of the pain, is that there be a more equitable reduction in State funding across all the institutions, including your own, and that be provided to Western Sydney. But because of your advocacy position, you have protected your institution from that, have you not?

Ms MACGREGOR: No, that has never been a proposition and it is not realistic. I do not think anybody would suggest that you could do that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Cut budgets?

Ms MACGREGOR: No, you cannot actually create a new institution like that. I am a museum professional, and I am afraid what you are saying is not possible. I should say—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The Museum of Contemporary Art, when was it created?

Ms MACGREGOR: Can I just tell you—we were created out of the collection that had been built up over 30 years at the Power Institute in the University of Sydney.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So you can do it.

Ms MACGREGOR: Thirty years—you do not create a collection overnight.

The CHAIR: But there is an excess in the collection of the Powerhouse Museum that goes back 135 years.

Ms MACGREGOR: Sure.

The CHAIR: There is plenty of material there.

Ms MACGREGOR: Yes. There was a proposal brought up to split the collections and look at different funding, which I passed to Arts NSW for consideration, by one of the people who were lobbying against the move. I think it was looked at and not regarded as viable.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The term "split" is a pejorative term.

Ms MACGREGOR: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Given the bulk of the collection is in a warehouse It would not be splitting, it would be putting more of it on display and using two locations to do it. "Split" is a pejorative term, do you agree?

Ms MACGREGOR: Yes, it is. Well, not necessarily. It depends how you read it. You could theoretically take some of the Powerhouse collection but you would still be faced with massive new ongoing running costs if you were to do it to the standard Western Sydney deserves. Why should they have second best? That is often what happens when people set up branches, it is second best. This is top-notch.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I am interested in your idea and your views about access and equity and I want to reflect on those along with the point of the Hon. Walt Secord about the potential tension from cultural institutions based in the central business district.

Ms MACGREGOR: Yes.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Would it not potentially be the flip by having the Powerhouse anchoring the cultural precinct in Parramatta? I wonder as to whether the Museum of Contemporary Art, and other cultural institutions in Sydney, might extend their reach into Parramatta and if there is an opportunity for flow on effects for other culture institutions. What are your views about that?

Ms MACGREGOR: I agree that the Powerhouse is not the be all and the end all. This is the game changer and there are a whole lot of other things that flow out from that. Just because the Powerhouse moves does not mean to say the art gallery, ours and everybody else, should not still be doing programs across Western Sydney. Parramatta is not the end of it because there needs to be investment in other regional centres which are doing amazing work at a tiny percentage. If you compare subsidy per head costs of government funding to all the major institutions, my own included, Carriageworks and the cultural institutions, to the likes of Campbelltown and you will see an astonishing disparity. The quality of programs that come out of the likes of Campbelltown are no less than come out of my own institution. There will be knock-on effects when sums of money are available to those institutions and places like my own to continue the work we have been doing and continue to be committed to.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: You said in your evidence that Western Sydney is not given a big enough slice of the cultural pie. I understand and respect you are the ambassador for Western Sydney. My focus is on regional New South Wales. Is it your view that regional New South Wales does not receive a big enough slice of the cultural pie?

Ms MACGREGOR: I believe the regional galleries are the most badly resourced and all for the sake of a small amount of funding. We have a strong relationship with regional New South Wales. We tour exhibitions and partner with regional galleries. I had a conversation this morning concerning a brand new gallery that is not being resourced by its council. It is tragic because it is amazing. It could be fantastic. The partnership with the State to make those places, with a very small amount of investment, would make a fundamental difference.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Will you tell us where that is?

Ms MACGREGOR: No, I cannot. There are examples with small amounts of money. When you put a small amount of money in the hands of regional galleries that have so much to offer it has an incremental effect.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: They have an economic multiplier effect in terms of tourism, would you agree with that?

Ms MACGREGOR: Absolutely, tourism and regional galleries.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: You would contend that a focus of more support for regional museums and galleries would be appropriate for this Government.

Ms MACGREGOR: Absolutely.

(The witness withdrew)

(Short adjournment)

PATRICIA JOHNSON, Co-convenor, Save the Powerhouse Campaign, affirmed and examined

JEAN-PIERRE ALEXANDRE, Co-convenor, Save the Powerhouse Campaign, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Thank you for appearing before the Committee today. Would you care to make an opening statement?

Ms JOHNSON: Thank you for inviting us to appear before the Committee today. Before we answer any questions, we will explain briefly who we are and who we represent. To our knowledge, the Save the Powerhouse Campaign is the only organisation whose sole purpose is to speak for members of the broader New South Wales community who oppose the closure of the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo, and who support the creation of a new world-class cultural facility in Western Sydney. We cite particularly a visionary proposal from our friends at the North Parramatta Residents Action Group for developing Parramatta's Fleet Street Heritage Precinct as a cultural complex that reflects the area's truly unique immigration and colonial history. We think this is a much better alternative than a cut-down version of the Powerhouse in a flood-prone car park.

We also believe that the dissenting voice of the New South Wales community has the potential to influence this debate. These are all the people whom the Government has never consulted, but whom it has dubbed "haters" simply for speaking out. These are grandparents, parents, and carers who bring their children to the Powerhouse. They are residents from Liverpool, Katoomba, Wollongong, and Penrith for whom this is part of an enjoyable day trip to the city. They are students, academics, innovators, researchers, and the list goes on.

We did not invent the save the Powerhouse cause. The campaign was an instinctive reaction to the Government's announcement in early 2015 that the Powerhouse Museum site was to be sold for high-rise development, and that up to \$200 million in revenue would fund a new museum in Parramatta. We wanted to provide a focus for the wave of community opposition that swept across inner Sydney, and there was an impressive response. We held meetings and rallies that were packed out. We developed an active Facebook community, which quickly grew to reach thousands and which now peaks at around 50,000.

The figures we drew from an informal survey we conducted when we were collecting petition signatures last year accord with those provided by Ms Merrillees earlier. That is, about 70 per cent of the signatories were from greater Sydney. However, 40 per cent were from Western Sydney and the inner west. One in three visitors was from the inner west. We think this directly challenges the Government's statement that the city is too far away to attract visitors from the west. Further, 12 per cent of signatories had travelled from across New South Wales—from the central and south coasts, from rural areas, and from Wollongong to Woy Woy to Yagoona, Tenterfield, St Albans and so on. That is a brief overview of the community we represent. We believe they have a right to be heard, and we will continue to work to that end.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: One of your key points is that if the museum were moved to Parramatta that would damage Australia's international reputation. Can you explain how?

Ms JOHNSON: That is our belief. Coincidentally, we have lived a lot of our life away from Sydney, in some of the major capitals of the world. We know that the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo is greatly respected. However, it is recognised as being in Sydney, the capital. We believe that if it were moved—and we sincerely believe this as ordinary citizens—people simply would not travel out to a suburb to visit an unknown, new and smaller version of the Powerhouse Museum, which they respect and look forward to visiting in Sydney.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I am not being critical, but is that statement based only on your belief?

Ms JOHNSON: Yes, it is.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It is based on any evidence?

Ms JOHNSON: We have not done any research.

Mr ALEXANDRE: It has never been done in the world. We believe that democratic nations simply do not do that. The Oslo example that was given is a very poor example, because it is a smaller place and the museum is being moved within the central business district. There is no example of such a move in the developed world.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Do you support the idea of having a museum at Parramatta?

Ms JOHNSON: Absolutely.

Mr ALEXANDRE: Yes.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: From where do you suggest the money should come to build such a major museum?

Mr ALEXANDRE: We will come to the figures later. To move the Powerhouse to Parramatta will cost close to \$1 billion, and \$200 million of that will come from the sale of the site. That is a difference of \$800 million. If you left the museum in Ultimo, you would have that \$800 million. We believe that spending \$500 million would deliver a world-class museum in Parramatta, and you would still have \$300 million to \$400 million to spend.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Are those figures based on some analysis that you can table?

Ms JOHNSON: We must emphasise that we are members of the community. However, we are fortunate to have obtained valuable expert advice from others, principally from the Powerhouse Museum Alliance. With the alliance's permission, we will cite Dr Lindsay Sharp, Dr Grace Cochrane, and Kylie Winkworth, who is an internationally known museologist. They have done careful expert calculations and passed on their information to us. That is the information we are citing; we have not calculated it ourselves.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Can you table that document?

Ms JOHNSON: I direct you to their submission, which covers this area comprehensively. We are willing to provide our own version, but that would be simpler for you.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: On what basis do you say that it would be sold for high-rise development? Where is the source of that information?

Ms JOHNSON: Once again, we only have the media and standard sources of information. You will forgive me if I go back a little. In late 2014, it was widely publicised. It was published in the media that Infrastructure NSW had identified the Powerhouse museum site as "an attractive renewal opportunity", which the community translated as an attractive real estate deal. This was followed by the announcement in March 2015 by the Government that, if re-elected, it would sell the Powerhouse Museum site for up to the estimated \$200 million and would move the Powerhouse to Parramatta and that \$200 million would wholly or partially fund this operation.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Knowing this Government, I will not dispute that. The comments of the previous witnesses was that it could potentially be another site for a museum or open space or some other cultural use. Do you believe that?

Ms JOHNSON: Sorry, you asked me what we in the general public were informed about initially and this is what was publicised as a statement by the New South Wales Government. This, in fact, was, for many people, the first they had heard of it, and they were simply told, "This is going to be sold for this money" and that the revenue would be put towards a new museum in Parramatta.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Mr Alexandre.

Mr ALEXANDRE: In fact, they said that they had identified it as a real estate opportunity. Real estate could be high rise, but it could be something else. They were talking of Google's head office a few months ago, and that seems to have gone away. It is an opportunity, so an opportunity could be high-rise apartments, could be Google, could be anything. Why not? We do not know, and it changes all the time.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Sorry, you do not know that it is not going to remain in public hands and you do not know that it is not going to stay as a cultural institution either?

Ms JOHNSON: The latest information we had was five weeks ago. We had a letter from Property NSW, a very polite letter, which told us simply that no decision had been made as yet about the future of this site, that Property NSW was in the process of analysing it, and it would take some time to reach a decision. That is the latest information we have. Initially, the media printed that it was high-rise apartments.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I agree with what you have just said.

The CHAIR: Do you have a view on exhibitions and cultural activities outside of Sydney?

Ms JOHNSON: I think it is not appropriate for us as the Save the Powerhouse Campaign to offer an informed opinion on that, but we believe that the arts and cultural sector needs and deserves suitable funding, that it probably does not get enough and that this whole question should be properly examined and reassessed.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: You do say in your submission:

We also believe that Inner Sydney has traditionally received an unfairly large share of the NSW Government's cultural arts budget, at the expense of regional centres.

Ms JOHNSON: We do, yes.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: So you would be in favour of more support being given to regional New South Wales?

Ms JOHNSON: Absolutely. Entirely.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Let me get this straight: You oppose the closure of the Powerhouse Museum?

Ms JOHNSON: Yes, we do.

Mr ALEXANDRE: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You support the creation of a Western Sydney cultural institution?

Ms JOHNSON: Yes, we do.

Mr ALEXANDRE: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What do you say if there are public commitments that the site at Ultimo will remain public space?

Ms JOHNSON: Public space is not the same as retaining the Powerhouse Museum. The Powerhouse Museum is incredibly important. We live in Ultimo and it is incredibly important to the daily life in Ultimo. It has been part of our history since—in one way or another it has been there since the 1880s, initially as the Museum of Arts and Sciences. It has been in various locations in Ultimo. It is part of our heritage. It is part of the wonderful gritty industrial past in our area. It was reopened in 1988 as the Powerhouse Museum in the old Powerhouse, which traditionally had fuelled the tramways—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you live close to the museum?

Ms JOHNSON: Yes, about 100 metres away.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: When did you first hear about the plan to close and move the Powerhouse Museum?

Ms JOHNSON: This was announced in the press, as I said, in March 2015.

Mr ALEXANDRE: February 2015.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How did you feel about it at the time?

Ms JOHNSON: Shocked. Disbelief.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How did you feel about the communication of this decision to the community?

Ms JOHNSON: It was just reported in the press. We thought this was—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Did you receive any flyers in your letterbox telling you that it was happening?

Ms JOHNSON: No.

Mr ALEXANDRE: Never.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Like Clover Moore does, or mayors?

Ms JOHNSON: No.

Mr ALEXANDRE: Never.

Ms JOHNSON: That is the point we would like to make. No community—not our community, not the greater Sydney community, not any communities in Parramatta or Western Sydney—no community members have ever been consulted about any aspect of this project. Our point is this: It is ultimately we, the taxpayers, who have to fund projects like this.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What is your worst fear of what could happen on that site?

Ms JOHNSON: That it could be turned into a 40-storey apartment block, which will stand empty because, as everybody except possibly this Government has recognised, the housing boom in Sydney—the apartment housing boom in Sydney is already flattening out. It has already peaked in other capitals.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Property developers have told us that a large structure will provide shade in the area and bring down temperatures.

Ms JOHNSON: Really?

Mr ALEXANDRE: Probably true.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Which property developers? Are they Sam Dastyari sponsors?

The CHAIR: Order!

Ms JOHNSON: They said the same thing about the monstrosities they have just created in Darling Harbour, which is now nothing but a huge high-rise apartment block with a couple of trees stuck on the end, and they are trying to do this to one of the few remaining gracious spaces that Ultimo has left.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you feel that the Premier has been dictatorial in his actions?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Withdraw that. Come on.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Can I ask a serious question—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It is a real question.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: If it was sold, if it was moved, in all seriousness, and I know this is not the position that you have, what would you like to happen to the site, if it were to be moved? As I say, I know that is not the premise that you support, but if it were, what would you like to happen to the site?

Ms JOHNSON: The site alone, if it is a matter of what we will do with the space, we would like some kind of open park, some kind of parklands, something beautiful where people can sit and relax. Also, with space for community events, such as local markets, local demonstrations, local entertainment, but this is not what we want, because we want the Powerhouse building itself and the Powerhouse Museum to stay in Ultimo. Apart from anything else, it is of vital importance to the local economy, which nobody has touched on. It is part of what we call the techno-educational chain of the University of Technology Sydney, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, TAFE and other educational buildings. There is also the wonderful Goods Line access that was built recently, which cost about \$12 million.

Mr ALEXANDRE: Yes.

Ms JOHNSON: It was several million dollars, anyway. It is a brilliant idea and it now gives people enjoyable access directly from Central Station to the Powerhouse and Darling Harbour, if they want to go there. It is frequently used. That is yet another waste of money. I think \$38 million has just been spent on redeveloping the forecourt of the Powerhouse, which now is an expanse of concrete. The waste that will be involved in moving the Powerhouse is colossal.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What did you make of Ms Macgregor's evidence that there was poor public transport to the Powerhouse Museum? You live in the area. What are your views on that?

Mr ALEXANDRE: The Paddy's Markets light rail station is about 20 metres away from the museum. Central Station is nearby. What is better transport than that?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is called Central Station after all.

Ms JOHNSON: Central Station is about five minutes walk away, down the Goods Line.

Mr ALEXANDRE: It is 10 minutes walk along the Goods Line. That is the pedestrian access. There are buses on the other side. There is no better place in Sydney for public transport.

Ms JOHNSON: It is well served.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Would be fair to say that you were unpersuaded by her evidence?

Ms JOHNSON: Yes.

Mr ALEXANDRE: Definitely, yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is the Powerhouse prized by the local community? Is it an important institution for the local community?

Ms JOHNSON: It is immensely loved and respected, above all by children. The coffee shop, on a Sunday afternoon, is packed out with families of all ages, grandparents and parents, people of all ethnic backgrounds, with their children. They bring them to the Powerhouse because it is such a wonderful experience for children. It is particularly impressive.

Mr ALEXANDRE: Sydney and Pyrmont are the most densely populated suburbs in Australia. People live in apartments. They do not have backyards. They bring their children to the park or to the museum.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: As you say, it is the densest part of Sydney. Do you know for a fact that local families view the museum as an extension of their backyard?

Ms JOHNSON: Yes.

Mr ALEXANDRE: Absolutely.

Ms JOHNSON: We are also actively involved in community work. We founded a group called the Friends of Ultimo, which brings together members of the Ultimo community to share activities. We do research at those events, so we are able to gather opinions. Local people particularly prize the Powerhouse. It is part of our daily life. It is an incredible thought that it might not be there in future.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: At any point did the Government or board of trustees engage with the local community on this decision?

Mr ALEXANDRE: Never.

Ms JOHNSON: No.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you know whether the board of trustees in particular has undertaken any outreach activities to engage with the local people who have supported this institution for decades? Did it ask you at all?

Mr ALEXANDRE: No.

Ms JOHNSON: No, not that we know of. People have told us with disappointment, "I am a member of the Powerhouse and have been going there monthly for many years." They too reacted with shock to the announcement. There was disbelief at first.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are you both friends or members of the Powerhouse?

Mr ALEXANDRE: No.

Ms JOHNSON: We are not lifelong members of the community. We came back to Sydney about seven years ago, but we visit it often.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: For the purpose of *Hansard*, would you confirm that you said no.

Mr ALEXANDRE: Yes.

Ms JOHNSON: That is correct.

Mr ALEXANDRE: We are not members of the Powerhouse.

Ms JOHNSON: We are not members.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am not saying that this was your preferred option but, when the proposition was put to you about what the site should be if the Powerhouse is moved, you said that you would like it to be open green space.

Ms JOHNSON: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I assume you are saying that in the context of retaining all heritage fabric.

Mr ALEXANDRE: Absolutely.

Ms JOHNSON: Yes, indeed, in that context.

The CHAIR: What, in your view, could be done to enhance the concept and development of a new cultural institution in Parramatta?

Ms JOHNSON: I mentioned briefly that we have formed very good relationships with people in Parramatta. We work with a lot of stakeholders who are similarly opposed to closing the Powerhouse and who

are supportive of a new cultural institution in Parramatta. We have formed a relationship with the North Parramatta Residents Action Group, whom you will hear from later this afternoon.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: An excellent group.

Ms JOHNSON: We thoroughly support the excellent, visionary proposal that they are going to put forward to you for developing the Fleet Street Heritage Precinct in Parramatta. I will let them tell you about it. We are not at all opposed to the idea of having satellites of the current Powerhouse and leaving the Powerhouse in Ultimo. It is true that the collection is enormous. There is unlimited potential for building satellites and having exchanges of collections with those satellites. We question one other aspect. There is the Castle Hill MAAS branch, which is 10 kilometres from Parramatta. It has been there for many years. Strangely, we hear nothing about it from Government. We have asked: What is the position of the facility at Castle Hill? Why do there need to be two Powerhouses at Parramatta, leaving Ultimo with no Powerhouse at all?

Mr ALEXANDRE: They just spent \$34 million to refurbish it.

Ms JOHNSON: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Given the size, depth and complexity of the collection at the Powerhouse, there does not have to be a satellite in Parramatta. There could be an equal and shared cultural facility, not a secondary branch or a satellite.

Ms JOHNSON: Absolutely. The primary point is: Why not ask the people of the area what they want? Why not consult them?

The CHAIR: You believe that consultation has not occurred in Ultimo. To your knowledge, has there been consultation with the people of Parramatta?

Ms JOHNSON: We will let them tell you about it, but we know that there has not been. They have the same frustrations.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: On that point, you say in your submission that, to date, the source, nature and quality of advice to the Government on the question of moving the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta has been "veiled in total secrecy". Would you elaborate?

Ms JOHNSON: As community members we have been told nothing at all about government consultation and advice. We have learnt some useful facts from documents obtained under freedom of information by Fairfax Media, I think in March. It made them freely available to us and we published them, so they have been freely available to the people of New South Wales to consult if they wish. Some of the facts revealed were quite interesting. For example, they showed that the New South Wales Government was informed in mid-August 2015 that the cost of building some kind of parallel museum on another site would be at least \$450 million. That is a big leap from the \$200 million that the Government estimated would be the revenue from the Ultimo site.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: They would have to sell the site for development to get that amount of money.

Ms JOHNSON: They would not get it. They would sell it for \$200 million, and they are going to pay out at least \$450 million. More money has to come from somewhere.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I want to follow up the issue of consultation. Liz Ann Macgregor talked about carving up the pie more equitably in Western Sydney. Regardless of which party is in power, the State is not likely to find another \$50 million a year to fund a new institution on a recurrent basis. Mr David Shoebridge suggested earlier that that would cut off funding to the other institutions. That would be just as outrageous.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That was not my suggestion.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It was your suggestion.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It was not my suggestion.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: We will check the *Hansard* tonight.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It was the proposal that Ms Macgregor defended herself from by saying that it would all come from the Powerhouse.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: You suggested that the funding should be carved up into smaller pieces. I am sure that will be supported. Councils in Western Sydney have been agitating for a greater share of

arts funding for years. They have responded by developing their own arts institutions—the Lewers bequest, the Casula Powerhouse and the Campbelltown Arts Centre, amongst others. Their communities support them and they have been re-elected on that basis. They have been arguing for more arts funding.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What is your question?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I am outlining the consultations. I do not interrupt your narrative, Mr Shoebridge, which takes up half the time. Secondly, this was a policy in the election. We went to the polls with this. I worked in Western Sydney during the election campaign and people were talking about it out there. Our view is that that is the ultimate community consultation and we won the seat of Parramatta, with Dr Geoff Lee as a strong advocate for this, and the community backed him on that issue. I put it to you that is the ultimate consultation and election result, with that clearly as one of our manifestoes?

Ms JOHNSON: I think we simply say we disagree with you.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Well, then we would not have won the election.

Ms JOHNSON: This is not community consultation. Community consultation is a series of dialogue or discussions with recognised community groups. It means going to educational institutions, recognised community organisations, clubs, community centres, that type of organisation—

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: The Clover Moore modelling; you want community meetings?

Ms JOHNSON: Having discussions with them, gathering the data, getting formal results and having something to quote.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Three councils adopted unanimously the report from Deloitte commissioned by the Western Sydney Business Chamber about the inequity of arts funding in Western Sydney. That is clear consultation that councils adopted.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Five per cent.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Yes, 5 per cent.

Ms JOHNSON: I do not think we would argue with the inequity—this is a slightly separate issue—we would not argue with that.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It is very much a linked issue; it is a central issue to this?

Ms JOHNSON: We certainly believe that Western Sydney and other regional areas deserve equitable funding. That is not the issue for us. It has been made into an either/or situation, which is ridiculous. There is one issue: should the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo be closed and sold off for whatever?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: There is no proposal to sell it at the moment.

Ms JOHNSON: The second one: should regional and rural arts organisations have appropriate funding? Of course they should.

Mr ALEXANDRE: There is a reasoning on no increase on the arts budget, on the cultural budget in New South Wales but at the same time the Government is planning huge increases in population. Those populations are going to pay tax. Part of those taxes should go to the culture and to the arts, as they would go to schools and other projects. That is where the increase for the fair share of the west and the whole of New South Wales should come from. If we reason on a never-changing budget then we are robbing Peter to pay Paul and playing musical chairs.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is a recipe for long-term cultural impoverishment, is it not, for Sydney?

Mr ALEXANDRE: Yes.

The CHAIR: At that point we will have to call it a day. Thank you very much for coming.

(The witnesses withdrew)

GRAHAM QUINT, Director, Advocacy, National Trust of Australia (NSW), affirmed and examined:

The CHAIR: Would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr QUINT: As Director, Advocacy of the National Trust of Australia (NSW), I have confined my submission to this inquiry to the inquiry's terms of reference (e), that is the sale of the Powerhouse Museum's site in Ultimo and its proposed move to Parramatta and whether there are alternative strategies to support museum development. I seek to table copies of the National Trust register listing reports for the Ultimo Powerhouse and the Powerhouse Museum at Ultimo.

The National Trust has also nominated the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum for listing on the State Heritage Register [SHR]. The Ultimo Powerhouse was magnificently repurposed just 30 years ago as a world-class museum. Since it opened in 1988 the museum building and its exhibitions have won many awards. The Powerhouse Museum belongs in its Ultimo technology context where it is a vital part of an education and innovation precinct, being easily accessible by the goods line walkway, light rail and from Darling Harbour and existing public transport.

The trust does support the establishment of a Parramatta branch of the museum with its own distinctive function and style but strongly opposes the closure of the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum. The National Trust supports the development of a distinctive cultural beacon in Parramatta but to transport a pared back, small-scale Powerhouse would be a great mistake. Western Sydney deserves far better—a unique museum, shaped by community consultation and expert museum conservator input; one that reflects the history, achievements and cultural diversity of the region and the aspirations of its people.

With regard to the inquiry's terms of reference (a), (c) and (h), the trust could certainly take questions on notice as the National Trust of New South Wales has championed the conservation and education of our heritage in New South Wales for over 70 years. The trust is the custodian of one of the largest portfolios of significant heritage properties and their collections in the State. Unlike the major State-based institutions, the trust is primarily a volunteer supported, not-for-profit entity. Unlike the other major institutions, the vast majority of our museums are in regional New South Wales—from Tenterfield and Armidale in the north to Dubbo in the west and down to Yass in the south. The economic and community benefits of our regional museums are enormous. The benefit from even a modest investment in our museums is multiplied many times over in the community.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Mr Quint, for coming today. You made a statement about a pared back, small-scale Powerhouse. What evidence do you have to base that assertion on?

Mr QUINT: In preparing the nomination for the State Heritage Register we did our own listing of the original Powerhouse itself and we have copies for everyone to look at. In listing the Powerhouse itself we saw the process they went through to put in the installations that are there—the steam engine and so on. The idea that you can simply move all that to some other building is beyond us. It has been through our industrial heritage committee and they just shake their heads and say, "This is just not possible. It would have to be pared down." You would not have a working steam engine. Some of these things are unique in the world; they are just amazing.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You are saying that these items could not be transported?

Mr QUINT: They could probably transport them; I cannot see how they could possibly work, given the history of how they were set up with the steam supplied to them in that building, given the construction of the building itself. It is an old powerhouse so it is ideally suited for hanging up the largest aeroplane in the Southern Hemisphere. The idea that you would build another office building, probably in Parramatta—I do not know what form this would take—and that it would have the size to actually exhibit these buildings, with the impression it gives when people walk in, it is just incomprehensible.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You are saying you do not know what size or scale the building would take but are still making the assumption that it would be pared back and be small scale?

Mr QUINT: Not making an assumption; we are looking at how the building was repurposed and the effort that they went through to do that from an engineering point of view and the idea that that would happen again in Parramatta and you would end up with something as good as what you have got at Ultimo—none of the engineers on our committee agree with that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you are saying it would be impossible to replicate; 30 years on it would be impossible to replicate anything like that?

Mr QUINT: I am not saying it would be impossible. Anything is possible if you throw enough money at it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But your evidence is that you have had engineers on the National Trust looking at it and they say it is highly, highly unlikely?

Mr QUINT: Highly unlikely, exactly.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: In your submission you said that the building is heritage listed. Which elements of the building specifically are heritage listed?

Mr QUINT: The building, as I understand it, is only listed by Sydney city council. There are a whole range of very important government buildings that are not listed on the State Heritage Register. If they are not listed on the State Heritage Register they are not protected from demolition. We have the National Art School and the 1823 Darlinghurst Gaol not heritage listed. **The Art Gallery of New South Wales is not listed. These buildings are simply not protected. That is why we initially list them on the register. That has no legal status at all but that then allowed us to make an informed submission for State Heritage Register listing.**

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: So you have nominated some elements of the building?

Mr QUINT: We have nominated the building and its use as the Powerhouse Museum.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Are you suggesting that the elements added in 1988 should be heritage listed?

Mr QUINT: Yes.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I think there would be no agreement with that.

Mr QUINT: Definitely.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Is it not the case—it certainly is with respect to this building—that most buildings are repurposed a number of times in their lives? This building has been repurposed twice now. If it is managed properly this is not a confronting process for a building to go through. It happens all the time. Would you agree with that?

Mr QUINT: It happens. The Queen Victoria Building [QVB] was markets; then it became a library and then it became what it is now. Buildings, though, reach their ultimate repurposing. I think you would have to say that the Queen Victoria Building has. I think you would have to say that the Powerhouse Museum, in its present incarnation, has reached its ultimate use. You would be stepping back from that, definitely. It has won awards because of what an outstanding repurposing that was. It is an example, worldwide, of how good that repurposing was.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Down the road is Sydney Central Park—the old Kent Brewery site. Tzannes Associates architecture work there is amazing. That has won awards for its repurposing.

Mr QUINT: Yes. I would totally agree. It is a wonderful example. Again, it is bringing people into the city that need something like the powerhouse museum for when their children grow up. In my fifties I went to the old museum at Harris Street with my boys, who are in their thirties and twenties. They went to the Powerhouse Museum and they all now do technology jobs.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Are you saying that those people could not go to Parramatta?

Mr QUINT: I do not live anywhere near here; I live in Peakhurst. I am saying that it is much easier for our kids to go, on their school excursions, to Sydney.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: No, it is not; I would contest that one. I would like to ask a question that follows on from the questions from the Government. I know, from your submission, that you are clearly a strong supporter of the museum remaining there. If, in the worst-case scenario, a decision was made to move the museum to Parramatta, what would you like to see happen on the site?

Mr QUINT: What would happen to all of the exhibits there, that are world class? We have listed the remnants of the old powerhouse itself. It is very strange to take a building where you have had such an excellent result and throw that away and move somewhere else. As was said earlier, most of the exhibits are over in Castle Hill. You could create a different type of museum at nowhere near the expense of moving the Powerhouse Museum from Sydney. You are dealing with what some people refer to as "big boys' toys". These are really big, impressive items. To have them working, or displayed as they are at the moment, would, from an engineering point of view be extraordinary.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I accept that. We had a chance, this morning, to see those big structures. If, in the end, the Government made a decision to move the museum, what would you like to see happen on the site?

Mr QUINT: First of all we would not want to see it demolished. A change in use would almost certainly divide up the spaces in the building. We have recently inspected the Department of Education building at Bridge Street. The wonderful thing about that development, as it is proposed, is that they are keeping all the spaces. They are not putting car parking underneath or doing all the things that would ruin that space.

So you would look at the Powerhouse Museum site and wonder, because there are all these big apartment buildings nearby, if it is going to become a car parking station or an office building. What is it going to be? If it is going to be divided up into lots of little units that would be a far worse use than what is there at the moment. It would be such a waste of an incredible space.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: What would you like to see? That is my question.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: A museum.

Mr QUINT: Yes, a museum would be the ideal use, where it is. That is the spot for a technology museum, essentially.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Take me through a National Trust Register listing. Does it have any legislative power or is it just moral persuasion?

Mr QUINT: We investigate a place—we do not look just at the bricks and mortar and the architectural significance, but also at the social significance and what the community does. So, we take a broader view. Generally our listings then flow on to council listings. In this case it was the other way around. We actually listed these buildings after the Sydney City Council. I repeat, there are a number of very important Government buildings that are not on the State Heritage Register. There are only 1,700 items on the State Heritage Register in New South Wales. In the Sydney area there are 16,000 on council lists. They are not protected from demolition. It is only the Heritage Act listing that protects from demolition. From our point of view, our listing on the National Trust Register was the first step to assessing this building and what its real significance was, and engaging with the community. We do not talk about "consultation" but about "engagement", as the important thing nowadays. We really want to hear what the community wants.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: How does somebody get something on your register? How does that occur?

Mr QUINT: Anybody can nominate. We have two nominations from somebody in country New South Wales about a house they have restored. It can be anything of local significance through to State or international significance. We have listed the Cliefden Caves for State heritage listing. There is another upper House inquiry into Water Augmentation. We have put in a submission on that. It can be anything from geological sites to railway lines, cemeteries, buildings, conservation areas.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Does it go to a committee?

Mr QUINT: Yes. There are separate committees. There is an industrial heritage committee of engineers that has been operating within the trust since the 1970s. That committee did the old powerhouse listing. The building heritage committee deals with such things as repurposing of buildings, architectural significance and so on. That committee recommended to the trust board the listing of the Powerhouse Museum as a separate listing.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Is it a rigorous process?

Mr QUINT: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you reject nominations?

Mr QUINT: Yes, we reject quite a number.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you reject very many?

Mr QUINT: Recently we have probably rejected half of the nominations that have come in—or they are on hold.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What happens when something is on hold, when you are seeking further information?

Mr QUINT: We basically need further evidence that that item is of such significance that it should be listed by the trust.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: The Powerhouse Museum is an industrial heritage site according to the National Trust.

Mr QUINT: It has two listings. There is the industrial listing of the old powerhouse and the listing of the Powerhouse Museum itself as a repurposed museum of world significance.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So you would go to the State Government afterwards and say—

Mr QUINT: In this instance we resolved to nominate the building for the State Heritage Register in the belief that it was of State significance. In our nomination we said that we believe that it meets most of the criteria for State listing.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: When you put something up for nomination do you also take advice from people who oppose it? For example, if I lived next to a house would you contact me and say, "Mr Secord, what are your views on this?"

Mr QUINT: We get people opposing us listing properties. We have to then take on board their points of view and decide whether to proceed or not.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Did the State Government engage with you at any point when you were proposing the dual listing?

Mr QUINT: When we are proposing State Heritage Register listings we make it known quite publicly that we are doing so. We put out an information sheet saying that we are nominating, as we have done with the National Art School and the Old Darlinghurst Gaol. We have made it fairly public that we are looking at nominating it for State listing.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: What did the State Government say?

Mr QUINT: It gets sent to the Heritage office and they then put it through their process. At that stage we are out of the process until—if it is a nomination from the trust—we are asked to come and present to the Heritage Council.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Have they asked you?

Mr QUINT: Not yet, but they have lots of nominations in the pipeline. The Cliefden Caves case has been there for two years, and we understand that it is about to come up for final consideration. So there is a lot in the pipeline.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So this move could take place before you impact—

Mr QUINT: Yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: At budget estimates we asked the arts Minister—and, I think, someone else—about whether there would be similar square metreage for exhibitions at the new site. They assured us on both occasions that that would be the case. What do you say to that?

Mr QUINT: It is not the square metreage. It is the functionality and the ability to run a steam engine.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is the cubic metreage, is it not?

Mr QUINT: It is the size of the space. They have huge aircraft hanging from the ceiling, which is what matters. You could have office space of that area simply not—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You are going to need to have a building that is much higher so that you could hang an aeroplane.

Mr QUINT: Higher and massively built, if you wanted to replicate what you have now.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you think it is possible to replicate what is existing at the Powerhouse Museum now at Parramatta?

Mr QUINT: You could do it, but it would be massively expensive. I am not an engineer myself—

The Hon. WALT SECORD: So it is possible?

Mr QUINT: Anything is possible.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You asked the Government some questions about supporting the heritage listing that includes the 1988 additions and repurposing. Can you explain to the Committee why that is an important part of a listing?

Mr QUINT: We do not have a time limit. People seem to be under the impression that if something is more than 100 years old we will list it. With the National Trust that is not the case. We often list very modern buildings. We listed the St Leonards Centre, which is a Brutalist building. It was built as a bank building. We listed the Sirius building and we list all Georgian buildings. We list the whole range; it does not have to be so many years old for us to list it. It has to have other values.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: In fact, Sydney's history has been one of often ignoring important architectural and cultural sites and destroying them for short-term decision-making.

Mr QUINT: I tell the story when the trust was first formed that we listed Georgian buildings and we lost most of the art deco cinemas because we were concentrating on Georgian buildings. We are now trying to get ahead of the game and pick the best examples of the newer buildings—for example, the Sydney Opera House was listed very early.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The report to the City of Sydney Council in the 1960s proposed the destruction of the Queen Victoria Building and its conversion to a car park, because they did not appreciate the architecture of the QVB at the time. That is Sydney's history, is it not?

Mr QUINT: There were architects saying pull the Queen Victoria Building down; it is ugly.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I suppose that you have learned from that history and that is why when you see something like the Powerhouse that won the 1988 Sulman award you are coming out and saying, "Protect it, do not destroy it".

Mr QUINT: Yes, it is very special.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Sydney has a short-term decision-making culture. What is the significance of the building winning the Sulman award in terms of heritage listing?

Mr QUINT: That is the Institute of Architects' award. There are various categories, and it won the Sulman award for its repurposing.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is one element, is it not, of why the Powerhouse should get a listing? There are seven elements. Can you explain the six elements that the Powerhouse ticks?

Mr QUINT: There is a series. The first is important in the course of the pattern of the cultural and natural history of New South Wales. The second is a strong personal association with the life of a person.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: We have read that somewhere.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I have not read that.

Mr QUINT: No, this is in the State Heritage Register nomination.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Mr Quint, can you explain the six elements of the seven elements for the State heritage listing that this site meets?

Mr QUINT: That is what I was reading out. It is a State listing and it is not in what has been handed out. The third one is important to demonstrating aesthetic characteristics. The fourth one is a high degree of creative or technical achievement, and it meets that one. The fifth one is association with a particular community or group in New South Wales, and it meets that one. The sixth one is potential to yield information contributing to the understanding of cultural and natural history of Australia. The seventh one is that it possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the cultural and natural history, and that is going back to the original power house. It is a combination of the original power house history and the Powerhouse Museum history put together.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Mr Quint, would you mind tendering that document?

Mr QUINT: I would be very pleased to.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The industrial heritage was proposed in March 2015. Is that correct?

Mr QUINT: I will check on that. The National Trust listing was June and July 2015 for the Powerhouse.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: They were the listing dates. I am looking at the documents that you provided, I think.

Mr QUINT: That is right. That is for the National Trust listings.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The date of proposal was March 2015 and it was then approved on 24 June 2015.

Mr QUINT: And the SHR nomination was November 2015.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That was when you forwarded it.

Mr QUINT: To the heritage office.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Considering the heritage significance that you have attributed to both the site itself and the site as a museum, why did it take the National Trust until after the Government had made the announcement in February 2015 to put them forward for listing?

Mr QUINT: With many of these places we had assumed they were already on the State Heritage Register and the Government itself had nominated them or they had been noted by the State Government department section 160 heritage registers. Unfortunately, often when items change hands they drop off these registers and they are no longer listed and protected. At that point, as with the National Art School we then have to take action.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Did you believe they were on a register previously?

Mr QUINT: Pretty well everybody we have spoken to, including us, thought it was already listed.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Was it previously on a register that it had dropped off, as you said could happen?

Mr QUINT: No, in this case it was only listed by the Sydney city council.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of the actual space itself or the space as a museum?

Mr QUINT: I think it is the space as a museum, but I would have to check that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: If you would take that on notice, it would be appreciated.

Mr QUINT: I will take it on notice.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Mr Quint, I go to your opening statement when you spoke about the importance of regional cultural institutions particularly museums and galleries, which is what we are focusing on. Do you agree that regional museums and galleries particularly, but all cultural institutions, are important for a regional community's identity?

Mr QUINT: Yes.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Do you agree they are important for a regional community's economy?

Mr QUINT: Yes.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Do you agree that they are important as a source of regional tourism?

Mr QUINT: Yes.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Do you agree that they have an economic multiplier effect within communities?

Mr QUINT: Yes.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: I am proud of the work that the Government is doing in terms of supporting regional museums and galleries and regional cultural institutions. What else do you think we could be doing in that space?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Fund the National Trust.

Mr QUINT: The National Trust has properties, museums and collections all over New South Wales.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Indeed, and they are very important.

Mr QUINT: We are well aware that a lot of these communities are starved of funding. One of the difficulties is that the population is moving to Sydney. Sydney is expanding massively and some of these country areas are declining. We are the first to know how hard it is to keep some of these country properties going and fund them. We have every sympathy and so with anything we could do to get these places going and seek funding we take every measure we can.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Apart from extra funding, is there anything else in this space that you would recommend that we consider in terms of supporting regional areas? I am happy for you to take this question on notice.

Mr QUINT: I will take that on notice, if you do not mind. We would be very happy to give you a detailed response.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Knowing, as you do, how hard it is to have money to do basic maintenance and upkeep, let alone capital improvements on the properties with heritage significance around the State, if you had \$200 or \$300 million as a one-off capital injection for museums, heritage and culture, would you spend it on destroying the Powerhouse and building a brand-new facility in Parramatta, or do you think that money shared equitably around the State could provide a far better cultural outcome?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I wonder what the answer will be.

Mr QUINT: Both around the State need the funding and the money. Western Sydney is certainly in need of support. Somebody mentioned the Casula Powerhouse and that is another fantastic example of repurposed thing. It is not just Sydney, but it is just that this particular museum is the best example of repurposing. To lose it sends such a bad signal. It is just extraordinary that people go to the trouble of doing what they did there and then just turn it into something else and use that money somewhere else. We are not really sure how, when or where.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: When you or any of the regional galleries you are aware of make a pitch to the Government for capital funding you are probably talking about \$500,000, \$1 million or figures like that. When you see potentially \$200 million or \$300 million of taxpayer money spent on this one project without a business case—

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: One where a business case is currently being developed.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How do you respond to that?

Mr QUINT: I can only respond in this way. Our CEO came back from Saumarez Homestead in Armidale that had received some money from a charitable grant. It was \$23,000 and he said the difference to the Saumarez Homestead from that amount of money was just extraordinary. It raised the spirits of the volunteers there; it was a fantastic thing. It is not that you need a lot of money for these places; you are just trying to keep the roof from leaking and losing these places.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You go through hoops, as does every community organisation or cultural institution, to get small grants. It must frustrate you no end to see \$100 million decisions being made without a business case.

Mr QUINT: In the case of the Powerhouse Museum you are looking at a major tourist attraction for worldwide tourism, that is what it should be. The same with the other institutions in Sydney they are major world-class tourism institutions and they require major amounts of funding. We are not doing an either/or here. What we are saying with Parramatta is a more modest but better focused museum would be better and something that the people of Parramatta want.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The trust has a diverse portfolio, you have a number of important regional galleries. Do you find that in terms of making a facility successful it is important to have it surrounded by other valued institutions or properties, so you have a precinct or atmospheric area?

Mr QUINT: It helps if you have a number of tourism spots in the town rather than just the one trust property. If you can link in with other events occurring in the town. The Norman Lindsay Gallery have jazz festivals and they link it with other things happening in the mountains. They are very important for the local economy.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is the arts ribbon that wraps around the harbour part of the Ultimo site's success?

Mr QUINT: I do not know why it is being separated from the rest of the institutions. I do not understand that thinking.

The CHAIR: I note you have taken questions on notice. You have 21 days to respond and the secretariat will be in contact in relation to the answers.

(The witness withdrew)

SUZETTE MEADE, President, North Parramatta Residents Action Group; Representative, Greater Western Sydney Heritage Action Group, affirmed and examined

JON HILLMAN, Vice President, North Parramatta Residents Action Group, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Would you like to make short opening statement?

Ms MEADE: Parramatta residents do not covet the Powerhouse Museum. The people of Parramatta just want equitable funding for our own arts and cultural development. The Government has driven a divide between communities from the east and west with the funding disparity for some time. The North Parramatta Residents Action Group [NPRAG] have made the decision to stand behind the campaign to press pause on the current fatally flawed plan to reallocate the Powerhouse Museum from Ultimo to Parramatta. NPRAG do not support the theft of a loved community cultural identity. Dressing it up as a gift and presenting it to the west like a scene from *Oliver twist* is insulting to us all.

If this Government spent the same time and money they do on appearing to be consultative with their so-called independent bodies, such as the Greater Sydney Commission, into actually listening to the community then we most likely would not be sitting here today in an inquiry. It is widely known that this Government announced the controversial relocation of the Powerhouse Museum prior to even commencing a feasibility study or a sound business plan being formed. Figures projected to carry out such relocation are up to \$1 billion. I am certain everyone in this room today would agree with me that if Parramatta council, businesses and community members were given the choice of a relocated, smaller Powerhouse Museum squeezed between a residential tower and a bridge or a billion dollars in State Government funding to develop a cultural framework of our own for a cultural and arts precinct, the latter would be chosen in a heartbeat.

Sydney has two arts galleries in the city, the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, but there is none in Parramatta. The proposed modern extension will double the size of the Art Gallery of New South Wales at a cost of \$400 million, further concentrating the art facilities and funding in the city centre. New South Wales is the only State that does not have a dedicated migration museum, a State museum with responsibilities for collecting research and interpreting migration history. As a State we constantly promote our unique diversity, especially in Sydney, yet we still have not invested in this rich and growing narrative.

In 2015 the most popular activity for New South Wales international cultural visitors was to visit history, heritage buildings, sites and monuments followed by visiting a museum or art gallery. Most importantly, cultural visitors stay longer, and therefore, spend more at a destination making them a lucrative high-yield market for the visitor economy. Yet the New South Wales Government is spending over \$1.6 billion on football stadiums rather than investing in a growing lucrative tourism market—where is the logic?

Parramatta is under a supercharged rezoning and reimagining of its future as a city. A concise and considered approach with an holistic master plan has been overlooked. Parramatta has more heritage narratives from indigenous and colonial history than anywhere else in New South Wales. Cultural stories and themes do not need to be invented or transplanted from another community. Greater Western Sydney needs and deserves the museum of New South Wales, an indigenous centre for excellence, the museum of migration and an art gallery. The 30 hectare Cumberland hospital precinct in North Parramatta that cradles the world heritage worthy Parramatta Female Factory is the best location for a cultural hub for the capital of Western Sydney. The Fleet Street Heritage Precinct vision has a comprehensive community coalition that includes the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce, the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, and the National Trust, along with many heritage associations.

Sadly, the New South Wales Government through UrbanGrowth NSW is proposing this sacrosanct area become a high density suburb. It is really embarrassing for our State Government that the Victorian Government has had the vision to stop a residential development of similar nature at Abbotsford Convent, just four kilometres from Melbourne's central business district, spread over 16 acres, it is Australia's largest multi-arts precinct. The convent is home to over 100 studios, two galleries, cafes, a band room, outdoor cinema, a radio station, school and an abundance, most importantly, of open green space. Each year the convent welcomes art projects, rehearsals, workshops, exhibitions, markets, events and countless festivals.

We have an opportunity to leave a legacy for the next generation. Currently all we envisage for the future is regret that the wrong decision was made for Parramatta. The North Parramatta Residents Action Group and the Greater Western Sydney Heritage Action Group, that I represent here today in this inquiry, formally request the New South Wales Government to press pause on the Powerhouse move. We demand a genuine independent audit of all culture assets, including museums and galleries, across New South Wales to be carried

out so an equitable rebalance of funding, without asset relocation depriving any community, be devised. Secondly, Parramatta's Fleet Street Heritage Precinct should be redeveloped by the Government with genuine and transparent stakeholder and community consultation.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What do you make of the argument put by those who support the relocation of the Powerhouse that Western Sydney and Parramatta cannot come up with their own unique museum or arts experience and that they have to get a facility relocated from the centre of Sydney to be viable? Do you find that insulting to Parramatta and Western Sydney?

Ms MEADE: Given that Parramatta is the cradle of our nation—it is where government started; it is where farming started; it is where the colony started—I find it very insulting and short sighted.

Mr HILLMAN: It astounded me that a very conservative member of our group said, "It's robbing Peter Powerhouse to pay Paul Parramatta." That sums it up. It is denuding one part of Sydney in order to provide a scaled-down version and a much poorer version of the Powerhouse Museum. We did not ask for it and we envisage better things than a scaled-down Powerhouse Museum—as good as it is where it is—being dumped on the people of Parramatta.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Imposing the Powerhouse on Parramatta seems to ignore the amazing tapestry of Aboriginal, colonial, and multicultural history in the area. Do you have an alternative proposal that would enliven Parramatta?

Ms MEADE: It is a completely wasted opportunity to invest in the narratives which we have and which people come to this country to learn about. We do not need to invent something nor to bring in history; we have it in Parramatta but it has been ignored. It is sitting there ready to be exposed to the world.

Mr HILLMAN: I would like to say something about the vision, and I would like to table a document for members because I will be referring to a couple of things in it. Our vision is evolving with more and more consultation. It is particularly inspired by places such as Williamsburg. I do not know whether members have been lucky enough to visit Williamsburg, but if they did they would know that it has an uncannily similar history to that of the Parramatta precinct. It was the centre of colonial America, and it was neglected for decades—about a century. Then, as we hope will happen with Parramatta, it was reinvigorated.

Today, colonial Williamsburg is the strongest tourism/economic asset in Virginia. From a ruin in the early part of the twentieth century, its assets, particularly the building assets that have been reinvigorated, are now worth approximately \$1 billion, and its annual revenue is approximately \$200 million. It is astounding. I encourage Committee members to look closely at colonial Williamsburg because it is an inspiration. Frankly, I hope that Committee members and, of course, Legislative Council members generally, will consider that approach as a possibility. If they were to do that, they could be leaving us with one of the greatest legacies of not only this State but also this nation.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Ms Meade, you mentioned a migration museum. Knowing Parramatta as a real multicultural hub, can you elaborate on your ideas about such a museum? I understand that Victoria has one.

Ms MEADE: As you said, more than 50 per cent of Parramatta's population was not born in Australia. If you go further west to Blacktown, the population is even more diverse. However, that is not celebrated in any way. We do not acknowledge the forced migration of convicts or migration since then, all the way to the free migration that continues to this very day. It would be a multifaceted benefit for Parramatta to have a migration museum so that we can learn where we have come from and where we are going. It would be a cohesive development for us to learn about each other's cultures, why we came here, and how we are becoming a nation together.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Is that idea being bandied around within Parramatta city council? What is the source of that idea?

Ms MEADE: It has come from residents, the arts community and the heritage community. For about the past 18 months we have been trying to develop an alternative vision for this 30 hectare site. The previous Government promised Parramatta an arts and cultural precinct on the old Kings School site. It is about time that Parramatta had an arts and cultural precinct.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Have you had any discussions with your local member, Mr Geoff Lee, about your concerns?

Ms MEADE: He believes the Government is doing the right thing and that we are troublemakers.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Have you had any meetings with him?

Ms MEADE: Yes, we have had meetings with him over the past 18 months. We have also invited him to various members' meetings. He believes our concern is not warranted.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Who called you a "troublemaker"? Was it the local member? Was that his description of you?

Ms MEADE: He has not said those words to me directly.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But they got back to you indirectly?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It is hearsay.

Ms MEADE: It is hearsay, yes.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: The witness is nodding her head.

Ms MEADE: I have not heard Geoff Lee say those words.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: But it has been put to you by other people that he has said that?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: The witness must say something otherwise nothing will be recorded in the transcript. Did you say yes?

Ms MEADE: That is the feeling that the North Parramatta Residents Action Group has gained from our local member—that is, we are troublemakers and—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It is the vibe.

Ms MEADE: It is the vibe. Read the media. We are a residents' action group.

The CHAIR: Show me an action group that is not making trouble; that is their job.

Mr HILLMAN: It is even more than a vibe. Unfortunately, Mr Lee did not help matters when he referred to our events and meetings as stunts and to our organisation as a front. I am not a member of any political party.

Ms MEADE: Nor am I.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: So the fact that your Facebook page says "maintaining your rage and enthusiasm", with reference to Gough Whitlam, and you are shown wearing an "It's Time" T-shirt is a coincidence.

Ms MEADE: No, but you can check; I am not a member of any political party.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: But you are a former staffer of Nathan Rees, are you not?

Ms MEADE: I beg your pardon.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: You are a former staffer of Nathan Rees.

Ms MEADE: I have never worked for Nathan Rees in my life.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: Do you withdraw that?

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: I withdraw that.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: That was very unfair.

The CHAIR: That is the equivalent to an apology; it is as close as you will get.

Ms MEADE: I accept the apology, Mr Mallard.

The CHAIR: That is putting you in the same boat as Mr Shoebridge.

The Hon. WALT SECORD: You have a site that you think would be a good location for a cultural museum covering multiculturalism, migration and Indigenous history.

Ms MEADE: And arts and galleries. There is no rehearsal space or space for artists in Parramatta. It is adjacent to a site which is world-heritage-worthy and which is now covered by national heritage listing. We believe that it is the perfect position. Unlike the site the Government is looking at on the Parramatta River, it is not encumbered. It also has open green space.

The CHAIR: What is your view of the Government's current preferred site?

Ms MEADE: I know that the Parramatta city council was not happy about the site being taken. There have been plans for some time—I think since Lord Mayor Chedid's time—for it to be an outdoor event space for the city. The Cumberland Hospital site is owned by the State Government—by several different government bodies. It is ready to be used by the State Government.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: For what sort of public events and recreation did the council want it?

Ms MEADE: It holds a few cultural events, but it is a limited space on the Parramatta River. If it does not flood, it covers the entire grassed area. Sometimes it comes right up to the arches of Lennox Bridge, and the ferry service is also closed. It is very limited and with the growing population in Parramatta, it is going to become even more limiting, but they hold various cultural events during the year. I could not name them off the top of my head.

Mr HILLMAN: Parts of Parramasala, parts of various community groups—

Ms MEADE: The Thai river festival.

Mr HILLMAN: Also, in terms of what the Chairman just asked, commenting on the proposed site—I understand the Committee has visited the Powerhouse Museum. If you saw the current proposed site on that riverbank, you would see—and you do not have to be an engineer or architect to see this—it is, quite frankly, impossible to accommodate all that the Powerhouse is now. It would not just be robbing Peter Powerhouse to pay Paul Parramatta, it would be downgrading the importance of a museum that holds all of those artefacts and has that wonderful educational role as well as tourism. It simply is an inadequate site with an artist's impression to make it look good in a place where people in Parramatta—you take any credible survey; we have taken surveys—do not want it. They want something unique, and they certainly do not want it there.

Just by the by, with the brand-new development—very high-rise, iconic development, I suppose—of apartments and so on, right where they are now adjacent to that site, it simply would not work with the museum blocking out—if it was to accommodate everything that is in the Powerhouse Museum now, it would presumably have to be something like the equivalent of five, six, seven storeys. I would imagine that those people who were just buying into those units would not be too happy.

The CHAIR: It has never stopped development in the past. Any more questions?

The Hon. WALT SECORD: No. We have the sense; you have communicated your views.

[following section redacted by resolution of the committee]

Ms MEADE: I wanted to table something. I did not know if I had to do it on the record. It is the vision and the letter we sent to Minister Stokes asking for our vision to be looked at. I wanted to table that.

The CHAIR: Please hand it up. Thank you very much for coming.

Mr HILLMAN: Mr Chairman, may I table that; it addresses a question.

The CHAIR: Hand it to the secretariat. Thank you very much. This hearing is closed.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(The Committee adjourned at 5.09 p.m.)